

Success Stories: Moraine Valley Community College

The WBF 2.0 Project provided 30 low-skilled participants with access to college-credit career programs in middle-skills occupations. The contextualized WBF 2.0 pilot programs in healthcare and manufacturing were successful for several reasons:

1. Without the support from Moraine Valley's Vice President of Academic Affairs and cross-campus collaboration between Corporate, Community, and Continuing Education; Career Programs; and Learning Enrichment and College Readiness, developmental education requirements would have prevented WBF 2.0 participants from this exposure to middle-skills occupations.
2. WBF 2.0 Project participants were able to successfully pass college-credit courses after receiving individualized attention and support provided by the WBF 2.0 Project through scholarship awards, classroom materials, additional tutoring, case management, and referrals.
3. Low-skilled participants became more integrated within the college.
4. WBF 2.0 Project participant success increased their desire to persist. In fact, one participant stated she never would have been able to pass the healthcare class without supportive services received from the WBF 2.0 Project.

The manufacturing career exploration activities, which included field trips, classroom tours, and guest speakers, were very successful because the WBF 2.0 Project was able to dispel myths regarding the manufacturing industry. Many people describe manufacturing by the three D's: dirty, deadly, and dangerous. Through partnerships with local manufacturers, such as AEP Industries, Chicago Magnesium, Magnet-Schultz of America, and Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Chicago, WBF 2.0 participants were able to meet staff, ask questions, learn about the employment outlook, and witness firsthand various manufacturing facilities. The hands-on activities and contextualization of courses contributed to increased math test scores for students completing Exploring Careers in Manufacturing. These activities also resulted in success for the college, the community, and completers of WBF 2.0 pilot programs.

Based on the success of contextualized WBF 2.0 pilot programs and community needs, MVCC created and filled the position of Educational Specialist. The Educational Specialist is responsible for the development, contextualization, and implementation of innovative curriculum in ESL, GED, and non-credit transitions. The Educational Specialist position is a sustainable role that will continue after the WBF 2.0 Project ends in December 2015.

The development of the Four C's curriculum is another successful and sustainable aspect of the WBF 2.0 Project. The Four Cs of Essential 21st Century Skills include individual lessons, short videos, group activities, and information that emphasizes the importance of critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity in the workplace. This curriculum has been shared and utilized among other MVCC workforce grant programs and will continue to be a resource for job seekers after the WBF 2.0 Project ends. Implementation and use of this curriculum is successful because it teaches participants how to convey their knowledge of the Four Cs during interviews and apply these skills at work. The WBF 2.0 Project continues to receive positive feedback from participants completing the Four Cs.