



EAB

Recapturing **Adult Learner** Enrollments

Strategies to Recruit Students
Through Employer Partnerships

Community College
Executive Forum





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Community College Executive Forum

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Supporting Members in Best Practice Implementation

Resources Available Within Your Membership

This publication is only the beginning of our work to assist members in adult learner recruitment. Recognizing that ideas seldom speak for themselves, our ambition is to work actively with members of the Community College Executive Forum to decide which practices are most relevant for your organization, to accelerate consensus among key constituencies, and to save implementation time.

Implementation Road Maps and Tools

Throughout the publication, this symbol will alert you to any corresponding tools and templates available in the toolkit at the back of this book. These tools are also available on our website at eab.com.

Recorded and Private-Label Webconference Sessions

Our website includes recordings of two hour-long webconferences walking through the practices highlighted in this publication. Forum experts are also available to conduct private webconferences with your team.

Unlimited Expert Troubleshooting

Members may contact the consultants who worked on any report to discuss the research, troubleshoot obstacles to implementation, or run deep on unique issues. Our staff conducts hundreds of telephone consultations every year.

Facilitated Onsite Presentations

Our experts regularly visit campuses to lead half-day to day-long sessions focused on highlighting key insights for senior leaders or helping internal project teams select the most relevant practices and determine next steps.



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Top Lessons from the Study

Recapturing Adult Learner Enrollments

Adult Learners Account for Majority of Community College Enrollment Decline

From fall 2012 to fall 2014, enrollments at two-year public colleges declined by 7% nationwide. Adult learners (i.e., students age 25 and older) disproportionately drove this decline. In fall 2014, community colleges enrolled 328,000 fewer adult learners than they had just two years earlier; during this same time frame, they lost 110,000 traditional-age students. Adult learners commonly leave college to return to the workforce during economic recoveries. However, throughout the ongoing recovery from the Great Recession, growing competition from other higher education sectors has exacerbated the cyclical enrollment decline.

Competition from For-Profit and Four-Year Universities Crowds Adult Learner Market

Despite increasingly stringent federal regulations and growing scrutiny from the media, for-profit universities have largely sustained their share of adult learner enrollments since 2010. Their resilience reflects not only their extensive marketing resources, but also their commitment to the convenience and flexibility that adult learners seek. Although the for-profit sector's long-term viability remains in question, nonprofit institutions have begun to adopt innovations from that sector in serving the adult learner market. In particular, four-year private and public universities are increasingly pursuing adult learners to sustain enrollments as high school graduating cohorts shrink.

Employer Partnerships Remain Colleges' Greatest Asset for Adult Learner Recruitment

Although adult learners value the convenience of for-profit institutions and the brand of four-year universities, career relevance ultimately guides their college choice. Accordingly, community colleges retain a crucial advantage in their unparalleled alignment with local industry needs. The employer partnerships they have maintained for decades are their greatest asset in recruiting adult learners. As the economy recovers and employers increasingly invest in talent, college leaders can position their programs as routes for adult learners to advance or reboot their careers.

Three Key Challenges Prevent Colleges from Maximizing Value of Employer Partnerships

Community colleges have historically underleveraged employer partnerships for adult learner recruitment. Current partnerships commonly fail to yield enrollments for three reasons:

- 1. Working Adults Deterred from Enrollment:** Despite the professional advantages of further training, many adult learners do not return to college. Financial, administrative, and psychological barriers may prevent workers from enrolling even when they qualify for tuition reimbursement.
- 2. Program Options Misaligned with Career Goals:** Many adults with work and family commitments hesitate to invest time and money in college programs. These programs may cover content irrelevant to their career goals or duplicate content they have already mastered on the job.
- 3. Job Seekers Question Value of Retraining:** Only an estimated 15% of unemployed workers retrain before they apply for new jobs. Many unemployed workers do not return to college because they lack confidence that retraining will boost their employability and long-term career growth.

Top Lessons from the Study (cont.)

Recapturing Adult Learner Enrollments

Remove Barriers to Enrollment to Encourage Use of Tuition Reimbursement

Although 54% of U.S. employers offer tuition reimbursement for workers enrolled in college courses, only an estimated 5% of workers take advantage of this benefit. Many workers decline to enroll because of up-front financial costs, college reentry anxiety, and complex enrollment processes. This results in missed opportunities for workers to upskill, as well as missed tuition revenue for their local community colleges. To facilitate enrollment for working adults, community colleges are introducing deferred tuition payment plans, noncredit-to-credit bridges, and employer-based advisors.

Partner with Employers to Market Programs Relevant to Workers' Career Goals

As technological change accelerates, workers must continuously upgrade their skills to remain current in their fields. However, competing work and family commitments discourage workers from pursuing training irrelevant to their careers. Program design innovations such as stackable certificates and prior learning assessment provide time-effective options to learn applicable skills, yet these innovations are often underutilized due to weak marketing or cumbersome policies. In response, select community colleges are partnering with employers to map stackable certificates to promotion opportunities and to crosswalk employer-designed corporate training programs to college credits.

Promote Hiring Outcomes to Demonstrate Value of Retraining to Job Seekers

Although U.S. employers spend \$110 billion on talent acquisition each year, 40% of them still struggle to fill open positions. At the same time, millions of unemployed and underemployed workers are declining to retrain. With limited resources and an urgent need to find work, these job seekers question whether they should invest in college. If community college leaders can convince job seekers of the value of further education, they can increase enrollments and simultaneously mitigate the talent shortage facing local employers. Progressive community colleges have accomplished this through career exploration boot camps, speed interviewing events, and guaranteed job offers within select programs.

Understanding Your Current Practice

The following questions are designed to guide members in evaluating their current activities. Members may use these questions to determine if the full range of best practices is in use on their campuses and to identify opportunities for investment or action.

Removing Barriers to Enrollment	Yes	No
1. Do you partner with employers to promote tuition reimbursement among their workers?		
2. Can students who receive tuition reimbursement defer payment on courses until their employer compensates them?		
3. Do you offer free course trials so that prospective students can gain confidence in their college readiness?		
4. Do you offer incentives to encourage noncredit training completers to pursue a certificate or degree?		
5. Do college advisors host regular office hours for prospective students at the sites of key employer partners?		
6. Can prospective students complete applications and course registration through on-site advisors at their place of employment?		
<i>If you answered "No" to any of the above questions, please turn to "Removing Barriers to Enrollment" (page 23).</i>		

Aligning Program Options with Career Goals	Yes	No
1. Do you communicate the labor market value of additional credentials to students who complete a short-term certificate?		
2. Do you partner with employers to identify which of your credentials align with career advancement opportunities at their organization?		
3. Have you centralized all prior learning assessment policies and procedures in one online location for simplified access?		
4. Do prior learning assessment policies appear in language that prospective and current students can easily understand?		
5. Do you advertise prior learning assessment to prospective adult learners through local media, employer visits, and information sessions?		
6. Have you crosswalked any standardized corporate training programs to college courses to allow incoming students to earn credit for them?		
<i>If you answered "No" to any of the above questions, please turn to "Aligning Program Options with Career Goals" (page 33).</i>		

Facilitating the Hiring Process	Yes	No
1. Do you partner with local workforce investment boards to enroll unemployed workers in training?		
2. Do you offer college and/or career counseling at community locations, such as one-stop career centers?		
3. Do you require students to adhere to professional standards (e.g., attendance, dress code) throughout pre-employment training programs?		
4. Do you allow employers to observe classes and view student performance reports to facilitate hiring upon graduation?		
5. Do you host on-campus interviewing events to connect graduating students with hiring employers?		
6. Do you guarantee interviews or job placements to students who complete certain high-demand training programs?		
7. Do you advertise employment outcomes to prospective students through program websites, brochures, and information sessions?		
8. Do you help employers recruit current students as part-time workers in exchange for tuition assistance upon hire?		
<i>If you answered "No" to any of the above questions, please turn to "Facilitating the Hiring Process" (page 45).</i>		



Recapturing Adult Learner Enrollments

INTRODUCTION

Beneath the Enrollment Headlines

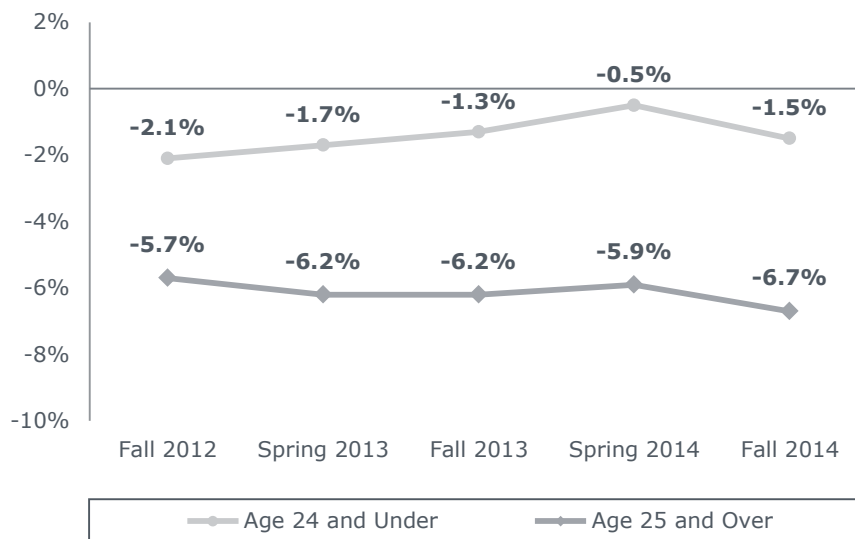
After historic enrollment growth during the Great Recession, community colleges have experienced several years of pervasive enrollment declines. These declines are concentrated among adult learners, defined as students age 25 and over. Since 2012, adult learner enrollments across the two-year sector have fallen by 5% to 7% each year. At the same time, traditional-age student enrollments have slipped by only 1% to 2%.

This sudden outflow of adult learners threatens the financial stability of many community colleges. In fall 2014, the sector enrolled 328,000 fewer adult learners than it had just two years earlier—a shortfall that represents about \$541 million in annual tuition revenue. During this time frame, a hypothetical midsize college experiencing national enrollment patterns would have lost over 600 adult learners, which equates to roughly \$1 million in annual tuition revenue.

Overall Declines Mask Steep Exodus of Adult Learners

Losing Students Age 25+

Year-Over-Year Enrollment Change at Two-Year Public Colleges



Leaving an Imposing Gap¹

Nationwide, 2012–2014		Midsize College, 2012–2014 ²
328K	Decline in adult learner enrollments	624
\$541M	Estimated loss in annual tuition revenue	\$1.0M

1) Tuition revenue calculations assume each adult learner completed 15 credits per year (6–9 credits per semester) at a cost of \$110 per credit.

2) Calculated for a community college with 10,000 students, half of whom are age 25 or over.

Source: "Current Term Enrollment Report—Fall 2014," National Student Clearinghouse, Dec. 2014; EAB interviews and analysis.

Adult Learner Loss Not Merely Cyclical

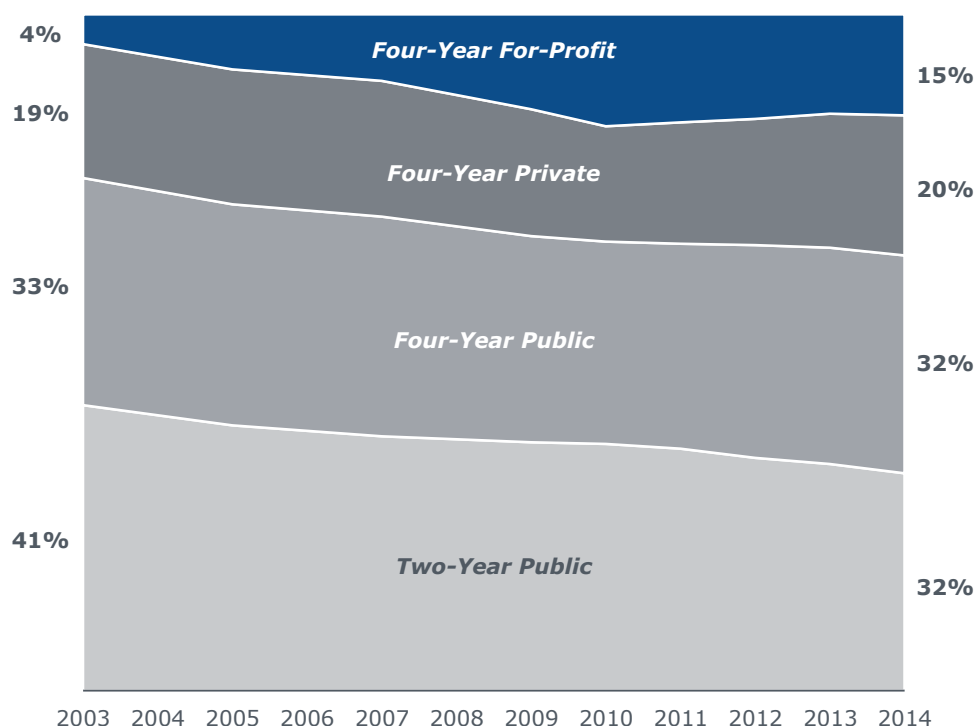
Although adult learners understandably reenter the workforce after a recession ends, the economic recovery only partly explains the enrollment challenge. In recent years, growing competition from other sectors of higher education has exacerbated the expected cyclical decline.

The recession notwithstanding, community colleges' market share of adult learners has steadily declined over the last decade. In 2003, community colleges enrolled 41% of all adult learners; by 2014, they enrolled only 32%. During this same time frame, the share of adult learners enrolled at for-profit institutions swelled from 4% to 15%.

Since the introduction of gainful employment regulations in 2010, for-profit institutions have confronted no shortage of challenges—including countless lawsuits, a congressional investigation led by Senator Tom Harkin, and consumer protection warnings from the Federal Trade Commission. Although these challenges have slowed the sector's growth, they have yet to reduce its market share. Since 2012, for-profit institutions have consistently enrolled 15% of all adult learners. Even if further regulation eventually topples the for-profit sector, its resilience to date attests to the strength of their appeal to adult learners.

Community College Market Share Declined Throughout Last Decade

Share of Postsecondary Enrollments for Students Age 25+¹



For-Profits Sustaining Market Share Despite Regulation



1) Data from 2003-2009 comes from the National Center for Education Statistics, while data from 2010-2014 come from the National Student Clearinghouse. Percentages do not sum to 100% due to rounding and the exclusion of two-year for-profits.

Source: *Digest of Education Statistics*, National Center for Education Statistics, 2013, 2011, 2009, 2007, 2005; "Current Term Enrollment Report—Fall 2014," National Student Clearinghouse, Dec. 2014; "Current Term Enrollment Report—Fall 2012," National Student Clearinghouse, Dec. 2012; Epstein J, "Closer Look at 'Gainful Employment'," *Inside Higher Ed*, July 2010; Fain P, "Kentucky Showdown," *Inside Higher Ed*, Nov. 2011; Fain P, "Results Are In," *Inside Higher Ed*, July 2012; Fain P, "FTC Joins For-Profit Fight," *Inside Higher Ed*, Nov. 2013; EAB interviews and analysis.

Giving For-Profits Their Due

Perhaps the most obvious factor behind the for-profit sector's resilience to enrollment threats is their investment in marketing. The Apollo Group (the parent company of the University of Phoenix) boasts an annual marketing budget of over \$500 million. For comparison, the nation's second-largest community college, Miami Dade College, spends only \$58,000 each year on advertising.

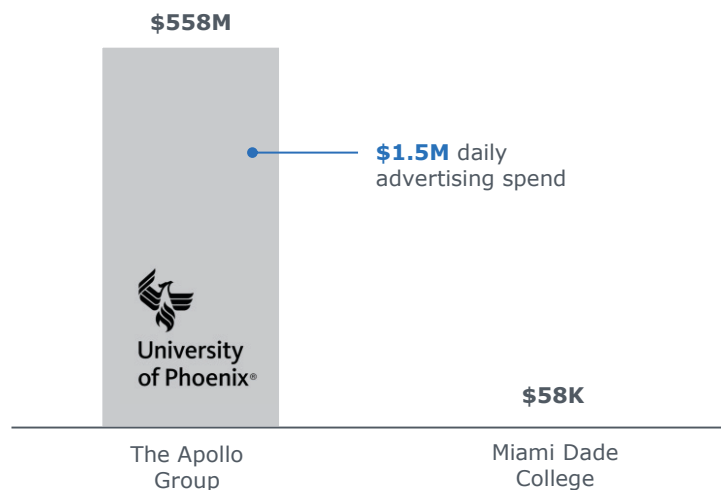
However, advertising alone does not account for the continued appeal of for-profit institutions. In addition to their well-resourced recruitment campaigns, these institutions consistently provide the convenience that adult learners seek through online courses and flexible scheduling. Furthermore, in response to scrutiny over high tuition rates, for-profit institutions have also started to reduce the cost of attendance through generous scholarships and incentives. One institution, Kaplan University, even offers incoming students a free three-week trial period to encourage initial enrollment.

Although the sustainability of the for-profit sector remains in question, its innovations in program delivery and student recruitment have reshaped the adult learner market, setting a high standard for other institutions that intend to compete for this audience.

