

Attempts to Increase MSG %

An Exercise in Multiple Means and Strategies

Abstract

OCTC SkillTrain Adult Education recognized the need to improve student MSG % rate. The team made a concerted effort, combining both administrative and instructional strategies to best ensure all eligible participants would have the opportunity to demonstrate a Measurable Skill Gain.

Introduction

In FY22, OCTC SkillTrain ended the year with 41% MSG rate. For more context, Table 1 displays quarterly MSG % from FY22 and FY23. Addressing a need for increased MSG attainment required first recognizing our strengths and weaknesses and designing strategies that would address these in both administrative and instructional ways.

Recognizing the need for program improvement in this area, our team had already developed a number of strategies to address this problem and was already implementing many of these when the PLC year began. Thus our project was to document these strategies and determine if our efforts overall were successful. While it was not possible to determine the success of individual, discrete strategies, we have seen marked improvement in our MSG % in FY23 as compare to FY22.

References & Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Dee Crescitelli, who supported our efforts in myriad ways and was a wonderful cheerleader throughout!

	End Q1	End Q2	End Q3
FY22	27.5%	37.4%	40.3%
FY23	42.3%	49.8%	51.3%

Table 1: MSG % at OCTC SkillTrain by Quarter.

Product Description & Motivation

Instructional Strategies (numbered for reference but in no particular order):

- (1) Intensive one-on-one enrollment meetings with staff to build relationships that would sustain participation.
- (2) Resuming in-person orientations to promote relationships with staff and other students.
- (3) Short-term TABE-specific math classes designed to ensure readiness for TABE post-test.
- (4) Use of IXL for distance-learning and hybrid students, providing targeted instruction at any time.
- (5) Delaying CASAS post-tests beyond 40 hours when ESL instructors indicate a student may need more time before testing.

Administrative Strategies:

- (6) Weekly "Top 10" list of GED-seeking students who are closest to reaching their goals. Staff targeted these students for completion.
- (7) GED Completers List was a staff motivator. What began as an empty table with 98 slots (the number of GEDs needed to meet our goal) was filled in as students achieved their goal, helping our staff see our progress.
- (8) IET Development for ESL Welding Cohort.

Baseline & Goal

Our baseline was 41% MSG rate from FY22. Our goal was 45.2%, the rate required per federal funding standards.

Results

OCTC SkillTrain has achieved a higher MSG % by End of Q3 in FY23, 51%, than during the same period in FY22, 40%. While limitations in data-tracking capacity reduces our ability to attribute causation to individual or collective efforts, we are able to recognize correlation between our various efforts and the resulting increase in MSG %.

Discussion

As noted in the "Results" section above, while causation cannot be established, we notice a correlation between our efforts and our improved results. Following are reflections on two strategies, one unsuccessful and one successful:

Strategy 3 did not appear to improve our MSG %. Despite numerous invitations and efforts to entice participation, only two students participated regularly in any of these cohorts. One achieved a post-test MSG.

Strategy 7 was very motivating for our staff. The list was kept in a high-traffic staff area, and staff would celebrate together as each graduate's name was written on the list. Later in the year, staff were not satisfied with being "on-track" monthly toward our goal but wanted to be ahead by one month. We had met our GED goal, which contribute to our MSG %, by May 15, 2023.

Conclusions

We are pleased with the outcomes of these efforts. The baseline and goal were both appropriate given the context of this project.

As we move forward, we will continue to utilize these strategies either in their current or modified states. We will modify the TABE-specific math classes to more effectively engage student participation and will design CASAS-specific ESL classes as well.

Beyond specific strategies or efforts, meeting goals requires being attentive to data and trends, thinking outside the box to develop new strategies, and attacking new challenges as a team. OCTC SkillTrain does all of this consistently and with excellence.