

## In Your Adult Education Classroom and Beyond... My Indiana Career Explorer Experience



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The Vigo County School Corporation has been using Indiana Career Explorer (ICE) since 2011 when it developed its 8th grade course: Exploring College and Careers. Every 8th grader in the district takes the Exploring College and Careers course, in which they create their own ICE Explorer account. The students then use ICE to complete the Career Interests, Skills Confidence, and Work Values assessments. I was able to serve on the team that helped design the Exploring College and Career Course, and I saw the potential that ICE had for our Adult Education students. I gathered a group of Adult Education teachers and we began exploring how we could use ICE in our programs. We have been using ICE ever since!

In our program, all new Adult Education students go through a two-day, three hours per

*This is the second in a two-part series on Indiana Career Explorer (ICE). The article comes from Jeff Clutter, an Adult Education Director in Region 7, who will describe how the Vigo County School Corporation Adult Education Program uses ICE during student orientations and in the classroom to prepare students transitioning beyond the High School Equivalency. The first article by Mary Pouch, State Field Trainer for ICE, was published in the April 2016 WorkINdiana issue.*

day, orientation session. Day one is mostly TABE testing, but on day two, after we take students through some basic information about classes, we lead guided activities utilizing ICE. For example, each new student creates an ICE account and completes the initial three assessments, which are Career Interests, Skills Confidence, and Work Values assessments.

Once these three assessments are completed, the students are asked to browse through the list of occupations that ICE generates as possible areas of interest for students. Students can find information about job descriptions, average salary, job outlook, and education or training needed for that job. We then ask students to choose one of those occupations and develop an essay around that occupation and what steps they need to take to reach that goal. The essay serves multiple purposes. First, it allows us to evaluate what writing skills the student has. Second, we ask the students to type the essay out, so it allows us to see what keyboarding skills they have. Finally, it allows the classroom instructor to see what occupation the student chose and what goals the student might have. This gives our

instructors a good starting point when making first introductions and setting goals with students.

Once students are in class, we encourage students to continue to utilize all the features that ICE offers, including the ability to search through post-secondary options as well as develop a résumé that they can upload to the program for safe keeping. ICE also offers resources that help the students improve their interviewing skills and teaches them how to search for employment. We also encourage those students seeking employment to create an Indiana Career Connect account and upload their resume there as well.

ICE has proven to be a great resource for Adult Education programs. It serves as a way for instructors to start the conversation about goals beyond the HSE with their students and helps students start thinking about possible career pathways that align with their interests. With ICE students are able to explore career options that they may otherwise have not considered and see what others with similar assessment scores have done as far as educational advancement and career choices. ICE adds a

## My Indiana Career Explorer Experience (cont'd)

clear picture of how adding more education expands the career options that are open to students. Finally, our partners at WorkOne appreciate the fact the students we refer to them already have an ICE account and have completed the initial assessments, since this is one of the first activities students must complete when enrolling at WorkOne.

It is not just Vigo County Schools that use ICE to great effect. For example, it is used by all of Central 9's Life Coaches and during every orientation that has access to the internet. According to Gayle Brooks, Continuing Education Coordinator, Central 9 Career Center Adult Education in Greenwood, Indiana," the ICE was offered during their annual Career Fair. At the fair, an open computer lab was staffed with facilitators who help students get started using ICE."

Gayle added that "ICE is a great tool to help students start thinking about possible career pathways that align with their interests. ICE can show students what others with similar assessment scores to their own have done in regard to educational advancement and career choices. ICE adds a clear picture of how higher education attainment expands the career options open to students. It is a wonderful tool for adult students!"

### Success Story: Adult Basic Education - Colby Lee Walker Career Center, Region 12



By Deborah Graves, DWD Academic Career Counselor

Miss Colby attempted to get her High School Equivalency (HSE) in 2011, but life and a new baby got in the way. Colby is a single mother of four small children under the age of five, but she was determined that she would accomplish her goal.

She began attending HSE evening classes at the Walker Career Center in Indianapolis. It was a struggle for her to find childcare and she depended on the bus line for transportation

to and from class. Despite this hardship, she refused to treat her barriers as excuses.

When her babysitter fell through, she did not give up. Instead of attending night school, she completed 40 hours of HSE review online at two different libraries. Finally, her sister, who also has two small babies, helped her with the kids. Colby's TABE (grade equivalency) scores were very high in reading and math, and the HSE diploma was within her reach. Five months after beginning classes she passed the HSE exam and earned her diploma.

Colby found out about the WorkINdiana program at Walker Career Center. She has always had a love for nursing and helping others, so she knew that the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training was for her. She met Academic Career Counselor Deb Graves at the WorkOne East office.

The front desk notified Deb that "a lady with what appears to be a day care of children" was here to see her.

Colby and her sister had ridden the bus with six babies to the appointment. Not only were they on time, they arrived ahead of schedule! Her sister stayed in the lobby and watched the kids while Deb quickly co-enrolled her into the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) services. Colby went on and completed her CNA classes and attained her license.

Colby personifies determination and perseverance. Her winning attitude in the midst of struggles has made us all very proud of her efforts. The collaboration of Adult Basic Education and the WorkINdiana program through WorkOne creates the perfect formula that offers second chances to people who think achieving their goals is impossible.