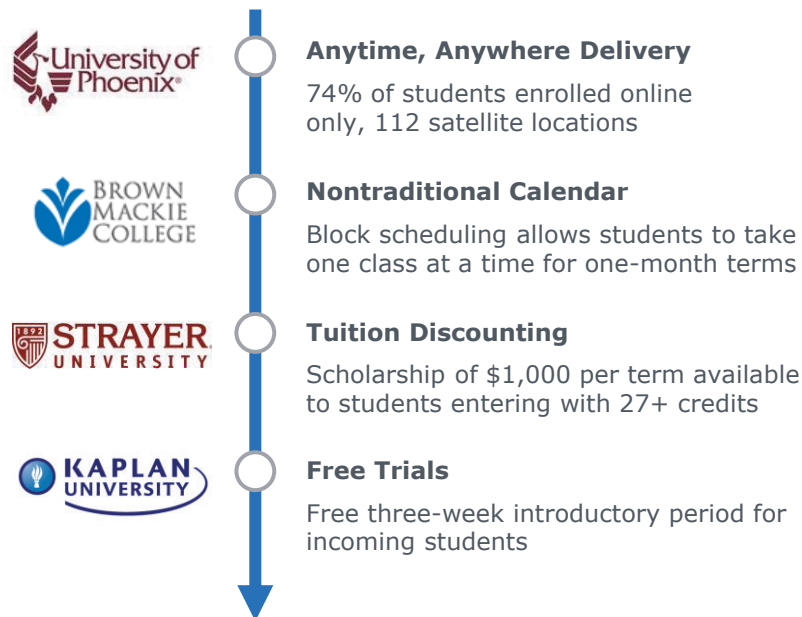
For-Profits Set Pace on Not Just Advertising, but Also Student Convenience

Marketing Resources Comically Insurmountable

Annual Advertising Spend



A Value Proposition Geared Toward Adult Learners



Source: "2014 Annual Report," The Apollo Group, Oct. 2014; Moltz D, "Knife to a Gun Fight," *Inside Higher Ed*, July 2010; Lewin T, "University of Phoenix to Shutter 115 Locations," *New York Times*, Oct. 2012; "One Course a Month," Brown Mackie College, <https://www.brownmackie.edu/why-brown-mackie/one-course-a-month/>; "Kaplan Commitment," Kaplan University, http://www.kaplanuniversity.edu/about/kaplan_commitment.aspx; Fain P, "Discounts at For-Profits?" *Inside Higher Ed*, Aug. 2012; EAB interviews and analysis.

Four-Years Open Up Second Front

Today, community colleges face enrollment competition not only from for-profit institutions but also from four-year universities. As high school graduating classes shrink, these public and private university leaders are increasingly recruiting adult learners to sustain revenue.

This trend has generated unprecedented competition in many local markets. Mesa, Arizona, presents an extreme yet conceivable example. Several for-profit institutions and two public universities have historically maintained campuses in Mesa. Recently, the city has also seen an influx of private nonprofit universities. In 2010, city officials seeking to increase college attainment invited four universities from the Northeast and Midwest to open satellite campuses in Mesa. These out-of-state institutions welcomed the opportunity to expand into a new geographic market with greater population growth than their home regions. Today, they compete with Mesa's local community college for enrollments.

Absent a new recruitment strategy, community colleges will struggle to compete in an increasingly crowded market. As for-profit institutions promote their convenience and four-year universities promote their reputation, community college leaders must identify the optimal method to recruit adult learners.

Nonprofit Universities Offer Brand Name Alternative to For-Profits

Undergraduate Institutions with Campuses in Mesa, AZ

Incumbent For-Profits

National



Carrington College



DeVry University



Everest College



Regency Beauty Institute

Local



Arizona College



Grand Canyon University¹

Community Colleges



Mesa Community College

Stuck in the Middle?

- For-profits competing on convenience
- Four-years competing on reputation
- Community colleges at risk of competing on affordability alone

Four-Year Nonprofits

In-State



Arizona State University



Northern Arizona University

Out-of-Market



Albright College (PA)



Benedictine University (IL)



Upper Iowa University (IA)



Wilkes University (PA)

1) Mesa campus slated to open in fall 2016.

Source: Rivard R, "Go West?," *Inside Higher Ed*, April 2014; Nelson G, "Downtown Mesa Is Getting Its Fourth Liberal Arts School," *AZCentral.com*, July 2012; EAB interviews and analysis.

Career Value Trumps Convenience and Brand

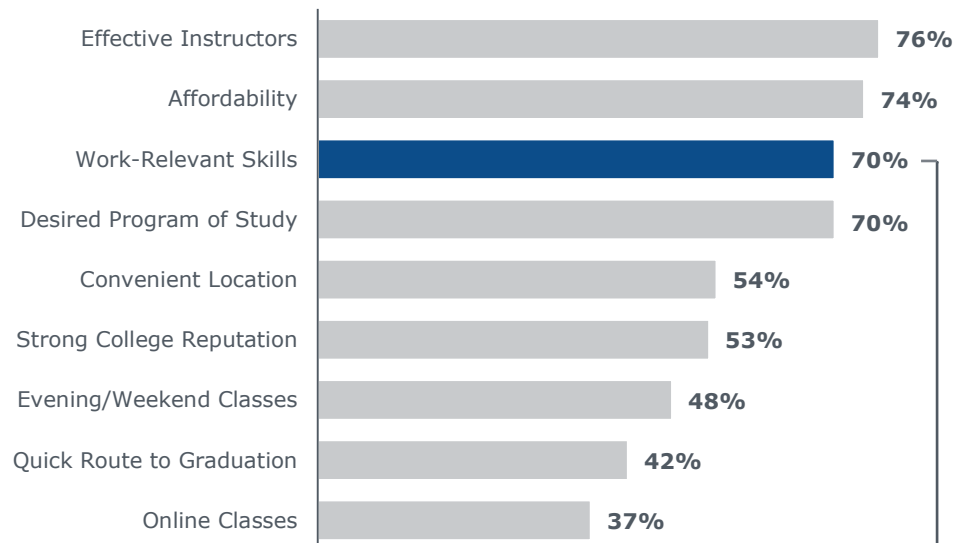
Although all sectors are actively recruiting adult learners, community colleges retain a crucial competitive advantage: career-focused programs aligned with adult learners' priorities. According to a Public Agenda survey on factors impacting school choice, 70% of prospective adult learners consider it "absolutely essential" that their college confer work-relevant skills. In fact, respondents prioritized work-relevant skills over factors such as convenient location, online classes, and strong college reputation—all characteristics that for-profit and four-year universities emphasize in their value proposition.

Compared to these other sectors, community colleges offer unparalleled alignment with local industry demand. After all, community colleges consistently seek employer input on curricula, hire industry practitioners to teach courses, and provide hands-on training in high-demand skills.

Industry Relevance of Greater Importance to Adults' College Decisions

Adult Learners' Top Priorities in School Choice¹

Percentage of Adult Prospective Students Rating Factor as "Absolutely Essential"



Community Colleges Strongest in Local Industry Alignment



Employer input on curriculum design



Courses taught by industry practitioners



Hands-on training in high-demand skills

1) N=803 students age 18-55 who did not enter college straight out of high school.

Source: Hagelskamp C, et al., "Is College Worth It for Me?", Public Agenda, Nov. 2013; EAB interviews and analysis.

An Underleveraged Recruitment Channel

When promoting the career relevance of their programs, community colleges' greatest assets are their employer partnerships. For decades, colleges have maintained employer partnerships to support their workforce development missions. Now they can leverage these partnerships to recruit adult learners. Although adult learners are a dispersed population (especially compared to high school students), they are a captive audience at their places of employment. Moreover, as employers reinvest in training during the current economic recovery, colleges have a growing opportunity to enroll adult learners receiving tuition reimbursement.

However, community colleges' current employer partnerships rarely provide a long-term pipeline of adult learners. Instead, three key barriers prevent prospective students from enrolling. First, working adults are deterred by the cost and complexity of returning to college. Second, few adult learners have time to learn content that lacks relevance to their career goals or duplicates prior learning. Third, job seekers will not invest in training without confidence that it will boost their employability.

Employer Partnerships Present Enrollment Opportunities—and Challenges

Why Recruit Adult Learners Through Employer Partnerships?

Aligned with Our Strengths

Community colleges have a long history of employer partnerships developed to advance workforce development



Reflects Where to Find Adult Learners

Although adult learners are dispersed, they're a captive audience at their workplaces

Positioned for Cyclical Growth

Employers are reinvesting in training and hiring workers as economy rebounds

Why Do Current Employer Partnerships Yield Few Enrollments?

1

Working Adults Deterred from Enrollment



Financial barriers, college anxiety, and cumbersome admissions processes prevent prospective students from retraining

2

Program Options Misaligned with Career Goals



Programs contain content that prospective students don't need for career advancement—or that they've already mastered on the job

3

Job Seekers Question Value of Retraining



Prospective students are unaware or unconvinced that returning to college can boost their employability and long-term career potential

Working Adults Deterred from Enrollment

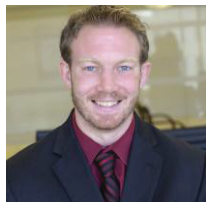
Several factors may deter working adults from enrolling in college, even if they need additional skills for career advancement.

Although most U.S. employers offer tuition reimbursement, many workers who qualify for this benefit cannot afford the up-front cost of enrollment. Because employers typically distribute reimbursement after classes end, students must cover the cost of tuition on their own at the start of the term.

In addition, many working adults face anxieties about returning to college. Those who left school several years ago may question their academic abilities or study skills. Similarly, those with limited college experience may feel intimidated by the campus environment.

Finally, working adults often struggle to complete the enrollment process itself. This complex series of steps—including application, financial aid, advising, and placement testing—may require incoming students to visit campus multiple times during the workday.

Cost and Complexity of Entering College Prevent Workers from Upskilling



Greg

- Earns \$27,000 per year working as a call center agent
- Left college six years ago with some credits, no credential
- Eligible for up to \$5,250/year in tuition reimbursement



High Up-front Costs

Must pay for courses out of pocket until employer reimburses him at end of term

"How can I afford to pay this \$700 bill before my employer reimburses me?"

College Reentry Anxieties

Lacks confidence in academic and college navigation skills after long break from school

"Do I still remember how to study for a test—or write a paper?"

Complex Enrollment Process

Unable to complete lengthy application process on campus while working 9-to-5

"Do I have to take time off work to turn in my application and meet with my advisor?"

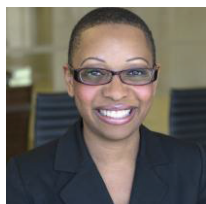
Program Options Misaligned with Career Goals

Beyond facing barriers to enrollment, many prospective students struggle to find college programs that align with their career goals. This discourages adult learners from returning to college because they have so little time to spend on training that lacks professional relevance.

Traditional degree programs often include courses irrelevant to individual students. For example, a business administration degree might not appeal to a corporate sales manager because she does not need economics coursework for her next promotion. In addition, the required courses in sales and customer service management may duplicate content she has already mastered on the job.

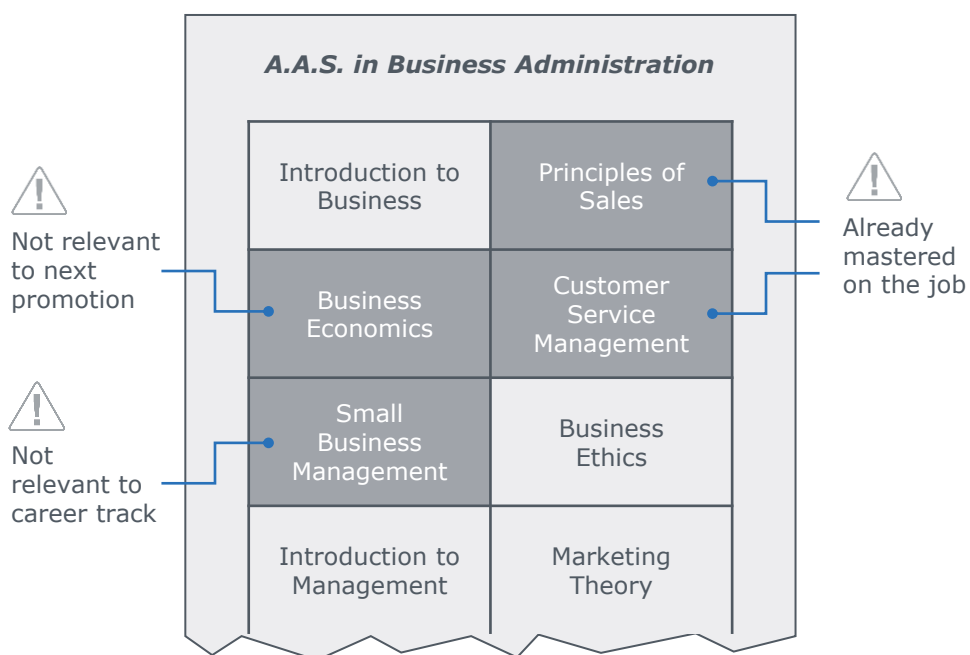
Nearly all adult learners face time constraints due to professional and personal commitments. As a result, they are unlikely to enter—and even less likely to complete—programs that do not provide efficient routes to career advancement.

Too Much Content Irrelevant to Promotion or Redundant with Prior Learning



Donna

- Four years of experience as retail supervisor
- Seeks promotion to marketing manager at corporate office
- Works full time; has two school-age children



Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

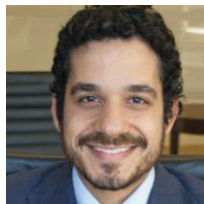
Job Seekers Question Value of Retraining

Of all potential adult learners, unemployed workers have the strongest reason to return to college: they need high-demand skills to find stable jobs. However, with limited resources and an urgent need to find work, many job seekers forgo retraining. Some do not consider college relevant to their needs, while others hesitate to take time out of the job search to retrain. Many job seekers also question whether the investment in retraining will enhance their employability and earning power.

As a result, only an estimated 15% of unemployed workers pursue retraining, according to a survey from the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University. Not only does this limit their employability and job security, but it also leads to talent shortages in high-demand fields. According to a ManpowerGroup survey, 40% of U.S. employers reported difficulty filling open positions in 2014, even as millions of workers were looking for jobs.

If community colleges can convince job seekers of the career value of retraining, they can bridge the gap between employers who need talent and workers who need jobs. In doing so, they can also recruit prospective students who would otherwise opt out of college.

Many Unemployed Workers Forgo Retraining to Pursue Immediate Employment



Jacob

- Eight years of manufacturing experience as unskilled worker
- Searching for job after recent layoff due to plant closure
- Earned high school diploma 10 years ago

Could Go Back to College Now, But...



Doesn't See the Relevance

"My goal is to get back into manufacturing—not to get back into the classroom."



Wants an Immediate Paycheck

"I can't afford to be unemployed. Why should I put my job search on hold to retrain?"



Skeptical of ROI on Retraining

"I don't want to invest my limited time and money in training, only to find out afterward that there are no jobs."

A Lose-Lose Hiring Process

*Job Seekers Lack
High-Demand Skills*

15%

Percentage of unemployed workers who take courses to gain new skills¹

*Employers Lack
Trained Candidates*

40%

Percentage of U.S. employers reporting difficulty filling open positions in 2014²

1) N=350 unemployed workers.
2) N=37,000 employers globally.

Source: Van Horn C, et al, "Left Behind: The Long-Term Unemployed Struggle in an Improving Economy," John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, Sept. 2014; "2014 U.S. Talent Shortage Survey," ManpowerGroup, Sept. 2014; EAB interviews and analysis.

A Road Map for the Study

This study examines three approaches to recruit adult learners through employer partnerships.

The first chapter explores how college leaders can remove the financial and administrative barriers that prevent working adults from enrolling. Topics include tuition reimbursement and noncredit-to-credit bridges.

The second chapter explores program options that allow adult learners to attain their career goals without excess time and effort. Topics include stackable certificates and prior learning assessment.

The third chapter explores how college leaders can facilitate hiring for job seekers to demonstrate the career value of retraining. Topics include speed interviewing events and guaranteed job offers.

Three Approaches to Recapturing Adult Learner Enrollments





Removing Barriers to Enrollment

SECTION

- Practice 1: Deferred Tuition Reimbursement Billing
- Practice 2: Noncredit-to-Credit Course Discount
- Practice 3: Employer-Based Enrollment Advisor

1

Renewed Attention to Tuition Reimbursement

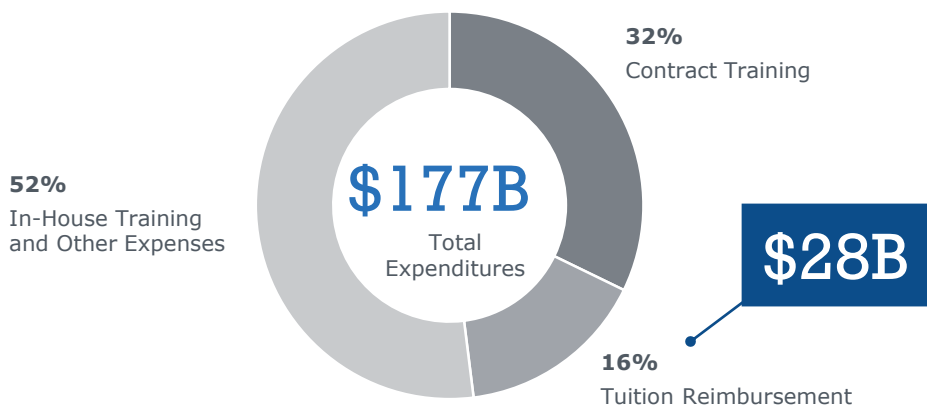
In 2013, U.S. employers spent \$177 billion on formal training for their workers. Of this sum, 16% (or \$28 billion) went toward tuition reimbursement. This common employee benefit covers the cost of training that individual workers complete on their own time.

