

GED Program Evaluation

June Brinkley

Old Dominion University

Evaluation Results

Dr. Ferebee- Johns is the program administrator for the Chesapeake Public Schools department of Adult and Continuing Education and the General Educational Development (GED) program. Dr. Ferebee- Johns is confident that the GED program provides GED participants the opportunity to improve their lives personally and professionally. Furthermore, she states that with the current partnerships and ongoing collaborations with the local Workforce Development Board and area agencies the GED recipient will have access to additional resources to enhance their quality of life (F. Ferebee-Johns, personal communication, April 4, 2017).

The questionnaire/survey was distributed to GED participants and a random number of surveys were chosen to represent the GED population. After reviewing the data, most of the students who participated were satisfied with the staff and teachers and the services the program offers. On the other hand, they also included suggestions, recommendations, and or changes to better serve their needs while in the program.

This program evaluation project did answer my research question, “In what way has the GED program improved the needs of the client and of the community?” Nevertheless improvements and changes are needed and will be essential to its future success.

Conclusion

The authors, Tyler & Lofstrom, 2010 agree that the GED plays a major role in high school dropouts having an opportunity to receive a post-secondary education. After rereading the student surveys, I believe this program does serve a need. Most of the participants are in the program to better themselves personally and professionally. Some are in the program for better employment, an apprenticeship program, enrolling in college and or expanding their knowledge.

Some participants spoke of how this program built their confidence, improved reading and writing skills, help them to better comprehend the English language, build vocabulary, spelling and pronunciation of words. Overall, all of the participants stated this is a great program and they rated the GED program as great and most helpful in achieving their goals while also noting the teachers are caring and exceptional. Dr. Ferebee-Johns is 100% behind the program, staff, teachers and the average 100 participants who annually completes the program successfully (personal communication, April 4, 2017).

In my findings, the GED program does need to look at how to be more creative in better servicing the students (Brinkley-Etz Korn & Skolits, 2014). The participants suggested more parking spaces, increased days for assessment testing, an increase in days and longer classroom time for teaching, more tutorials and materials, additional one-on-one assistance, books related to the GED test to bring home to review or for homework, an option to enroll in reading/language and math course in the same term, more teacher participation and interaction with students, and consideration of breaking up the class into two groups for those retaking the course and those enrolling for the first time. I am aware of limited funding and the decreasing of educational and instructional funds as stated by Dr. Ferebee-Johns in her interview, nevertheless the continued success of the GED program could be at risk if improvements are not explored (F. Ferebee-Johns, personal communication, April 4, 2017).

Effects

The suggestions requested by the students were meant with good intentions. However, reviewing my data from the interview, Dr. Ferebee-Johns stated there would be a decrease in funding adult education and instructional services and an increase in the funding of career pathway opportunities (personal communication, April 4, 2017).

The students are asking for more parking space, I do not know if that will affect enrollment, although it can create an environment of frustration in the classroom and at the site.

Some students suggested extra testing days for assessment testing. Modifying the time for assessment testing may increase participation in the GED program, thus an increase in enrollment.

The students also recommended additional days and longer time in the classroom, more one-on-one assistance and teacher student interaction. I believe this would build rapport, positively influence test scores and the number of participants in repeated courses, and allow students more time to grasp the material. Also the students suggested more tutorials, tutoring, GED Books or materials for review or homework to reinforce the lesson, as these added resources may affect test scores, classroom participation and may reduce the number of students repeating courses.

Lastly, it was suggested to allow students to enroll in two courses (math and English) a term. It may or may not affect the completion time rate. According to Dr. Ferebee-Johns, the rate of completion is approximately 80% for those students completing a minimal of 50 hours of instruction.

The yearning of these students to better themselves through knowledge and their suggestions and recommendations is positive and worth noting. They participated in the survey and gave feedback as to how the GED program can better serve them. The negative would be if the stakeholders and Dr. Ferebee- Johns disregards their concerns due to a lack of funds and/or the small number of staff/teachers on site to service the students adequately.

Recommendations

Due to current funding issues, I recommend the stakeholders consider adjusting hours for assessment testing, if interested in increasing participation in the GED program and consider providing more tutorials, tutoring, and books related to the GED for test preparation. The parking problem can create a hostile environment if ignored, so it warrants looking into.

I recommend for future exploration that they explore allowing students to register for two subject courses in a term. Currently, students are only allowed to enroll in two classes the computer technology class, which is taught on Wednesdays and one other class (math or English). Students are requesting a change from the norm. I believe the stakeholders and Dr. Ferebee-Johns should consider students taking Math and English as an enrollment option when registering for classes especially for those students with high test scores and are capable to do the work. This may affect enrollment, the completion rate and/or reduce the number of students repeating courses. I believe in improvements and change and in doing, a lesson is gain and another idea is born.

Goals and Objectives

Brinkley-Etzkorn,& Skolits, (2014) noted that student success depends on funding and funding depends on student success. The goal is to display to the students that their concerns were heard. I recommend Dr. Ferebee-Johns consider the following:

- Assessment Testing hours
 - Advertise (flyers, internet) a special week or month during peak registration twice a year
 - Add an additional hour during peak registration
- Students enroll in two courses in a term (one year trial run)
 - Math and English courses

- (10 students in each class)
- Enrollment Requirements
 - Student must be in good standing
 - Math and English scores must meet the criteria
 - Instructor's recommendation
 - Attendance review
- Provide books and/or related GED materials for students taking the GED Test
 - Partner with the local libraries and/or the college libraries in the area to request for GED books and materials (no more than 2 years old) when they purchase or replace new GED books and related materials
 - Fund Raise twice a year
 - Have a yard sale, car wash, and/or Educational program/event
 - Partner with local businesses and have a book drive get the community involved
 - Purchase the GED books and materials and charge a fee to the students in the GED program.
 - Create Math & English Practice Test materials that can be stored online for student access
- Provide adequate parking
 - Assign a person to monitor the parking lot daily for 2-months and report findings
 - Reach out to the churches and businesses in the surrounding area for additional parking space

The author, Tuck, 2012 stated the GED provides a sense of accomplishment for students.

With that being said lets challenge ourselves to improve the GED program.

References

- Brinkley-Etz Korn, K. E. & Skolits, G. (2014). Anticipated effects of the GED test on educators and young adult learners. *Journal of Research & Practice for Adult Literacy, Secondary & Basic Education*, 3, 3, 8-21. Retrieved from <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.proxy.lib.odu.edu/ehost/>
- Tuck, E. (2012). Repatriating the GED: Urban youth and the alternative to a high school diploma. *High School Journal*, 95, 4, 4-18. Retrieved from <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.proxy.lib.odu.edu/ehost/>
- Tyler, J. & Lofstrom, M. (2010). Is the GED an effective route to postsecondary education for school dropouts? *Economics of Education Review*, 29, 5, 813-825.
doi:10.1016/j.econedurev.2010.03.001