Although some employers scaled down tuition reimbursement policies during the Great Recession, many have since restored and expanded these benefits. For example, in June 2014, Starbucks began to cover the full cost of two years of study toward an online bachelor's degree at Arizona State University—an offer they expanded in April 2015 to cover all four years of study.

Tuition reimbursement provides employers with more than just a boost in public opinion; it also provides a cost-effective means for workers to advance their skills. Moreover, it allows employers to recruit and retain high-potential workers. Some employers use education benefits to attract job candidates who value further learning. Others offer generous tuition coverage to encourage workers who would otherwise leave the company for college to stay employed while they complete their credential.

Growing Opportunity for Colleges to Enroll Employer-Sponsored Students

U.S. Employer Training Expenditures, 2013



Why Do Employers Invest in Tuition Reimbursement?



Developing Skills for Advancement

Reduces the cost to workers of learning new skills needed for more complex roles at the firm



Recruiting High-Potential Workers

Attracts job seekers with the motivation and aptitude to value further education



Reducing Worker Turnover

Encourages workers to stay with their employer until they complete their education program

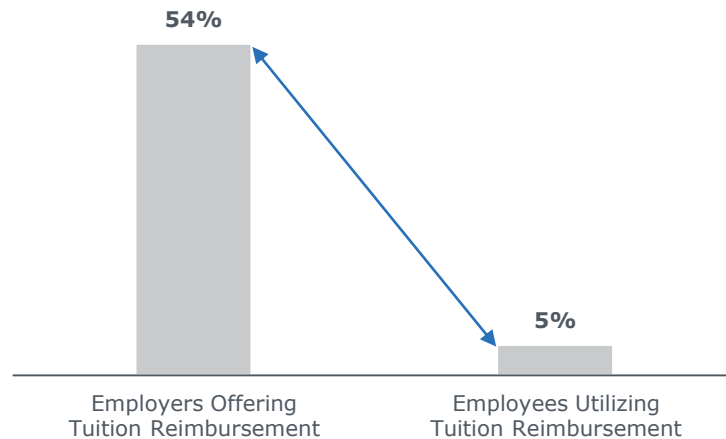
Commonly Available, Yet Rarely Utilized

According to the Society for Human Resource Management, 54% of U.S. employers offered tuition reimbursement in 2014. However, only an estimated 5% of employees take advantage of this benefit. The underutilization of tuition reimbursement represents a missed opportunity for employers to retain and upskill workers, as well as for colleges to enroll students with a third-party funding source.

Many workers who could benefit from an employer-sponsored credential do not pursue one. Some prospective students cannot afford to pay tuition up-front if they must wait until the end of the term for reimbursement. Others worry about their readiness to return to the classroom. Because of work obligations, many also have limited time to travel to campus to complete the enrollment process.

College Costs and Anxieties Prevent Use of Tuition Reimbursement

Money Left on the Table



Reimbursement Alone Not Enough

Adults' Most Common Barriers to Enrollment



Finances: Prospective students choose not to enroll because they cannot afford up-front tuition payment



College Reentry Anxiety: Adults with limited college experience fear entering campus or returning to the classroom



Complex Enrollment Process: Professional obligations prevent adults from visiting campus during workday to complete various steps required for admission

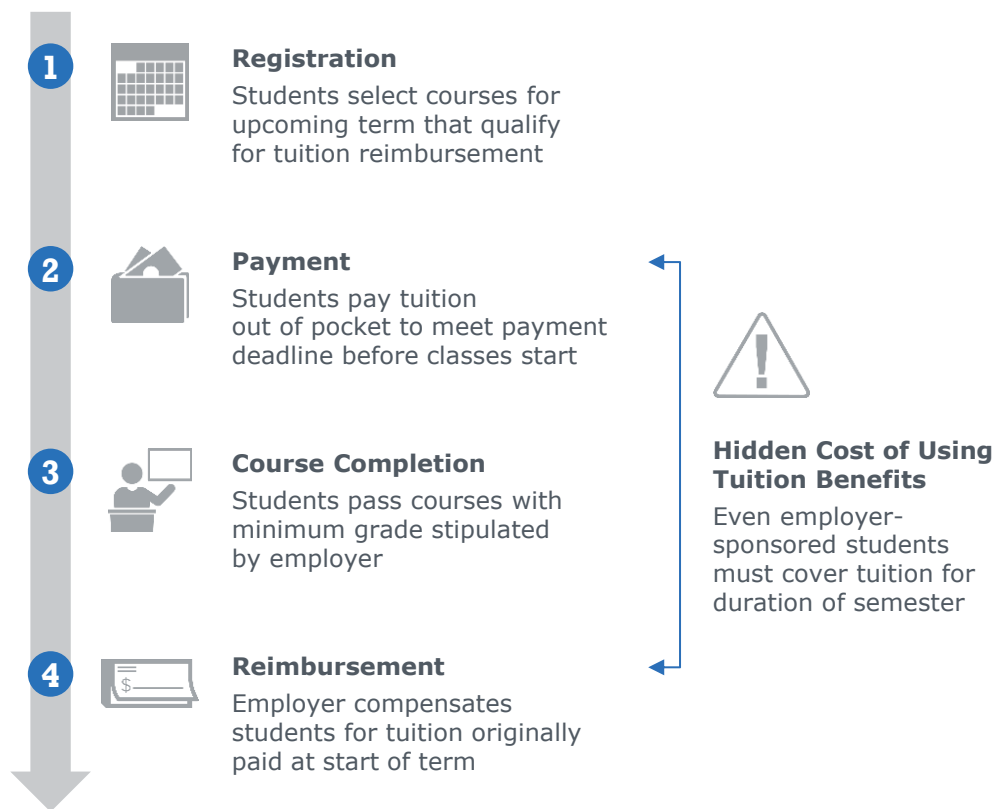
Source: "2014 Employee Benefits," Society for Human Resource Management, June 2014; "An Analysis of Inquiry, Nonstart, and Drop Reasons in Nontraditional University Student Populations," InsideTrack, Nov. 2010; "Why You Should Invest in Tuition Assistance," Chief Learning Officer Media, <http://www.clomedia.com/articles/why-you-should-invest-in-tuition-assistance>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Only a Benefit After the Fact

Even prospective students who receive tuition reimbursement from their employer may face financial barriers to enrollment. Although colleges almost always require students to pay for courses before the term starts, most employers only reimburse for courses after the term ends. In fact, some employers require students to first submit a transcript that demonstrates they have earned satisfactory grades in their courses. As a result, students unable to cover the cost of courses at the start of the term cannot afford to use tuition reimbursement.

Up-front Tuition Costs Deter Employer-Sponsored Workers from Enrolling

Standard Tuition Reimbursement Process



Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Deferred Tuition Reimbursement Billing

To eliminate the up-front costs of using tuition reimbursement, Des Moines Area Community College¹ (DMACC) allows students to defer payment until after the term ends. A qualifying student must submit a promissory note to the college before classes start. Her employer must sign the note to indicate that the company's tuition reimbursement policy covers the applicable courses, and the student must sign the note to confirm that she assumes full responsibility for payment.

Once staff in DMACC's business office receive the promissory note, they extend the student's deadline to pay tuition until 30 days after classes end. This window allows the student to submit her transcript to her employer and receive reimbursement. Afterward, she can pay the college without incurring any financial burden.

DMACC staff advertise the deferred payment plan through on-site education fairs and the college website. Since introducing the plan in spring 2006, the number of students who use tuition reimbursement has grown substantially. As of fall 2014, 170 employer-sponsored students enrolled at the college under the deferred payment plan.

DMACC Allows Workers to Pay After Employers Provide Compensation

Eliminating Out-of-Pocket Costs



1. Promissory Note: Student submits signed note to college guaranteeing payment for registered courses



2. Bill Deferral: Upon receipt of note, college extends student's payment deadline to 30 days after term ends

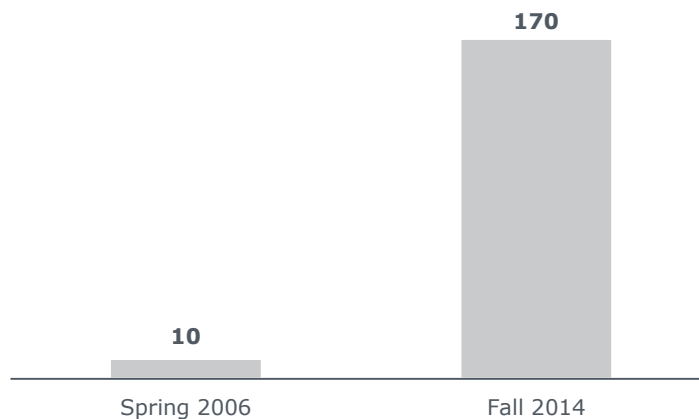


3. Course Completion: Student receives reimbursement from employer after passing courses with satisfactory grade



4. Tuition Payment: After receiving reimbursement, student pays college for courses taken

Enrollments in DMACC's Deferred Payment Plan



See page 63 for a tuition deferral promissory note template.



¹) Located in Ankeny, IA (large suburb); enrolls 20,200 students, 38% full-time.

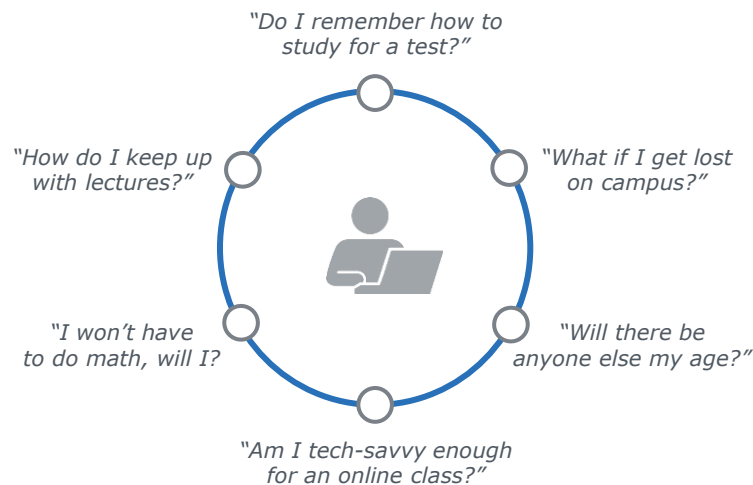
The Psychological Cost of Enrollment

In addition to financial barriers to enrollment, many adult learners must overcome personal anxieties. Incoming students commonly question whether they have the academic ability or study skills to return to the classroom. Some may find the college environment intimidating, while others may worry that they will have no peers on campus.

These anxieties commonly prevent prospective adult learners from enrolling in courses that would benefit their careers. To help these students overcome self-doubt when reentering the classroom, administrators must explore alternate pathways into college that adult learners find less intimidating.

College Reentry Anxiety Common Among Adult Learners

No Shortage of Reasonable Concerns



First Steps Aren't Easy

"We hear all the time from adults that it takes them hours, weeks, even months of sitting in the parking lot to work up enough courage to walk in the door and ask about enrolling."

*Barb Dreger, Director of Marketing
Fox Valley Technical College*

”

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Noncredit-to-Credit Course Discount

Many adult learners who hesitate to enroll in credit-bearing courses find noncredit training more accessible because of the less formal learning environment. In 2010, Snead State Community College¹ introduced an incentive that encourages students to use noncredit training as a bridge to credit-bearing programs.

Students who complete Snead State's noncredit work readiness training qualify for one free three-credit course in a program of their choice. This course serves as a free trial; it allows students to evaluate their readiness for college-level coursework at no financial risk. After students gain confidence in their abilities, they can continue to take courses toward a certificate or degree at the standard tuition rate.

Snead State advertises the free course in their noncredit training brochure, and noncredit instructors routinely discuss the offer with their classes. Over the past four years, over a quarter of the students who have completed the noncredit work readiness training have taken a free three-credit course. These 75 students have since enrolled in over 800 additional paid courses and completed nearly two dozen certificates and degrees at the college.

Snead State Offers Free Three-Credit Course to Noncredit Training Completers

Free Course Allows Students to Build Confidence in College Readiness



Complete Noncredit "Ready to Work" Training

Eight- to ten-week training teaches job search and workplace behavior skills to unemployed and underemployed workers

Receive Free Three-Credit Course

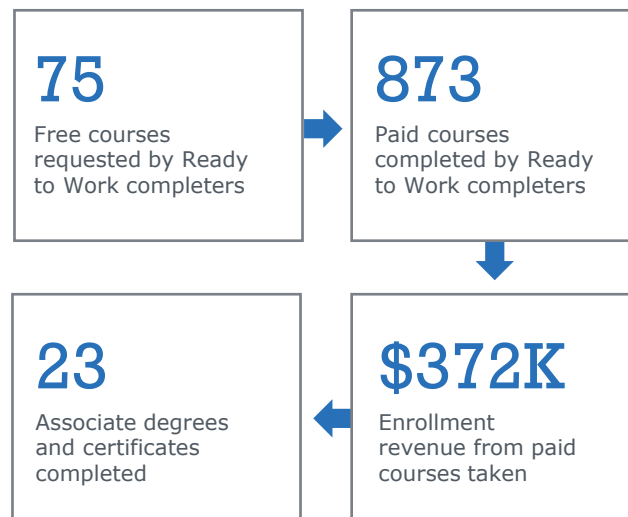
Job seekers who finish Ready to Work receive free course (\$426 value) in field of their choice

Continue Toward Certificate or Degree

Students pay for additional courses after gaining confidence in ability to do college-level work

Small Incentive, High Returns

Program Outcomes at Snead State, 2010-2014



¹) Located in Boaz, AL (distant town); enrolls 2,300 students, 67% full-time.

Navigating the Enrollment Process

For some adult learners, the greatest barrier to enrollment is the enrollment process itself. Incoming students of all ages must navigate a complex series of steps that includes applications, financial aid, advising, and more. Adult learners may face additional challenges when they encounter steps designed around the needs of traditional-age students. For example, the requirement to submit a high school transcript may strike adult learners (many of whom graduated from high school decades earlier) as more difficult to fulfill and less reflective of their current abilities.

Moreover, the enrollment process commonly requires multiple visits to campus. The inconvenience of completing these steps during the workday often deters prospective adult learners from enrolling.

College Admissions Especially Taxing for Working Adults

Challenges Begin Before First Day of Class



Application Process

Admissions steps and terminology remain unclear to adults with limited college experience

"I finished my application online, but I never got a student ID. Have I been admitted, or do I need to fill out the form again?"



Financial Aid

Lengthy and highly technical forms overwhelm adults with requests for information

"I made it through the first page of FAFSA, but I have another 80 questions to go. Where can I find my adjusted gross income?"



Transcript Requests

Adults must track down records from institutions they attended many years ago

"I graduated from high school in 1986 and took two college classes the next year. Do these schools even have my records on file?"



Work Commitments

Professional obligations limit access to student services during the workday

"I took a day off last week to take placement exams, but now I need to meet with my advisor. I can't leave work again for this."

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Employer-Based Enrollment Advisor

To facilitate enrollment for working adults, Gateway Community and Technical College¹ places on-site advisors with key employer partners. Much like college staff who visit employers for education fairs, the on-site advisor helps workers navigate their tuition benefits. However, unlike these other college representatives, the on-site advisor can also help workers complete much of the enrollment process. For example, workers can visit the advisor to complete their online applications, receive assistance with financial aid forms and transcript requests, and register for courses.

Gateway piloted this model with a nearby Citi call center, where an on-site advisor works for 20 hours per week. Since the advisor's introduction in 2003, the number of Citi workers enrolled at Gateway has increased fourfold, to nearly 150 students each year. In addition to generating enrollments for Gateway, the on-site advisor has increased staff retention at Citi's call center by engaging workers in tuition reimbursement. In response to this two-way success, the college has since introduced on-site advisors at several other local employers with large entry-level workforces.

Gateway's On-Site Advisor Helps Adults Enter College Without Leaving Work

Responsibilities of On-Site Advisor



Works 20 hours per week at Citi call center



Introduces new hires to education benefits during company orientation



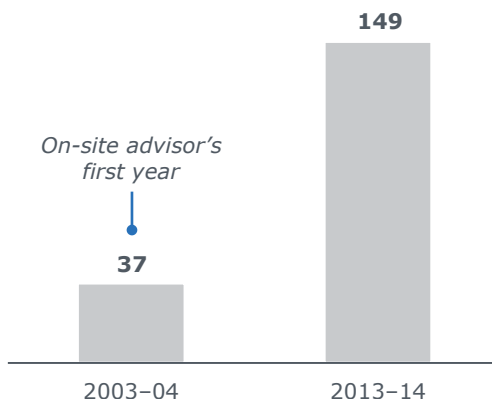
Assists workers with college enrollment process:

- Online applications
- Transcript requests
- Financial aid forms
- Course registration



Promotes services through weekly information table outside cafeteria

Number of Citi Workers Enrolled at Gateway



\$66K

Approximate tuition revenue from Citi workers, 2013-14¹

98

Certificates and degrees completed by Citi workers since fall 2003

See page 64 for guidance on selecting employers to host onsite advisors.



1) Located in Florence, KY (large suburb); enrolls 4,600 students, 32% full-time.

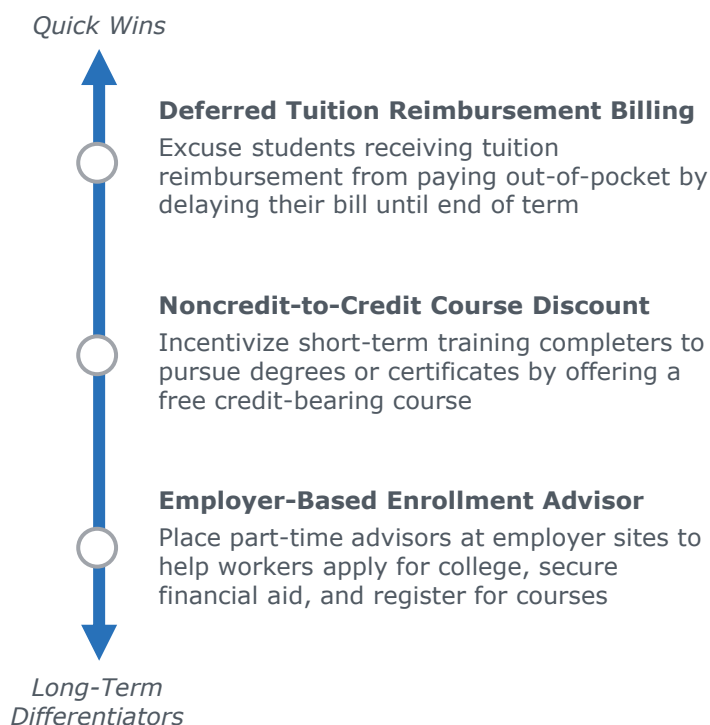
2) Calculation assumes each Citi employee took one three-credit course.

Removing Barriers to Enrollment

The strategies profiled in this section allow colleges to remove the financial, psychological, and administrative barriers that prevent many adult learners from entering college.

In doing so, colleges can increase enrollments from working adults who seek to upgrade their skills. At the same time, by increasing utilization of tuition reimbursement, colleges can help employers increase staff retention and provide students with access to employer-funded training.

Choosing the Right Solutions for Your Campus



The Win-Win-Win

College



Enrolls working adults seeking to enhance their skills through ongoing education

Employer



Expands use of education benefits that promote worker retention

Student



Receives affordable training option that can lead to career advancement

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.



Aligning Program Options with Career Goals

SECTION

2

- Practice 4: Stackable Certificate Career Roadmap
- Practice 5: Centralized Prior Learning Portal
- Practice 6: Corporate Training Credit Crosswalk

Entering an Era of Lifelong Learning

Over the last decade, many industry leaders, public officials, and educators have called attention to the growing importance of lifelong learning. As the pace of technological change accelerates, workers must continuously upgrade their skills to remain current in their fields.

Under this model, the typical worker does not necessarily earn a postsecondary degree at the start of his career. Instead, he may complete a short-term credential to enter the workforce and then pursue additional just-in-time training as his career progresses. This training often includes short-term certificates, professional development seminars, and informal on-the-job learning. Rather than completing his education in one step, he completes it over the course of several years. For much of this time, he must balance the competing commitments of work and learning.

Traditional Degree Gives Way to Continuum of Just-in-Time Training



IMAGE CREDIT: CHANGE.GOV.

A Presidential Call to Action

“This competitive economy is not going to get easier.... There’s going to be the need for you to continually upgrade your skills. It’s all about lifelong learning now, not just a one-time deal.”

Barack Obama, U.S. President

A “Typical” Path for a Manufacturing Worker



Career Readiness Boot Camp

Takes 10-week noncredit course to prepare for entry-level production job

On-the-Job Training

Learns additional skills through hands-on training in first three months of work

Short-Term Certificate

Takes 15 credits in manufacturing technology to move into skilled role

Professional Development

Completes in-house leadership curriculum to move into supervisory role

Source: “Complete text, video of President Obama’s Education Speech,” WISH-TV, <http://wishtv.com/2015/02/06/complete-video-of-president-obamas-education-speech>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Promoting Adult-Centered Program Design

To serve lifelong learners throughout the course of their careers, community colleges must design programs that align with adults' priorities. First and foremost, nearly every adult learner returns to the classroom for career-oriented reasons. According to a survey conducted by Aslanian Market Research, 81% of adult learners primarily enroll in college to start, change, or advance in their careers. Moreover, between the competing commitments of work and family, few adult learners can afford to spend time on learning that does not strictly align with their career goals.

Community colleges are increasingly adopting several adult-centered innovations in program design. These innovations include stackable certificates (short-term credentials that build toward degrees) and prior learning assessment (opportunities to earn credit for learning gained outside the classroom). With these innovations in place, college leaders must now integrate them into enrollment strategy. For example, as more students complete stackable certificates, administrators must encourage graduates to return for full degrees. In addition, administrators must market prior learning assessment to prospective students who currently find it obscure and inaccessible.

Adults Seek Programs Aligned with Career Goals and Time Constraints

Understanding Adult Learner Priorities



Overwhelmingly Motivated by Career Factors

Nearly all adult learners return to college for professional advancement, not personal enrichment



Competing Commitments Leave No Time to Waste

Between work and family commitments, students cannot afford to spend time on training irrelevant to their career goals

81%

Share of adult undergraduates who primarily enroll in college to start, change, or advance in their careers¹

#1

Rank of "competing commitments" among adult learners' top reasons for dropping out of college²

Promising Innovations Raise Strategic Enrollment Questions



*Stackable
Credentials*

How do we encourage certificate completers to return for their next credential?



*Prior Learning
Assessment*

How do we market prior learning assessment to adults who would not enroll without it?

1) N=unknown. Data comes from an Aslanian Market Research survey of students age 25+ in 20 locations nationwide.

2) N=102,000.

Source: Aslanian C, "Adult Students 2013," Aslanian Market Research, July 2013; Drekmeier K and Tilghman C, "An Analysis of Inquiry, Nonstart, and Drop Reasons in Nontraditional University Student Populations," InsideTrack, Nov. 2010; EAB interviews and analysis.

Shifting Toward Short-Term Credentials

Over the last five years, stackable certificates have grown rapidly in popularity. This model allows a student to earn a certificate after she completes a set number of credits (typically 12 to 30), and then apply those credits toward an advanced certificate or degree at a later date. This provides students with interim credentials as they progress toward their degrees. In addition, it offers employers access to a more quickly credentialed workforce, and it gives colleges credit for additional certificate completions.

Although stackable certificates provide numerous advantages, they also present an enrollment challenge for colleges. Once students have completed their first certificates and entered the workforce, how should college administrators persuade them to return for further credentials as their careers progress? This challenge requires that administrators demonstrate how additional credentials will advance workers' careers, as well as position their institution as the best place to pursue those credentials.

Stackable Certificates Create Need to Facilitate Repeat Purchases

Example: Manufacturing Technology—Welding



Three-Way Value Drives Adoption of Stackable Certificates



Student

Counts incremental learning toward long-term degree



Employer

Provides accelerated route to a credentialed workforce



College

Increases completions from short-term credentials

Our Next Challenge: Facilitating the Repeat Purchase



Demonstrating Career Advancement Value

Convincing students of the long-term returns on completing more advanced credentials



Staying Top-of-Mind

Becoming a student's school of choice once they're ready to pursue further training

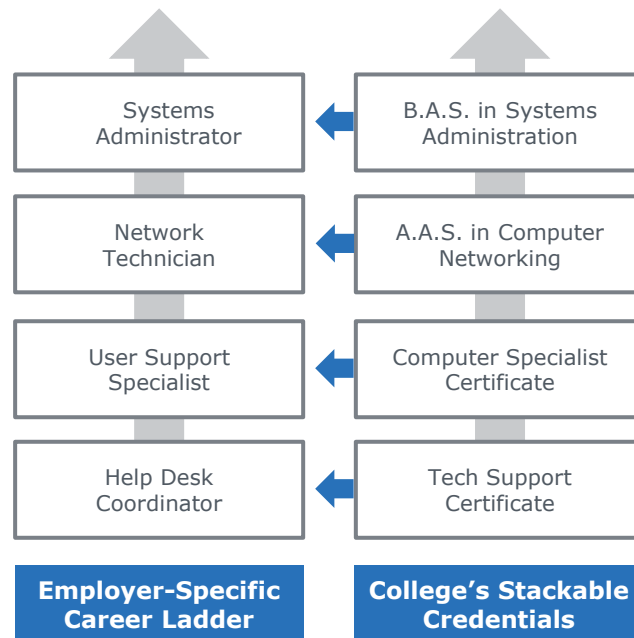
Stackable Certificate Career Road Map

To demonstrate the value of additional credentials, college administrators can work with key employer partners to map career ladders available at the employer to stackable credentials available at the college. For example, a college may develop a road map with an IT firm that indicates that their tech support certificate prepares graduates to work as entry-level help desk coordinators, while their associate's degree prepares graduates for promotion to network technician. Such road maps provide guidance on the most appropriate time in a worker's career to pursue a given credential. Moreover, road maps help workers understand how an additional credential can lead to advancement, which encourages them to return to the college for further training.

By encouraging short-term certificate completers to return for advanced certificates and degrees, college administrators can increase the amount of tuition revenue generated per student. In addition, administrators can support their graduates' long-term career advancement by providing the skills they need for each successive promotion.

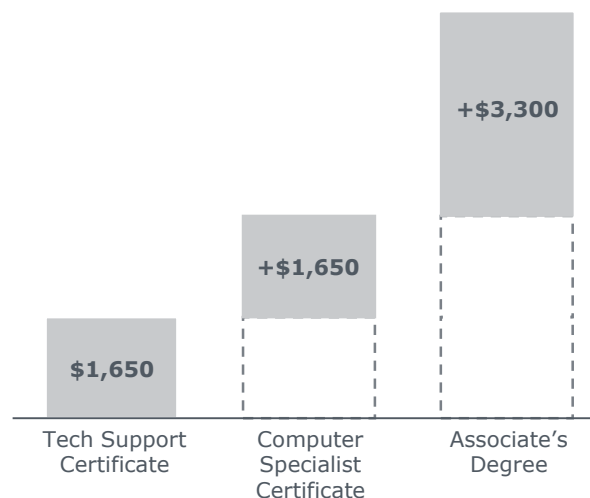
Workers Value Credentials Mapped to Employer-Specific Promotion Opportunities

Sample Road Map: Networking Career Path



Greater Revenue Potential from Repeat Purchase

Estimated Tuition per Student¹



¹) Calculation assumes each credit costs \$110, certificates include 15 credits, and degrees include 30 credits.

New Life for an Old Idea

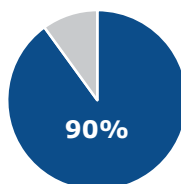
Stackable certificates appeal to adult learners partly because students can complete them in an accelerated time frame. Prior learning assessment (PLA) offers another opportunity to accelerate completion for adult learners. Most community colleges already offer several options to earn credit for college-level learning completed outside the classroom. Common options include standardized exams, faculty-designed challenge exams, and portfolio reviews.

In theory, prior learning assessment should assist with adult learner recruitment. However, most prospective adult learners lack awareness of PLA because current policies are poorly marketed. Moreover, those who are aware of PLA rarely utilize it because they cannot navigate the relevant policies. Many colleges lack a single comprehensive resource that provides information on all assessment options, and existing resources often include administrative jargon that students find intimidating or inscrutable.

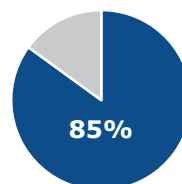
Prior Learning Assessment Well-Established but Underutilized

Multiple Forms of Assessment Common

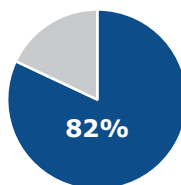
Percentage of Community Colleges Offering Various Types of PLA



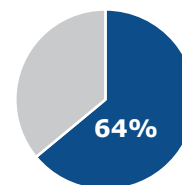
CLEP¹



Challenge Exams



Military Credit



Portfolio Assessment

Available, Yet Not Accessible

“Prior learning assessment isn’t promoted at our colleges. There’s no one place you can go to for information on all the credit for prior learning options. It’s everywhere—our senate rules, our policies, our catalog—in pieces and parts. And it isn’t at all student-friendly. Our charge is to take it out of academic language, put it in easily understood language, and then use it as a recruitment tool for adults.”

*Director for Workforce Solutions
Community College System*

See page 65 for a comparison of different forms of prior learning assessment.

1) College Level Examination Program.

Centralized Prior Learning Portal

In February 2015, the Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges launched College Credit Fast Track, a statewide portal to standardize and streamline the prior learning assessment process for students. This portal serves as a centralized resource on all assessment options, including portfolios, standardized exams, and military transcripts. In addition, it provides a platform for students to build and share portfolios for review.

Pennsylvania's community colleges garnered local media coverage of the portal's launch to attract attention to prior learning assessment more broadly. News stories reached prospective adult learners who were previously unaware of the policy. Several colleges hosted on-campus information sessions for these prospective students to provide further information on prior learning assessment and the enrollment process.

Within one month of the portal's launch, over 200 users across the state had created accounts to build portfolios. Most of these users were prospective adult learners—adults aged 35 to 55 who were not currently enrolled in Pennsylvania's community colleges.

Pennsylvania's New Platform Makes Policies Accessible to Prospective Adult Learners

The First Statewide PLA Portal



Launched in February 2015 to standardize and streamline prior learning assessment practices across 14 community colleges

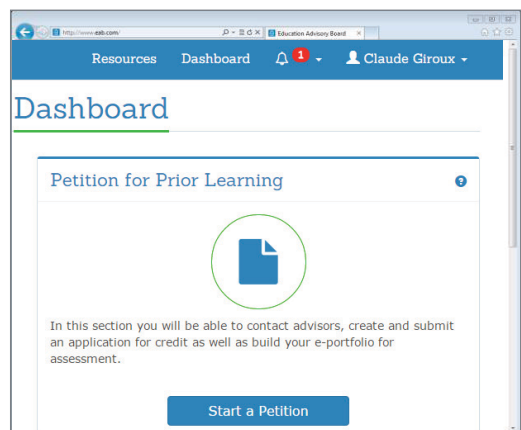


IMAGE CREDIT: CCFASTTRACK.ORG

Benefits of a Centralized Resource



Student-Facing Instructions: Aggregates information on all forms of PLA in language students understand



Streamlined Portfolio Review: Provides shared platform for students to build and faculty to review e-portfolios



Promotional Opportunity: Launch accompanied by news stories and on-campus events publicizing PLA

200

Number of active users (primarily prospective students age 35-55) one month after launch

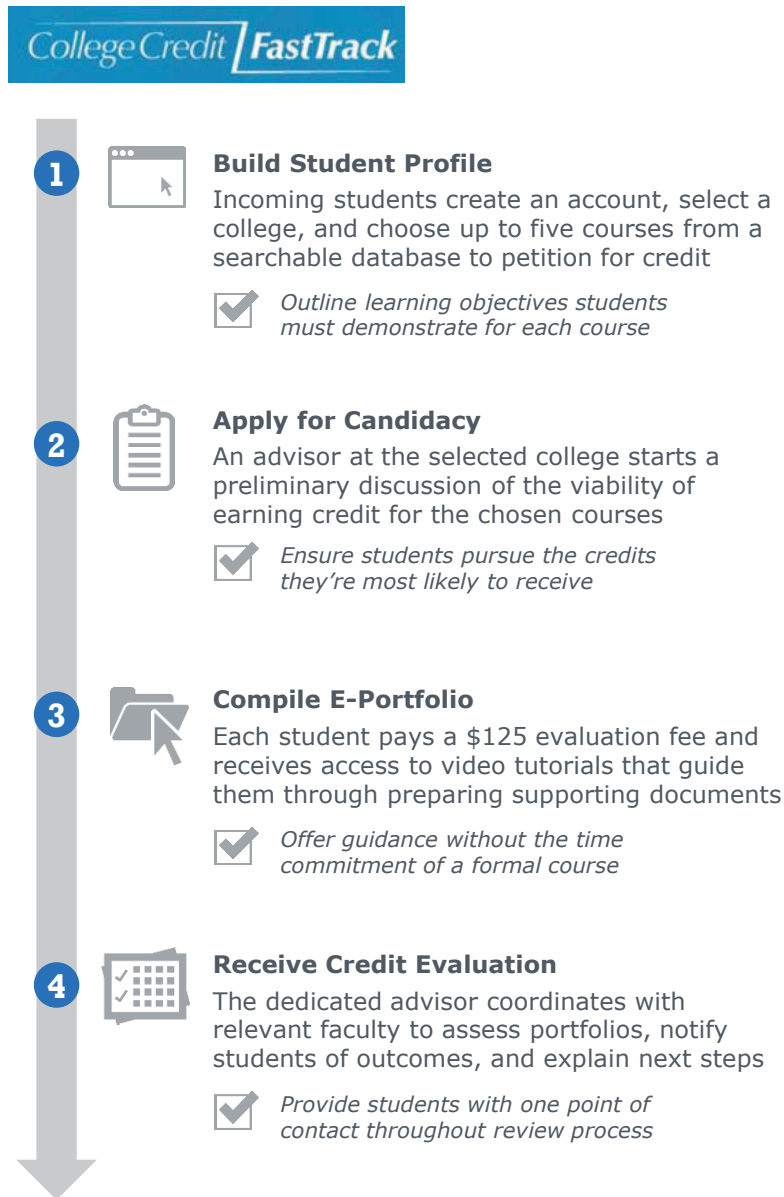


No Longer an Arcane Process

One of College Credit Fast Track's primary goals is to make portfolio assessment more accessible for students. Currently, few students pursue credit through portfolios, a relatively complex and time-consuming form of prior learning assessment. However, portfolios provide a unique opportunity to demonstrate professional skills such as public speaking and leadership, which can be difficult to convey through standardized exams or transcripts.

College Credit Fast Track aims to streamline the portfolio assessment process and provide students with the necessary guidance to complete it. After creating an account, students can search a database to identify courses that align with their prior experience. Before the student begins to compile her portfolio, an advisor contacts her to discuss the viability of getting credit for each of her selected courses. This advisor then serves as the student's primary contact for the evaluation process.

Platform Streamlines Portfolio Assessment for Incoming Students



Source: "How It Works," Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges, <https://www.ccfasttrack.org/Home/HowItWorks>; EAB interviews and analysis.

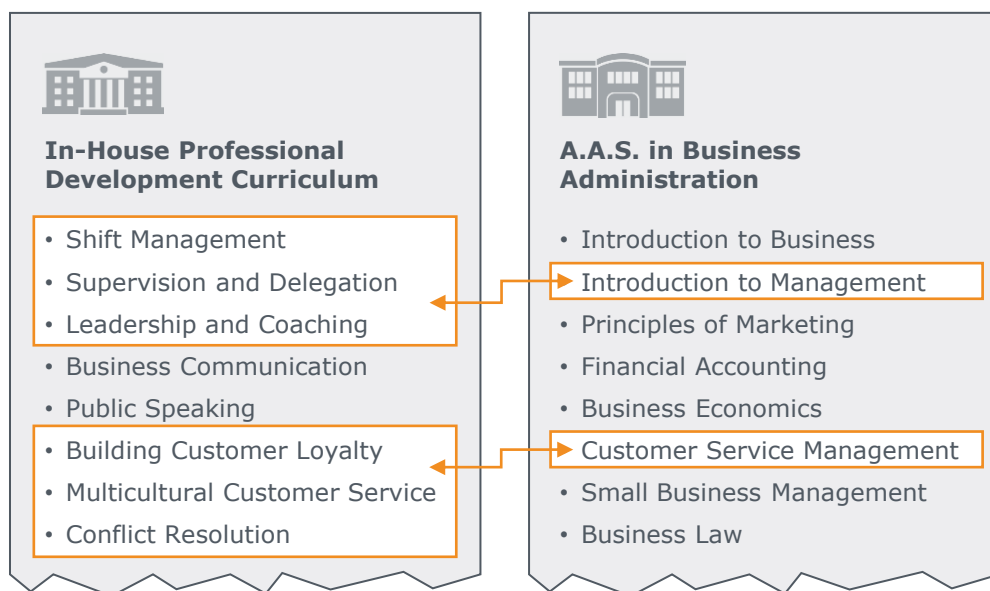
Reducing Duplication of Effort

A centralized portal can streamline the prior learning assessment process, but most incoming students must still complete exams or portfolios to earn credit. While these assessments are necessary to demonstrate prior learning completed in informal settings, they may seem redundant to students who have completed formal training programs outside the classroom.

Many large employers offer formal training programs in-house to help workers upskill and advance into new positions. Often, these trainings include content that overlaps with college coursework. For example, a retail company may require new supervisors to complete standardized training modules in shift management, delegation, and leadership—topics commonly taught in college-level management courses. Robust in-house training programs require students to demonstrate mastery of a set of learning outcomes upon completion. A worker who completes such a training may wish to enroll in college if he can get credit for it. However, he may question the need to prepare a portfolio or take an additional exam.

Emerging Need to Facilitate Credit for Students Who Complete Formal Corporate Training

Common Overlap Between On-the-Job and Classroom Curricula



No Less Rigorous Than Classroom Learning

Characteristics of Leading In-House Corporate Training Programs

- ☒ Curriculum standardized across sites
- ☒ Trainees assessed on defined set of learning outcomes
- ☒ Evaluated for credit by third-party organization (e.g., ACE, NCCRS¹)

1) American Council on Education, National College Credit Recommendation Service.

Corporate Training Credit Crosswalk

Students who complete formal corporate training programs can benefit from crosswalks that directly map their training to college credits. Ivy Tech Community College¹ maintains such a crosswalk with McDonald's. In 2014, Ivy Tech's faculty curriculum committee mapped the learning outcomes of McDonald's Hamburger University trainings to those of Ivy Tech's courses. The resulting crosswalk allows Hamburger University trainees to earn up to 21 credits toward Ivy Tech's online degrees in business administration or general studies.

Ivy Tech administrators created a dedicated landing page for McDonald's employees to submit an online application. Incoming students only need to submit their Hamburger University transcript to earn credits; they do not need to complete any additional assessments. An advisor trained to navigate the crosswalk processes the credits and guides students through the rest of the enrollment process.

Ivy Tech Pre-approves Credits for McDonald's Management Modules

In-House Corporate Training Mapped to College Courses

 McDonald's Training	 Ivy Tech Course
• Dept. Management • Guest Service • Kitchen Functional • Intro to Management • Dept. Manager Capstone	BUSN 101 Introduction to Business
• Shift Management • Operations Supervisor • Dept. Management • Intro to Management	BUSN 165 Techniques of Supervision
• ServSafe • Shift Management	HOSP 101 Sanitation and First Aid

Crosswalk Streamlines Credit Conferral for Students

- 1 Complete Online Application**
 Ivy Tech provides a dedicated landing page for McDonald's employees to fill out their application and learn about financial aid
- 2 Submit McDonald's Transcript**
 Incoming students send ACE transcript of completed Hamburger University modules to a specialized advisor trained to interpret the credit crosswalk
- 3 Receive Credit for Training**
 Hamburger University trainings are worth up to 21 credits toward an Ivy Tech degree or certificate in business administration or general studies

See page 66 for guidance on what makes an employer suitable for a credit crosswalk.

1) Located in Indianapolis, IN (large city); enrolls 98,800 students, 35% full-time.

Source: "Crosswalk: McDonald's Corporation Training and Ivy Tech Community College," Ivy Tech Community College, Nov. 2014; EAB interviews and analysis.

Generating Leads, Accelerating Attainment

Because Ivy Tech offers its business administration and general studies degrees online, McDonald's employees from across the United States can take advantage of the credit crosswalk. To recruit students nationally, Ivy Tech staff routinely attend education fairs on Hamburger University's campus in Oak Brook, Illinois. At each fair, they set up an information table that includes a laptop displaying the credit crosswalk, as well as inquiry cards for prospective students to complete.

After five months of recruitment, Ivy Tech received 140 inquiries from McDonald's employees seeking further information on enrollment. Moreover, 75% of these inquiries came from out-of-state students, which indicates that this partnership helps the college reach a broader geographic market.

Furthermore, students who enrolled in the program during its first two semesters brought in an average of 14 credits from Hamburger University. By accelerating their time to completion, administrators intend to increase the likelihood that these workers will earn college credentials.

Credit Crosswalk Builds Pipeline of Prospective Students Likely to Complete

Integrated into Student Recruitment Process



Education Fairs: Ivy Tech representatives set up information tables at events hosted on-site at Hamburger University



Crosswalk Display: At information tables, employees can browse the crosswalk on a laptop to see how many credits they qualify for



Inquiry Cards: Employees interested in further information on Ivy Tech's programs leave behind contact information



Outreach from Advisors: Ivy Tech staff contact employees who submit inquiry cards to guide them through enrollment process

A National Enrollment Pipeline

140

Number of inquiries generated during first five months of recruitment

75%

Approximate share of inquiries coming from out-of-state students

14

Average number of credits incoming students bring in from Hamburger University trainings

Aligning Program Options with Career Goals

The strategies profiled in this section recruit prospective adult learners to college programs that align with both their professional goals and their busy lives. These strategies encourage short-term certificate completers to pursue further credentials that advance their careers, and they attract working adults by awarding credits for college-level learning completed outside the classroom.

Most adult learners have limited time outside of their professional and personal commitments, so they are unlikely to begin—and even less likely to complete—programs that do not advance their careers. By guiding them toward training that aligns with their goals, colleges improve their ability to recruit adult learners and retain them until completion.

Choosing the Right Solutions for Your Campus



The Win-Win-Win

College



Recruits and retains working adults in programs aligned with career goals

Employer



Gains accelerated options to upskill current workers for promotion

Student



Completes only those courses relevant and necessary to advance their careers

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.



Facilitating the Hiring Process

SECTION

3

- Practice 7: Community-Based Career Boot Camps
- Practice 8: Class-Wide Speed Interviewing
- Practice 9: Training-Based Job Screen
- Practice 10: Guaranteed Employment Offer
- Practice 11: Employer-Sponsored Degree Completion

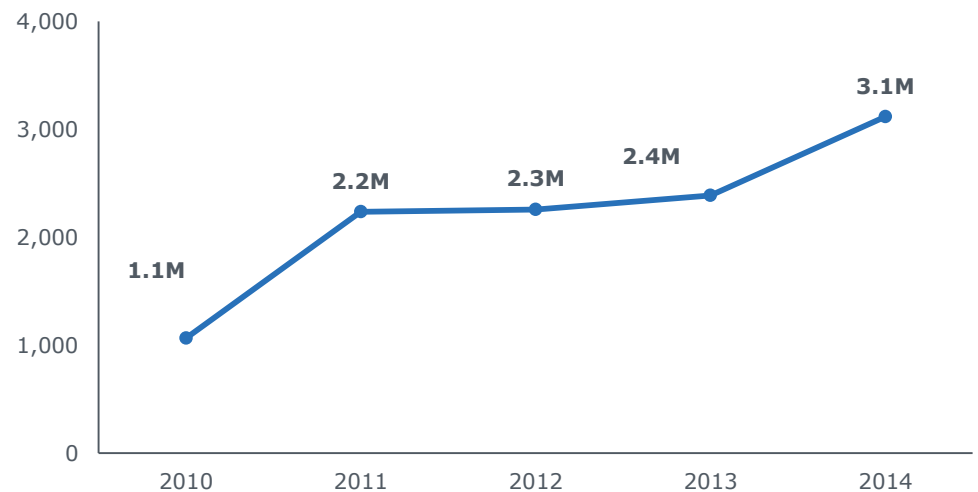
Hiring Budgets Grow as Job Market Expands

As the U.S. economy emerges from the Great Recession, the job market is finally expanding. In 2014, employers added 3.1 million new jobs nationwide—a 30% increase from the prior year.

This increase in hiring activity comes at no small cost to employers. Not only must they fill more open positions, but also they must compete for talent with other firms in their industry. Currently, U.S. employers spend over \$110 billion on talent acquisition each year. This large sum covers a wide range of expenses, including recruitment firms, corporate branding, social networking, and assessment tools.

Economic Recovery Sees Employers Spending More on Talent Acquisition

Number of New U.S. Jobs Created Annually



Corporate Hiring Expenses Rival Training Budgets

\$110B Amount companies spend annually on talent acquisition, including:



Recruiters



Corporate branding



Social networking



Assessment tools

Source: O'Leonard K, *2011 Talent Acquisition Factbook*, Bersin by Deloitte, Nov. 2011; "Employment, Hours, and Earnings from the Current Employment Statistics Survey," Bureau of Labor Statistics, http://data.bls.gov/timeseries/CES0000000001?output_view=net_1mth; EAB interviews and analysis.

Many Job Seekers Still Searching

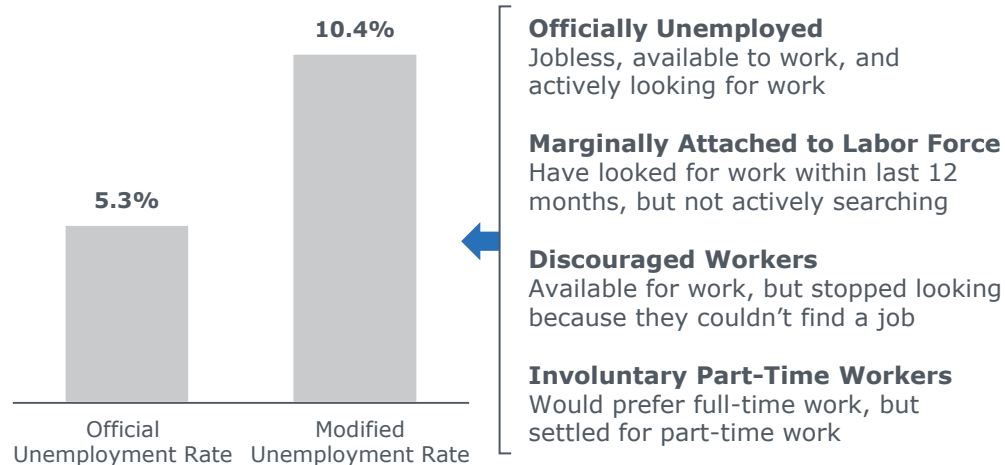
Despite the uptick in hiring, millions of workers are still unable to find jobs. Because the official unemployment rate includes only individuals actively seeking work, it understates the magnitude of this challenge. In particular, it excludes workers who stopped looking for a job because they could not find one, as well as workers who settled for part-time jobs in the absence of full-time work. As of May 2015, the official unemployment rate was only 5.3%. However, 11.3% of the labor force met a more inclusive definition of joblessness.

In response, several private-sector start-ups have emerged to connect these workers with employers. Some of these hiring intermediaries, such as LearnUp, offer customized training to a given employer's job candidates. A few intermediaries, such as CPG Camp, allow candidates to pair this training with job search assistance through résumé reviews and mock interviews. Other intermediaries, such as Elance, offer assessments that allow employers to screen candidates for skills, aptitude, or fit.

Official Unemployment Rate Understates Labor Market Mismatch

Alternative Measures of Unemployment

United States, May 2015



A Market Emerges for Hiring Intermediaries



Customized Pre-hire Training

- Job candidates complete company-specific online trainings before receiving interview offer
- Employer partners include Gap Inc., AT&T, Staples



Job Search Skills Booster

- Mock interviews and résumé reviews (priced separately) supplement self-paced marketing boot camp
- Completers hired by Avon, Nestle, General Mills



Assessment-Based Candidate Profiles

- Freelance designers and programmers create public profiles based on skills test performance
- 800+ companies have access to freelancers' profiles

Source: "Alternative Measures of Labor Underutilization," Bureau of Labor Statistics, <http://www.bls.gov/lau/stalt.htm>; "A Well-Funded Startup Emerges from the Unemployment Lines," *Wired*, Aug. 2012; "CPG Camp Services," CPG Camp, <http://www.cpgcamp.com/services/>; "One in Three U.S. Workers is a Freelancer," *Wall Street Journal*, Sept. 2014; EAB interviews and analysis.

Colleges Ideally Positioned to Broker Hiring

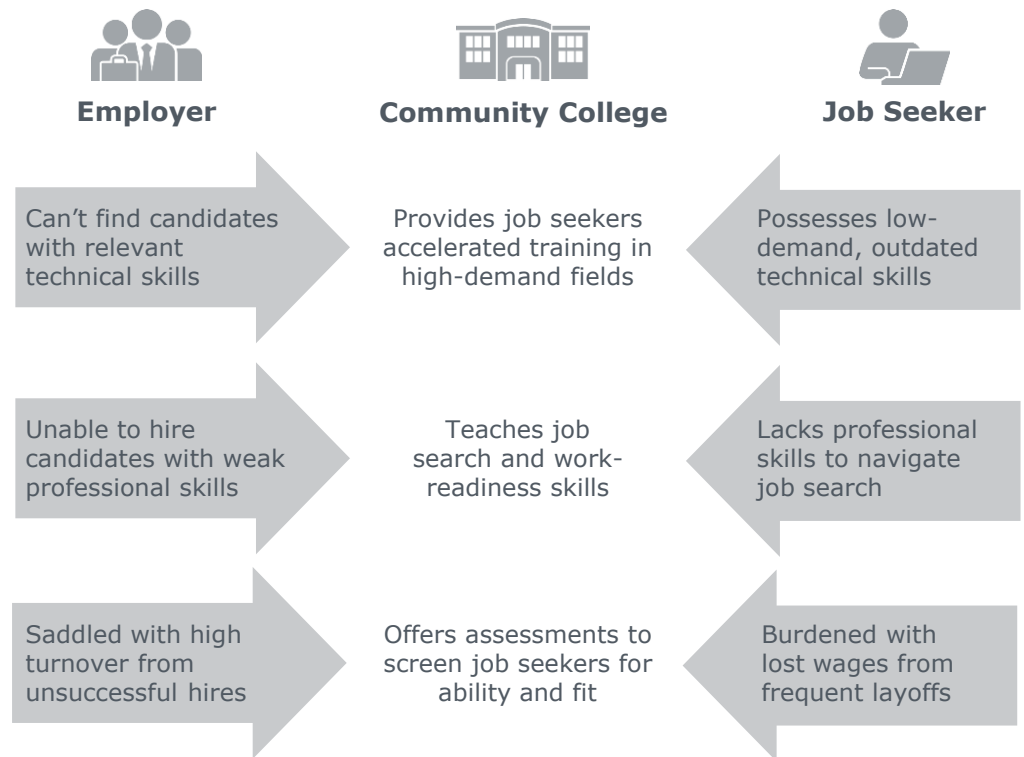
The emergence of hiring start-ups suggests a growing market for services that connect employers seeking talent with workers seeking jobs.

Community colleges are ideally positioned to provide these services because they offer accelerated training in high-demand skill sets. These short-term programs allow job seekers to rapidly update their skills to align with employer demand.

In addition to retraining workers, community college programs can assist workers with the hiring process. After all, instructors already teach the professional skills that workers need to navigate the job search and adapt to a new workplace.

Finally, college administrators can draw on their expertise in assessment to help employers evaluate job candidates. Assessments that screen candidates for ability and fit can streamline the hiring process and reduce the risk of future turnover.

Accelerated Training Removes Roadblocks for Employers and Job Seekers Alike



Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Making the Case for Reskilling

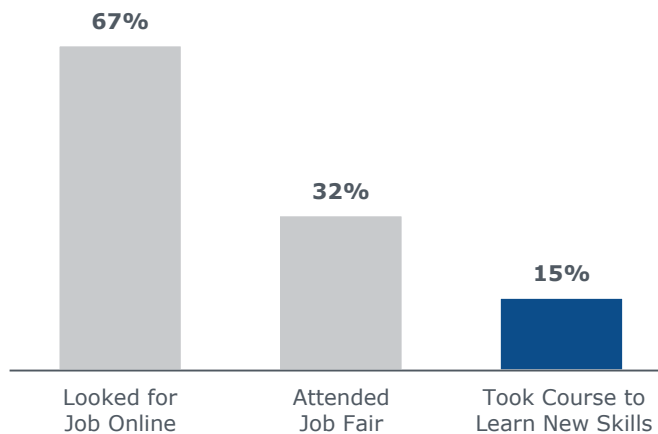
To resolve the mismatch between employers' needs and job seekers' skills, college leaders must first guide job seekers toward training in high-demand fields. In a survey of unemployed workers conducted by the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University, only 15% of respondents took a course to learn new skills. Instead, most unemployed workers reenter the job market with the same skills they had before their layoff. Not only does this make it challenging to find work, but it also limits workers' long-term job security.

Some dislocated workers reenter the job market without retraining because they need an immediate source of income. However, many other workers forgo retraining because they question the return on investment. Given the direct cost and opportunity cost of returning to college as an adult learner, these workers need assurance that retraining will benefit their careers.

Many Job Seekers Bypass Further Training Despite Long-Term Returns

New Skills Take Backseat to Job Search

Percentage of Job Seekers Participating in Select Activities in Last 12 Months¹



Why Do Workers Forgo Retraining?



Career Relevance Unclear

Job seekers lack awareness of college-based training programs that align with career goals



Need Immediate Paycheck

In the short run, job seekers would prefer to earn income rather than pay tuition



Skeptical of ROI

Job seekers question whether investing time and money in retraining will enhance employability

¹) N=350 unemployed workers.

Community-Based Career Boot Camps

At the height of the Great Recession, Lorain County Community College¹ (LCCC) demonstrated the value of retraining through career decision boot camps. These three-hour sessions helped dislocated workers select a new career path and identify relevant retraining options. While many colleges offer career decision support on-campus for current students, LCCC staff wanted to bring this service into the community to reach prospective students. Accordingly, they hosted many sessions at the one-stop career center operated by their local workforce investment board. This venue allowed them to reach a large audience of dislocated workers who would not have considered returning to college otherwise.

During the boot camp, attendees completed a personality assessment that matched them to potential careers, and then received access to online resources that allowed them to research these careers. After participants selected a career path, they returned to meet with a career specialist, who helped them identify and enroll in relevant training programs at LCCC.

LCCC's Off-Campus Workshops Connect Retraining to Employment Goals

Career Decision Boot Camp



- **Purpose:** To identify a new career path and relevant retraining options
- **Audience:** Dislocated workers who may be unable or hesitant to visit campus
- **Locations:** workforce investment board's one-stop career center, on-campus

Boot Camp Agenda and Next Steps

- 1 **Career Assessment:** Take a personality and values assessment to identify potential career choices
- 2 **Labor Market Research:** Conduct guided online research on career demand, salary, and responsibilities
- 3 **One-on-One Consultation:** Meet with career specialist to evaluate career choice and explore training
- 4 **Enrollment:** Enter best-fit training program

See pages 67–72 for further boot camp activity suggestions and a comparison of career assessment vendors.

1) Located in Elyria, OH (small city); enrolls 12,300 students, 28% full-time.

Creating a Pipeline of Employable Graduates

Across the first three years that LCCC hosted career decision boot camps, over 2,000 unemployed and underemployed workers attended. During this same time frame, 458 boot camp attendees went on to enroll in the college. For many of these incoming students, the boot camp demonstrated the value of returning to college for further training. Additionally, it guided students toward enrollment in relevant LCCC programs instead of leaving them to identify their own retraining options.

Because these incoming students understood how training aligned with their career goals, they were more likely than the general population to finish their course of study. Nearly 40% of boot camp attendees who enrolled at LCCC went on to complete a certificate or degree within three years. Most of these completers found job placements in high-demand fields, such as information technology and manufacturing.

Boot Camp Participants Likely to Enroll, Complete, and Find Work

Outcomes from LCCC’s Boot Camp During First Three Years



Placements Concentrated in High-Demand Fields



Information Technology



Manufacturing



Office Support



Sales

Source: Jim Shanahan, "Serving Adult Workers Who Lost Jobs During the Great Recession," Nov. 2013; EAB interviews and analysis.

Class-Wide Speed Interviewing

After workers complete retraining, they may still face a daunting job search. To ease this process, Bossier Parish Community College¹ (BPCC) hosts a speed interviewing event for students in their advanced manufacturing and mechatronics certificate.²

During the week of program graduation, seven to nine local manufacturing employers visit campus for one day. In the morning, participating employers receive and review the résumés of each graduating student. Then, they conduct 15-minute interviews with every student; each employer remains stationed in one room, while the students rotate among the rooms. Following the event, employers invite promising candidates to their sites for second-round interviews.

This one-day event has a dramatic impact on student outcomes. During the 2014–15 academic year, 30 of the 66 program graduates accepted job offers with employers met through speed interviewing. Not only does this model help graduates find employment, but it also helps prospective students understand the value of enrollment. Program staff consistently discuss the speed interviewing event with prospective students to demonstrate how enrolling in BPCC's program can improve their job search outcomes.

BPCC Arranges First-Round Interviews to Jump-Start Hiring for Program Graduates

A Matchmaking Event for Graduates



One-Day Event: Employers visit campus during week of program graduation to interview advanced manufacturing students

Round-Robin Format: Each employer remains in one room for the day, while students rotate among the rooms

Immediate Callbacks: Many participating students receive second-round interview offer within 24 hours of event

7–9

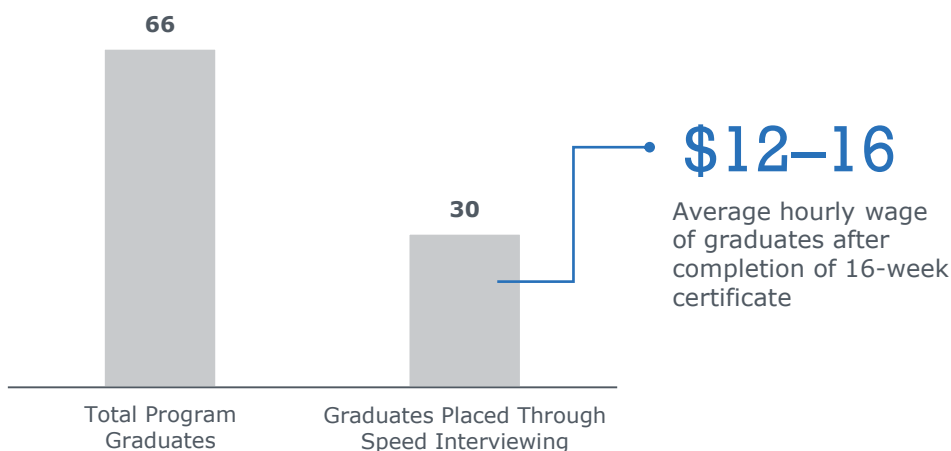
Number of participating employers per event

15

Length in minutes of each first-round interview

Single Channel Drives Job Placement

Outcomes from Advanced Manufacturing and Mechatronics Certificate, 2014–15



See pages 73–77 for guidance on launching a speed interviewing event.

1) Located in Bossier City, LA (small city); enrolls 8,500 students, 59% full-time.

2) Developed with Department of Labor's TAACCCT3 grant for Advanced Manufacturing, Mechatronics, and Quality Consortium.

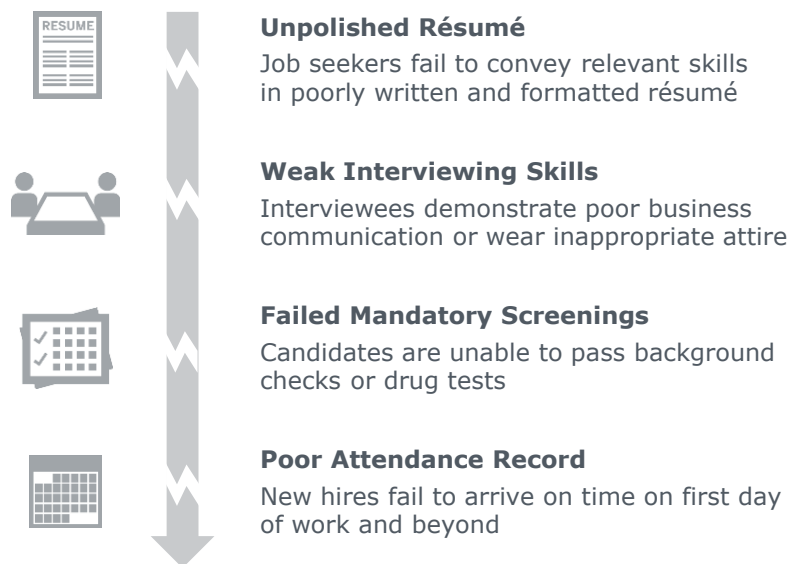
In Need of an Alternative to Résumés

By introducing graduates to multiple potential employers at once, speed interviewing increases the likelihood of a job offer. However, to secure the job offer, graduates still need professional skills to navigate the job search. Without these skills, they may fail to convey relevant training and work experience in their résumé, or they may demonstrate weak business communication skills in their interview.

These common missteps in the job search process present a challenge for employers as well as job seekers. Employers who need to hire a large volume of candidates find it costly to sift through thousands of résumés only to extend a few job offers. The difficulty of talent acquisition may limit an employer's productivity or, in extreme cases, threaten the profitability of operating in its current location.

Traditional Application Process Screens Out High-Potential Candidates

Missteps in Hiring Process



Leaky Talent Acquisition Pipeline

“Local employers like the area but are sometimes concerned about finding qualified candidates. One employer had access to over 28,000 résumés and picked 2,000 for further review. From those 2,000 résumés, they interviewed 200 people. From those 200 people, they hired 60. But three weeks later, they only had 20 workers left. Their message to local leaders was, ‘We can’t afford to keep looking for workers in the area if we lose over two-thirds before we finish training them.’”

*John Churchill, Executive Director of Workforce Development
Southwest Tennessee Community College*

Training-Based Job Screen

In 2012, Southwest Tennessee Community College¹ created an alternative hiring process for entry-level manufacturing jobs that does not rely on résumés. Employers that participate in the college's Industrial Readiness Training program (IRT) customize a five-week noncredit training program to reflect the technical skills and soft skills they seek in new workers. These employers receive access to student performance records, including their scores on career readiness and mechanical aptitude assessments. Employers may also observe students in class to evaluate their professional skills. At the end of the training, employers select students to interview based on their performance.

In the last three years, this program has graduated over 1,000 students, many of them sponsored by the local workforce investment board. Approximately 80% of graduates have found jobs with employer partners, who consider the program a more efficient means to screen candidates than the traditional application process. In response to the program's success, the college is partnering with an economic development organization to replicate the model in other industries with entry-level hiring needs, beginning with retail and logistics.

Southwest Tennessee Invites Employers to Hire Based on Class Performance

Industrial Readiness Training Program



Customized Curriculum

Employers design a five-week training program to reflect the technical and professional skills demanded



First Step Toward Hiring

Employers offer job interviews to students who meet performance expectations



Professional Expectations

Students must adhere to workplace standards, including attendance and dress code



Employer-Facing Assessments

College shares student assessments and attendance reports with employer

Strong Program Outcomes Inspire Statewide Replication

1,040 Students who have completed program since 2012

\$1M Total training revenue from enrolled students, paid in part by workforce investment board

80% Approximate job placement rate for program completers



Plans to replicate program across Tennessee—and expand into retail and logistics

See page 78 for a rubric to assess professional skills in short-term training programs.



1) Located in Memphis, TN (large city); enrolls 10,800 students, 44% full-time.

Guaranteed Employment Offer

While successful workforce training programs often lead to job interviews, an organization called WorkAmerica seeks to go one step further. This start-up aims to offer graduates not just an interview but a guaranteed placement.

WorkAmerica partners with community colleges to find employers willing to hire any student who graduates from select training programs in high-demand fields such as welding and commercial truck driving. Because these employers pay WorkAmerica for their recruiting services, partnership is free to the college. The employers may review and suggest revisions to the college's curriculum to ensure that it meets their needs. They may also screen students through background checks, drug tests, and interviews. However, all screening must occur before classes begin to ensure that incoming students have a job offer before they invest time or money in retraining.

Prospective students become more likely to enroll in training if they feel confident in their employment outcomes. In the first three months after Anne Arundel Community College¹ began to guarantee jobs to completers of its Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training program, enrollments increased by 38% as more students clearly understood the value of retraining.

WorkAmerica Secures Job Placements Before Students Begin Training

A Start-Up Tackles the Hiring Gap

WorkAmerica



Matching Graduates to Employers

Launched in 2014 to connect short-term training completers with hard-to-fill job openings



Guaranteed Jobs upon Completion

Partners with two-year colleges to broker job offers in commercial driving, welding, and select allied health fields



Pre-screening Before Class Starts

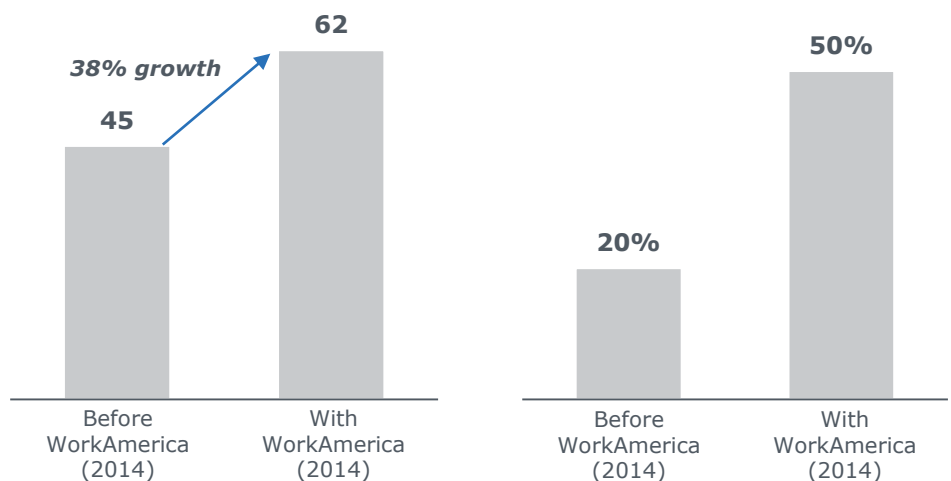
Helps incoming students navigate background checks, drug tests, and other employer-required steps



Outcomes Within Commercial Driver's License Program

Program Enrollments Over Three-Month Period

Approximate Percentage of Students Who Enroll After Program Orientation



¹) Located in Arnold, MD (large suburb); enrolls 16,500 students, 30% full-time.

Seeking a Do-It Yourself Solution

Dozens of community colleges are exploring partnerships with hiring intermediaries such as WorkAmerica. However, in the absence of an intermediary, colleges with strong industry relations could also arrange guaranteed job offers in direct partnership with employers.

To guarantee a job offer, a college needs a high-demand training program and the capacity to recruit and screen incoming students according to employer needs. Moreover, it needs a willing employer partner. Many employers will resist guaranteeing jobs to all workers who graduate from a given program. However, colleges may find exceptions among employers who have scarce talent supplies, high worker turnover, and standardized sets of technical skills for which they hire.

With Adequate Staff Time and Willing Partners, Can Colleges Broker Jobs?

Prerequisites to Guaranteeing Job Offers



High-Demand Training: Curriculum that aligns with (or can be adapted to match) employer hiring needs



Employer Partners: A local company or companies that can commit to hiring graduates



Prospective Student Outreach: Marketing collateral and/or events to promote guaranteed job offer



Job Screening Support: Staff to guide incoming students through employers' evaluation procedures

What Makes an Employer Willing to Guarantee Placements?



Scarce supply of talent in high-demand skill set



High turnover among entry-level workforce



Standardized skills required of all incoming hires



Short-term training sufficient to teach necessary skills

The ‘Jobbing Out’ Dilemma

Typically, high employer demand in a given field benefits a college’s job placement outcomes. In select cases, however, it may negatively impact student retention. When a fast-growing industry faces a severe talent shortage, some employers choose to hire students before they complete their credentials. Once hired, these students often leave college to work full-time—a trend that some college leaders refer to as “jobbing out.”

This trend has consequences not only for the college but for the student. Although students who have not completed a college credential may find entry-level jobs readily available, they tend to have fewer opportunities for advancement. Accordingly, colleges can better prepare students for long-term career growth if they discourage students from leaving before completion.

Students Who Find Work Before Completion Often Leave College

Immutable Economic Trends?

Recession: Completion While Out of Work



During a recession, students return to school for either a degree or certificate to improve their job prospects

Post-recession: Jobbing Out



In a growing economy, students voluntarily leave school or get recruited by employers with immediate labor need

Education for the Long Term

“The economy picks up. Companies hire. Students leave school because they want to work and earn money, and they leave classrooms empty. Yet, in the long term, to get a better life, they’re probably going to need a better education—to complete their associate’s degree, or maybe even a bachelor’s or master’s degree.”

*Hector Aguilar, Executive Dean of Continuing Education
Austin Community College*

Employer-Sponsored Degree Completion

In 2010, Austin Community College¹ (ACC) and Samsung Austin Semiconductor launched a partnership that fulfills the employer's immediate hiring needs while promoting college completion. Under the Technician Apprenticeship Program, ACC helps Samsung recruit current electronics students to work part-time at their local facility. To qualify for these part-time jobs, students must have a 3.0 GPA and at least 28 credits toward a relevant associate's degree. In exchange for access to these high-performing students, Samsung sponsors their continued enrollment at ACC while employed. These part-time workers must pursue at least six credits per term, and Samsung pays for any tuition not covered by financial aid.

As Samsung's hiring needs expand over the next two years, ACC plans to admit about 20 students into the program. To date, nearly every participating student has completed an associate's degree at the college.

Samsung's willingness to sponsor degree completion stems from its pressing need for part-time technicians. Colleges that seek to replicate this program should look for employers who similarly have critical part-time job openings. Ideal employer partners also offer generous tuition reimbursement, as well as opportunities for full-time employment upon graduation.

For Early Access to ACC Students, Samsung Sponsors Continued Enrollment

Technician Apprenticeship Program



The College Provides...

- **Part-time Workforce**
Participating ACC electronics students work at Samsung for 24 hours per week
- **Screened Candidates**
Students must have a 3.0 GPA and 28 credits toward an A.A.S. to apply
- **Recruitment Assistance**
ACC allows Samsung to recruit through class visits, job boards, and office tours



The Employer Provides...

- **Continued Enrollment**
Participants must register for a minimum of six credits per term and maintain 3.0 GPA
- **Last-Dollar Scholarships**
Samsung covers any remaining tuition costs after financial aid is applied
- **Completion Incentive**
Students who complete A.A.S. and have successful quarterly performance reviews are eligible for full-time positions at Samsung

20

Estimated apprenticeship positions opening in next one to two years

100%

Approximate completion rate for participating students

Characteristics of an Ideal Degree Completion Partner

- ✓ **Part-Time Positions:** Participating students can make faster progress toward degree completion if they are not employed full-time
- ✓ **Generous Tuition Reimbursement:** Students are more likely to stay enrolled if they receive financial support from their employer
- ✓ **Career Advancement Opportunities:** Employers can incentivize completion by offering participants full-time positions upon graduation

¹) Located in Austin, TX (large city); enrolls 41,600 students, 23% full-time.

Facilitating the Hiring Process

The strategies profiled in this section allow community colleges to connect workers struggling to find jobs with employers struggling to find talent. In doing so, colleges also demonstrate the career value of retraining to job seekers.

Not only do these strategies enhance employment outcomes for students, but also they reduce the cost of talent acquisition for employer partners. Moreover, they allow colleges to enroll job seekers who might otherwise forgo retraining as they reenter the workforce.

Choosing the Right Solutions for Your Campus



The Win-Win-Win

College	Employer	Student
 Enrolls job seekers who might otherwise bypass college as they look for work	 Receives a reliable pipeline of pre-trained workers for hard-to-fill positions	 Gains access to jobs in high-demand fields that require additional training

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.



Adult Learner Recruitment Toolkit

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Tuition Deferral Promissory Note Template

Purpose of the Tool

Many students choose not to take advantage of their employer's tuition reimbursement policy because they cannot afford to pay for courses before their employer reimburses them. Colleges can remove this financial barrier by allowing students to defer payment for courses until after the term ends.

A student and her employer must sign a tuition deferral promissory note to notify the college's billing office of their intent to delay payment. An effective promissory note requires students to accept full responsibility for payment and outlines the consequences of failing to pay after the deferral period ends. The template below, which draws on an example from Des Moines Area Community College, suggests language for an effective promissory note.

EAB Community College

 **EAB**

Deferred Tuition Promissory Note

Students may sign a promissory note to defer payment for classes until 30 days after grades are issued. Students must submit the signed promissory note to EAB CC Business Office before the first day of class.

Student Name: _____ Student ID# _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Semester (circle one): Fall Spring Summer

Number of Credit Hours: _____

Total Tuition Charges: _____

Employer Name: _____

Employer Address: _____

Employer Contact Name: _____

Employer Contact Email/Phone: _____

Employer Contact Signature: _____ Date: _____

I promise to pay EAB Community College for tuition and fees within 30 days of grades being issued. I understand that if I do not receive a sufficient grade for a course or courses for my employer to reimburse me, or for any other reason my employer does not reimburse me, I am still responsible for payment to EAB Community College for all tuition and fees incurred for the course(s). I understand that failure to pay these charges will result in EAB Community College withholding transcripts and/or issuance of diploma or degree until full payment is received. I further understand that failure to pay for all tuition and fees will prevent me from registering for future classes and will cause my account to be forwarded to a collection agency.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Return to: EAB Community College
 Attn: Business Office
 1 Davis Ave
 Stuartsville, SD 00499

Phone: 555-123-4567
 Fax: 555-123-7890

- Top section provides space for official titling and college logo
- Introductory paragraph describes the policy and provides instructions. Institutions should consider:
 - Exact location for payment submission
 - The precise duration of the payment grace period
- Middle section captures student contact information, employer contact information, and total course cost
- Bottom section presents the consequences for delinquent payment
- Last section indicates contact information and the return address

Source: Des Moines Area Community College, "Deferred Billing Promissory Note," <https://go.dmacc.edu/registration/Documents/promissorynote.pdf>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Employer-Based Advisor Site Selection Scorecard

Purpose of the Tool

Select colleges have placed on-site advisors with key employer partners to help their workers enroll in college. The advisor hosts regular office hours at an employer's site, where she can assist workers with online applications, financial aid, course registration, and other steps in the admissions process. Not only does this facilitate enrollment for workers, but it helps the employer and the college increase utilization of tuition reimbursement.

Not all employers are equally attractive candidates to host on-site advisors. The following scorecard allows community colleges to compare the revenue potential and feasibility of placing an advisor with various potential employers. The last column indicates the qualities of an ideal employer partner.

	Business 1	Business 2	Ideal Employer
Revenue Potential: Will the employer provide a large and sustainable enrollment pipeline?			
Number of Employees Does the employer hire enough potential students?			1,000+
Average Employee Retention Does the employer have high staff turnover that an advisor could mitigate?			<2 years for entry-level positions
Alignment with College Programs Do we offer multiple courses relevant to career advancement at the employer?			Existing degrees or certificates relevant to employer needs
Potential for Career Advancement Are promotion opportunities available to workers who earn college credentials?			Associate degree recommended to advance within firm
Willingness to Advertise Internally Will the employer help us promote our programs throughout the company?			Promotes programs via newsletters, education fairs, etc.
Feasibility: Is the employer willing and able to support an on-site advisor?			
Distance from College Is the employer close to campus?			Within driving distance
Availability of Office Space Can the employer provide space for the advisor to meet with workers?			Office space available in prominent location
Percentage of Advisor Salary Paid Is the employer willing to cover part of the advisor's salary?			50%+
Years of Prior College Partnership Do we have past experience working with the employer?			1+ years

Note: In the absence of employers ideally suited to host on-site advisors, colleges may direct any representative who conducts informational employer visits to help workers start the enrollment process. For example, a college representative who attends education fairs may set up one-on-one appointments after the fair to help workers complete online applications.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Prior Learning Assessment Taxonomy

Purpose of the Tool

Prior learning assessment (PLA) awards credit to individuals who demonstrate mastery of college-level content. Most colleges offer multiple forms of PLA to appeal to their students' wide range of experiences and abilities. However, many qualified students choose not to use these options because of unclear policies.

This tool outlines the key characteristics of various forms of PLA. With modifications to reflect institution-specific policies, college administrators can adapt this chart into a resource that allows incoming students to self-select the form of PLA that best aligns with their experience and goals.

Prior Learning Assessment Taxonomy				
	 Standardized Exams	 Course Challenge Exams	 Evaluated Training, Certification, or Licenses	 Portfolio Assessments
Format	Credits offered for multiple-choice tests that assess mastery of college-level content	Credits offered for exams developed by department, similar to course finals	Credits offered for standardized training from approved non-academic institution	Credits offered for skills documented through résumés, essays, projects, letters, etc.
Skills Assessed	General education skills	- Technical skills - General education skills	Technical skills	- Professional skills - General education skills
Relevant Experience	- Classroom study - Independent study	- Work experience - Classroom study	- Military training - Apprenticeship or licensure training - Standardized corporate training	- Work experience - Extracurricular learning
Additional Requirements	Test-taking skills	Test-taking skills	Transcript from training provider	- Strong writing skills, - Portfolio course (at some institutions)
Assessor	Exam provider (e.g., College Board, ETS) ¹	Faculty	Faculty or third-party organization (e.g., ACE, NCCRS) ²	Faculty or third-party organization (e.g., LearningCounts, KNEXT)
Time to Earn Credits	90–180 minutes long, depending on provider	Typically no more than 3 hours	No additional time investment	Up to 15 weeks for portfolio completion
Number of Credits Available	Typically 3 credits per exam passed	Typically 3 credits per exam passed	Typically 3–40 credits, depending on training	Typically 3–15 credits, depending on experience
Cost to Student	\$80–\$91 per exam, depending on provider	\$20–\$100 per exam, depending on institution	\$40–\$45 transcript fee, if ordered from third-party organization	\$100–\$1,000 total, depending on course provider and assessor

1) The College Board administers the Advanced Placement (AP) and College Level Examination Program (CLEP) tests, and ETS administers the DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST).

2) The American Council on Education (ACE) evaluates military training and corporate training. The National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS) evaluates training programs offered by corporations, unions, religious organizations, and other entities.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Credit Crosswalk Suitability Diagnostic

Purpose of the Tool

To streamline prior learning assessment for incoming students, colleges can create crosswalks that map an employer's in-house training curriculum to college credits. For example, a college may allow a student who has completed a given employer's business leadership course to receive three credits in business administration.

Because the development of a credit crosswalk requires a substantial investment of faculty and staff time, college administrators should closely evaluate any employers interested in this type of partnership. The two-part diagnostic below allows administrators to assess a given employer's suitability for a credit crosswalk.

Feasibility of Developing Crosswalk

	Yes	No
1. Does the employer's in-house training program have a standardized curriculum?	☐	☐
2. Does the employer's curriculum align with a program of study available at the college?	☐	☐
3. Are workers in the training program assessed on a defined set of learning outcomes?	☐	☐
4. Has the employer's training program been evaluated for credit by a third-party organization (e.g., ACE, NCCRS)?	☐	☐

Evaluation

Number of "Yes" Responses	4	2-3	0-1
Feasibility Score	High	Medium	Low

Enrollment Potential from Partnership

	Yes	No
1. Does the employer have a large base of workers (ideally over 500 employees)?	☐	☐
2. Do a large percentage of workers participate in training each year?	☐	☐
3. Does the employer offer tuition reimbursement for workers who enroll in college?	☐	☐
4. Does the employer host education fairs or other occasions for colleges to promote educational opportunities to workers?	☐	☐

Evaluation

Number of "Yes" Responses	4	2-3	0-1
Enrollment Potential Score	High	Medium	Low

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Sample Career Boot Camp Agenda

Purpose of the Tool

A career boot camp allows college administrators to demonstrate the value of retraining to unemployed and underemployed workers. Boot camp participants should leave with the knowledge to explore, evaluate, and pursue their career goals. This tool describes the essential components of the career boot camp; college administrators may adapt the scale and duration of each session as necessary.

The agenda below contains titling and descriptions written specifically for an adult learner audience. The chart on the following page provides detailed logistics for each session introduced below.

Host boot camps at convenient times for adults (e.g., after work or on weekends)

 **EAB**

Career Boot Camp

Accelerating Your Career Search

6:00 pm

Introduction
Enjoy light refreshments and get to know your colleagues and instructors!

6:30 pm

Discovering Your Career
Take a career assessment to see how your interests can lead to a new career

7:00 pm

Understanding Your Career
One of our career experts will lead this group session to explain the assessment results

7:30 pm

Growing Your Career Opportunities
Learn new and powerful strategies to land your dream job

8:30 pm

Taking the Next Steps
You will leave this session with a clear understanding of how to get the job

Upcoming Sessions

May 1st | ABC Job Center
Allied Health Boot Camp

June 1st | City Workforce Office
Retail Career Boot Camp

Contact Us

P 555.123.4567
F 555.123-7890
BootCamp@eabcc.edu

Divide the event into manageable sessions to maintain participant focus

Include upcoming sessions to promote future attendance

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Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

eab.com

Sample Career Boot Camp Agenda (cont.)

Career Boot Camp Agenda—Detailed Logistics

This table provides operational and logistical details for each boot camp session. College administrators should adapt the schedule, content delivery, and resources for each session as necessary.

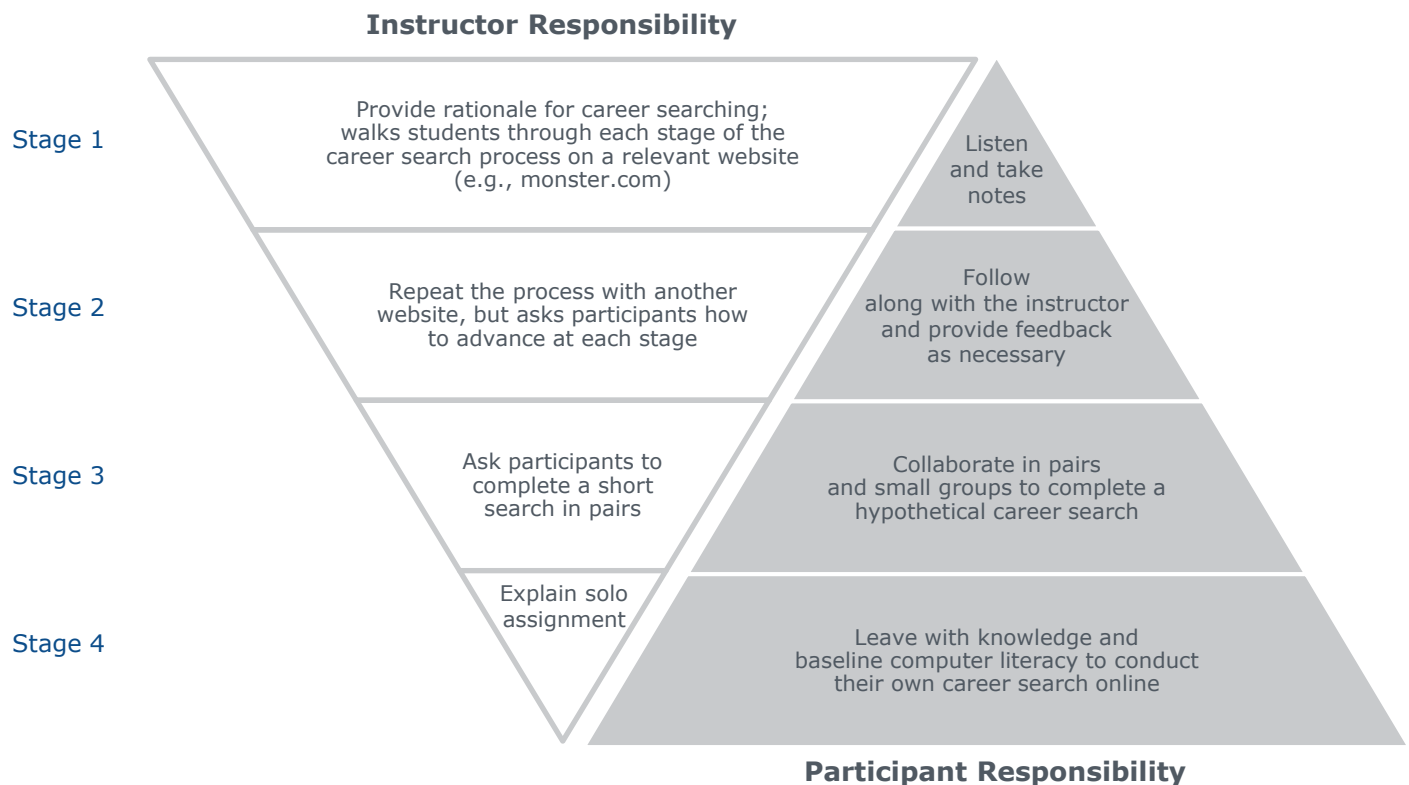
Agenda Item	Description	Suggested Duration	Suggested Resources
Introduction	The instructors and staff introduce themselves and facilitate an icebreaker for participants.	10–30 minutes	• Name tags
Discovering Your Career	Boot camp participants complete a career or personality assessment to identify their personality strengths and interests. The assessment results frame the ensuing consultation with a career specialist.	15–60 minutes (depending on assessment)	• Computer lab • Projector • Paper and pencils
Understanding Your Career	Participants discuss their assessment results with a career specialist. This session explains how participants may use their results to embark on a new career pathway. First, career specialists should ask participants if they agree with the results. Next, they should identify areas of resistance (e.g., fear of change, starting careers over again). Finally, career specialists should assuage participants of anxieties with examples of successful career changes.	30–60 minutes (depending on group size)	• Tables • Laptop • Paper and pencils
Growing Your Career Opportunities	Boot camp instructors teach students how to research and uncover new career opportunities. First, instructors should highlight job boards and career websites (e.g., salary.com, monster.com) to reveal the core functions of potential jobs. Instructors should walk students through the entire process, from entering a search query to contacting an expert in the field for an informational interview. Then, instructors should use interactive activities (see p. 69) to build participants' familiarity and understanding with fundamental career search skills.	45–60 minutes	• PowerPoint • Computer lab or laptops • Paper and pencils
Taking the Next Steps	Provide students with take-home assignments to hone their career search skills (see pg. 70). More importantly, encourage participants to schedule a follow-up session with a career specialist to share their progress and seek further guidance on enrollment in a relevant training program.	10–20 minutes	• 11 x 17 blank timelines • Completed example

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Career Boot Camp Teaching Guide

Purpose of the Tool

Colleges host career boot camps to help unemployed and underemployed adults select a career path and identify relevant retraining opportunities. Boot camp attendees should leave these sessions with a tangible set of career search skills. Because some adult learners lack essential computer skills, career specialists must teach these skills with clear instructions and include enough practice for attendees to develop confidence in their skills during the session. The teaching diagram below illustrates how a teacher gradually transfers the responsibility of learning to the student. By the end of the session, participants should be able to successfully complete online career exploration with minimal assistance from the teacher.



Checks for Participant Understanding

- ☒ Make sure every participant can successfully operate a mouse and keyboard
- ☒ Ask participants to independently navigate to the job board website (e.g., monster.com)
- ☒ Pose questions to participants to help them complete a hypothetical search as an entire group; address any misconceptions as needed
- ☒ Ask for a student to summarize the assignment instructions in their own words

Interactive Learning Activities



Partner Search: Participants work in pairs to find information on a hypothetical job



Know-Want-Learn Chart: A three-column worksheet captures what students know, want to know, and what they have learned throughout the session



Gallery Walk: Small groups of students research a particular occupation and capture the information on an easel pad; groups rotate and share their findings

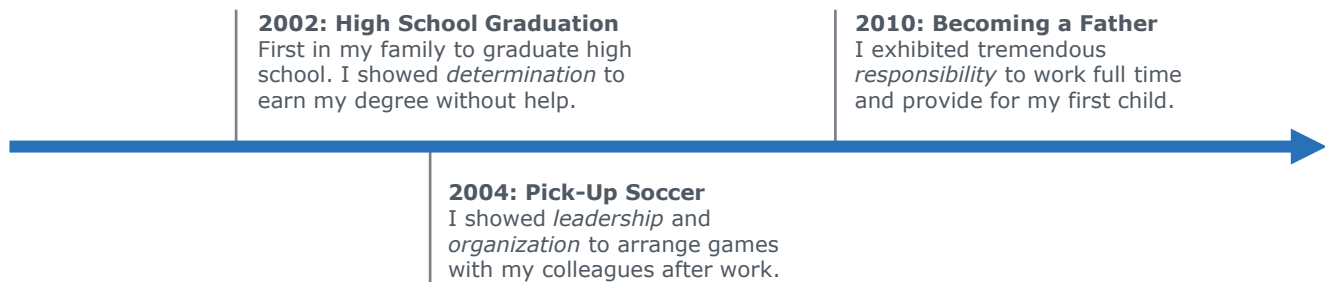
Source: Fisher D, "Effective Use of the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model," https://www.mheonline.com/treasures/pdf/douglas_fisher.pdf; EAB interviews and analysis

Career Boot Camp Teaching Guide (cont.)

Extend Educational Impact with Take-Home Exercises

Given the short duration of a career boot camp, instructors should provide participants with a take-home assignment to help them further understand their personality traits and interests before their next career consultation. The suggested assignment below challenges attendees to concretely identify how their personality traits precipitated moments of success in their life. Career specialists may use the sample timeline and guiding questions to assist attendees with the exercise. The Personal Attribute Word Box serves as a visual aid for attendees who struggle with the assignment.

Sample Achievement Timeline



Personal Attribute Word Box

- Communicative: Listens and speaks well
- Compassionate: Thinks of others
- Creative: Imaginative and artistic
- Curious: Eager to learn
- Determined: Never gives up
- Encouraging: Helps others solve problems
- Insightful: Intelligent and observant
- Leadership: Takes charge to solve problems
- Organized: Structures and orders things well
- Precise: Strong attention to details
- Persuasive: Convinces others of their ideas
- Responsibility: Makes sure things get done

Questions to Guide Achievement Timeline Completion

1. Think about your life's happiest moments. What made these moments possible?
2. What things, activities, or people do you value most in your life? How do you interact with them on a daily basis?
3. What positive qualities would your friends, family, and colleagues use to describe you? Why do you think so?
4. Think of a time in which you have helped somebody (including yourself). In what ways did you help? What problem or obstacle did you solve?

Discussion Questions for Achievement Timeline Debrief

1. Did you find the Achievement Timeline difficult to complete? Why or why not?
2. Why did you choose to include these particular achievements? Were there others you omitted?
3. Which achievement are you most proud of? Why does this particular event stand out to you?
4. In what ways do you think this exercise clarified your personal attributes?
5. How do you think you could use this information to help you choose a career?

Career Assessment Vendor Comparison

Purpose of the Tool

Career boot camps help unemployed and underemployed workers identify a career path and relevant retraining options. During boot camps, participants often complete a career assessment to better understand how their strengths and interests align with potential occupations. The results fundamentally shape the experience of a boot camp participant because they inform and guide the advisor's career advice and recommendations.

This tool helps college administrators decide which career assessment platform to use in boot camps and related services. The guide below provides basic information on four of the most popular career assessment platforms. College administrators may use it in conjunction with the scorecard on the following page to evaluate how well various platforms align with college priorities.

Sokanu Edu

Profile:	Prominent career assessment modified for educational institutions
Price:	Offers a flat fee (\$500-\$1,000 depending on license) or per-student fee (\$8-\$12 per student)
Selected Customers:	New York University, University of Nevada, University of Miami
Website:	https://www.sokanu.com/edu/



Profile:	Offers the MAPP career assessment, the first online career test
Price:	Cost depends on the number of participants; colleges may enroll in a free trial
Selected Customers:	Not specified
Website:	http://www.assessment.com/Students-Graduates.asp



Profile:	Provides a wide range of free and premium career and personality assessments
Price:	Cost ranges from \$99.95 to \$999.95 depending on the number of students and tests
Selected Customers:	Allegany College of Maryland, Santa Fe Community College, Santa Monica College
Website:	http://www.myplan.com/



Profile:	Offers a total of five free and premium career and personality assessments
Price:	All assessments are free except for the \$29 Career Surveyor and TypeFinder tests
Selected Customers:	Not specified
Website:	http://www.truity.com/

Source: Sokanu Edu, <https://www.sokanu.com/edu/>; MAPP for Students, <http://www.assessment.com/AboutMAPP/MAPPForStudents.asp>; MyPlan, <http://www.myplan.com/assess>; Truity Test & Quizzes, <http://www.truity.com>; EAB interviews and analysis.

Career Assessment Vendor Comparison

Vendor Comparison Scorecard

These 10 diagnostic questions help college administrators decide whether a career assessment aligns with their priorities (e.g., cost, ease of use, level of analysis). The second column provides an example of how an administrator might use this tool to evaluate the hypothetical platform "EAB Career Assessment." The column also includes the reasoning behind each answer for illustrative purposes.

	Criteria	Vendor 1: EAB Career Assessment	Vendor 2	Vendor 3
Functionality	1. Does the test take less than 30 minutes to complete?	No The test takes over 45 minutes to complete		
	2. Does the test measure enough personality traits to produce an informed assessment?	Yes The test measures over 150 different characteristics, traits, and interests		
	3. Is the test presented intuitively so adult learners may complete it without assistance?	Yes The test features a simple multiple-choice format		
	4. Does the test generate easy-to-interpret results to help advisors make recommendations?	Yes The results page includes color-coded charts, graphs, and figures		
	5. Does the test include detailed descriptions of recommended careers?	Yes Each career description includes job duties, average earnings, projected growth, and required education		
Usability	6. Does the test require minimal training to administer?	Yes The platform interface is intuitive and easy to learn		
	7. Does the vendor offer responsive customer support?	No The vendor relies on message boards and FAQs.		
Cost	8. Can we afford to administer this test to a large group of students?	Yes A flat-fee subscription allows us to administer the test an unlimited number of times		
	9. Do new subscribers receive a free trial?	Yes New users receive a 30-day free trial		
	10. Does the platform provide discounts to educational institutions?	Yes Colleges and universities receive a 10% discount		
	Final Score (Number of "Yes" Responses)	8 out of 10		

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Speed Interviewing Event Launch Worksheet

Purpose of the Tool

A speed interviewing event allows each student graduating from a given program to have first-round interviews with multiple employers. These events require careful planning to ensure they run according to schedule and to make positive impressions on visiting employer partners. The checklist below helps college administrators manage the logistics of hosting a speed interviewing event. The first row includes an example of how administrators can use the checklist to track important tasks and keep notes on the planning process.

Event Space		Notes
	Confirm a date for the event	<i>After checking with facilities, we moved the event to May 14th to avoid another large, on-campus event</i>
	Locate and reserve a series of small rooms to conduct interviews	
	Organize extra tables and chairs for the interviews	
	Reserve a large conference room for a networking lunch	
	Plan parking instructions and signage for employers	

Timing and Duration		Notes
	Determine how many students and employers will participate in the event	
	Create a rotating schedule so each student spends 15 minutes with each employer	
	Designate a staff member as time-keeper to ensure interviews remain on schedule	
	Set aside time between interview blocks for lunch break	

Employer Relations		Notes
	Send customized outreach to invite local employers to participate (see pg. 76)	
	Contact cafeteria or caterer to provide employers with lunch	
	Prepare questions to discuss with employers over lunch	
	Prepare thank you cards and follow-up instructions for employers	

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Speed Interviewing Event Launch Worksheet (cont.)

Preparing Students for Speed Interviewing

In addition to managing the logistics of a speed interviewing event, program administrators must ensure that students are prepared to meet with employers. The worksheet below helps administrators brainstorm ways to prepare students to make positive impressions on participating employers. Sample answers and action steps appear on the following page.

Student Interview Preparation Guide

1. What skills learned in our program should students be prepared to discuss with employers?

Action Steps:

2. How can we prepare our students to make both positive *first* and *lasting* impressions?

Action Steps:

3. How can we ensure our students appropriately respond to employer follow-up?

Action Steps:

Speed Interviewing Event Launch Worksheet (cont.)

Student Interview Preparation Guide

1. What skills learned in our program should students be prepared to discuss with employers?

After speaking to our employer partners' HR managers, they would like to hear from our students how they have worked in teams. In addition, they frequently ask our students during the interview what they think are the most important skills they learned in the course.

Action Steps:

Expand the rubric for the final project to include a "teamwork" criterion.

Include a question on the final exam which explicitly asks students to explain what skills and abilities they acquired during the course.

2. How can we prepare our students to make both positive *first* and *lasting* impressions?

Our students make their first impressions with their résumé. We should include résumé workshops which not only improve their quality, but ensures they have an appropriate industry focus. Also, the interviewers always ask our students to briefly introduce themselves. Our students should rehearse a brief pitch.

Action Steps:

Organize a résumé writing workshop in which we invite some participating HR managers to review our students' résumés.

Create a homework assignment for our students to perfect a 30-second personal summary.

3. How can we ensure our students appropriately respond to employer follow-up?

Some of our employer partners shared that some our students either ignored their follow-up calls, rudely declined, or generally mishandled competing job offers. We should coach our students to respond to all offers promptly and tactfully.

Action Steps:

Model professional responses to job offers during the last class before the interview. Instruct students to role-play with each other and practice delivering appropriate responses. Encourage instructors to provide as much feedback as possible.

Speed Interviewing Outreach Template

Purpose of the Tool

A speed interviewing event allows employer partners to meet with numerous students graduating from a relevant training program over the course of one day. Employers benefit from the expedited format because they can quickly identify talent and compare candidates against their cohort. However, human resources managers may demonstrate initial skepticism when asked to participate in a speed interviewing event because of the unfamiliar format. This worksheet helps college administrators increase employers' willingness to participate by strengthening the initial outreach email.

Outreach Email Builder Worksheet

I. Email Sender:

Use a single point of contact for outreach. The stronger the relationship with the contact, the more likely the response.

Brainstorm existing relationships with employer partners. List the top candidates to send outreach:

II. Subject Line:

Express how the speed interview event benefits the employer in a concise, informative phrase:

- Results Oriented: "Secure Next Year's Cohort with EAB College's Speed Interviewing Event"
- Inquiry Based: "EAB Community College Speed Interview Event Inquiry"
- Humble Request: "Cordially Invited to EAB Community College's Speed Interviewing Event"
- Explicit Explanation: "EAB Community College Invites You to Speed Interviewing Event"

Which of these subject lines would you incorporate into your outreach emails? Why?

Compose a subject line addressed to a relatively unknown employer prospect. Compare your subject lines with a colleague.

III. Salutation:

Address the employer prospect by their first name, especially if you have a prior relationship. Reserve the use of surnames and titles for unfamiliar or senior-level contacts.

Compose an appropriate salutation based on your familiarity with the contact.

Example: *Joan Smith, HR manager and alumni of the college* → Hi Joan, I hope all is well.

Pat Langerman, Vice President of Employee Development → _____

Frances Davis, HR director unfamiliar with the college → _____

IV. Email Body

See example on next page.

V. Sign-Off and Signature

Use your first name and include contact information after your signature.

Examples:

Warm regards, Thanks again,

All the best, Take care,

Speed Interviewing Outreach Template (cont.)

Example Email

Subject: Interview 15 EAB College Manufacturing Graduates in One Day

Dear Maureen,

I hope you are doing well. It was a pleasure speaking with you about Manufacturing Inc.'s training needs last month at the Plains County economic development fair.

In the past, EAB Community College's incumbent training program helped Manufacturing Inc. increase its throughput by 11%. Now, we are very excited to invite Manufacturing Inc. to our first-ever Mechatronics Speed Interviewing Event. This event will give you the opportunity to conduct 15-minute first-round interviews with a pool of fully trained mechatronics students. It will also allow your company to select a cohort of outstanding candidates in just one day, thus accelerating the hiring process and reducing recruitment costs.

Would you be willing to speak briefly by phone in the next week? I would sincerely appreciate the opportunity to discuss the speed interview event further. Please let me know if I can answer any questions in the meantime.

All the best,
Andrea

Andrea Anderson

Director of Industrial Manufacturing

andrea@eabcc.edu

555-123-4567

Reference past interactions to reaffirm existing relationship

Highlight any past training experiences to solidify value

Explain how the employer benefits from the event's unique format

Request a follow-up conversation to address questions or concerns by phone

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Professional Skills Evaluation Rubric

Purpose of the Tool

Many short-term training programs seek to prepare students with the professional skills required for employment (e.g., dependability, accountability). The following rubric organizes these skills into a concrete format that all stakeholders can comprehend. Not only does a standardized rubric help students understand class expectations, but it also helps instructors evaluate students' skills according to pre-established criteria.

Some short-term training programs invite employers to extend interviews to students based on their performance in class. In this case, a standardized rubric also allows instructors to communicate a student's professional skills to employers according to consistent principles.

Professional Skills Evaluation Rubric			
Criteria	Exceeds Baseline	Baseline	Below Baseline
Points	3	2	1
Attendance	Attends 100% of classes	Misses one class and explains any absence to instructor or classmates	Misses more than one class and never explains absences to instructor or classmates
Time Management	Always turns assignments in on time	Turns in assignments late two or fewer times	Turns in assignments late three or more times
Integrity	Exhibits positive attitude and honesty; always takes responsibility for mistakes	Demonstrates reasonable work ethic; usually takes responsibility for mistakes	Easily discouraged and does not take responsibility for mistakes
Communication	Speaks confidently, clearly, and intelligently; freely exchanges ideas	Uses organized and appropriate language; responds to peers as necessary	Unprofessional communication and lack of listening; does not speak well with classmates
Quality of Work	Demonstrates exemplary effort and dedication to tasks and assignments	Exhibits adequate effort and meets all required assignment criteria	Shows lack of effort and frequently fails to meet all assignment criteria
Interpersonal Skills and Teamwork	Excels in group settings either as a leader or teammate	Works well in a team setting, but needs occasional prompting to fully participate	Makes poor choices in a group setting; rarely participates or contributes to group activities
Initiative	Always attends class well prepared; finds creative solutions to assignments	Frequently prepared for class; shows occasional leadership to complete assignments	Typically unprepared for class; lets others complete assignments
Problem Solving	Thinks through problems with strategy, organization, and precision	Finds solutions in ad-hoc manner; occasionally seeks help with problems	Avoids challenging tasks and assignments; rarely asks for help with problems



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The Community College Executive Forum research team is grateful to the individuals and organizations that shared their insights, analysis, and time with us. We would especially like to recognize the following individuals for being particularly generous with their time and expertise.

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