Notes from Asking Good Questions Activity (Navigator Training 7/30/13)

These notes were submitted by presenter, Sandy Goodman, as follow up to the activity. The notes include the questions developed by table groups (and written on newsprint) as well as some comments and suggestions.

Activity

1) Watch video “Asking Questions”, interview with Dr. Beverly Ford
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZZCMEu9J_w

   • Dr. Ford takes the concept of closed and open-ended questions further with the concept of thinking questions, open-ended questions that engage the student in reflection, exploration, and problem solving.
   • This fits in with our discussions about college and career readiness skills, most of which focused on developing problem solving skills and fostering resiliency
   • Also connects to notion of developmental advising approach.

2) Consider intake interview as a starting place for fostering college and career readiness, rather than simply focusing on gathering information (e.g. eligibility). How can you develop intake (and ongoing discussion) questions that can:
   • better help you learn more about a student, their perspective on school, their goals, their personal strengths and challenges.
   • open up discussion and get students thinking about and reflecting on issues that they’ll encounter in the program that they may not have considered, e.g. their goals, attitudes towards school, strengths and challenges, career goals, etc/

Examples:
   • Instead of “Why did you leave high school?” An alternative question could be “What did you find difficult about school in the past and what did you enjoy about school in the past? What would help you to get through school now?”
   • Avoid questions that are too broad and obscure, and be prepared to follow up with examples. Instead of “What is your learning style?” (which presumes this is a term that students are familiar with), an alternative question could be “Describe how you learn best, for example do you learn best from watching someone, listening to instructions, doing it as your learning, etc…? “ Then follow up “can you give an example of a situation where you learned something more easily/successfully?”
   • Instead of “what are your technology skills?” ask “describe an example of how you use computer, internet, smartphone, to accomplish a task.
   • A follow up to a question about work history could be “what do/did you enjoy about that job and what do/didn’t you enjoy?”
   • What did you find difficult about school in the past and what did you enjoy about school in the past? What would help you to get through school now?”
3) In your groups, brainstorm a set of thinking questions you might ask at an initial (or early) intake interview to learn about student interested in your program:

- Develop 2 thinking questions to address each of the college and career readiness areas personal, career, academic and college knowledge readiness
- Identify the purpose of the question (i.e., what you hope to learn, what you want students to begin thinking about)
- Consider questions that help students identify strengths and supports as well as challenges.

From the Newsprint Sheets

How do you plan to communicate your needs and concerns to faculty and staff?
What are your strategies to balance work family, relationships, and school responsibilities?
How much do you know about the career that you want to pursue?
What types of careers have you explored?

What are your best study skills and test taking skills?
How would you describe your tech skills?
How familiar are you with the financial aid process?
Where would you go if you had questions about campus services?

What changes would you like to see in the community?
Who is dependent upon you on a daily basis?
Where do you see yourself in 2-3 years?
What caused you to leave HS?
What do you hope to achieve as a result of your participation in the program?
How do you feel about going to college?
What does the word “college” mean to you?

Who makes up your household?
What responsibilities do you have that may make it difficult for you to attend school?
Why are you seeking training?
Why did you choose this training?
What caused you to leave your prior school?
What motivates you to learn?
What does college/training mean to you?
Do you know what to do to be financially prepared for college?

How do you plan to balance work, school, family?
Can you give an example of how you balance financial obligations? Can you think of ways to improve this?
What skills do you have that make you think this is a good fit for you?
What steps are needed to get there?

Tell me about your technology skills?
What are your learning styles?
How are you planning to pay for college?
What do you know about the resources here at the college?
Who are the most supportive people in your life?
How flexible is your weekly schedule?
How did you get your last job?
What would you like your next job to look like?
Where is your favorite place to study?
What were your favorite subjects in school?
Have your family or friends attended college?
What might be your first favorite class?
What tools will you use to complete your educational goal?
What would you be willing to sacrifice for your education?
What type of job do you want?
Can you think of any barrier that will keep you from fulfilling your academic goal?
Where are your academic strengths?
How will you handle the stress of family and study time?
How can you handle childcare and school?
Why are you choosing this career?
What are your interests and strengths related to this career choice?
What do you need to know to improve your skills?
What are the steps to complete financial aid?
Describe the process to enroll in college?
How will you balance home and school life?
What are some things that might prevent you from coming to class?
What are your goals after completing your GED?
How can you find out more about that field?
What were your strengths and weaknesses in your past school experience?
What motivates you to do your homework?
What resources are available at the college?
If you are struggling where do you go for help?
What have you liked about your earlier education?
What might keep you from pursuing your goals?
What resources do you have to learn about careers?
What is your previous work experience?

In what classes were you successful?
What can you do to create a good study environment for yourself?
What sorts of things make learning easier for you?
What kept you from coming to school in the past? what’s different now?
Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

Describe where and when you’ll study? What makes a good study environment for you?
What kinds of classes have you done well in?
Who do you know that has gone to college?
How have you saved for a large purchase?
What would you do if your car broke down?
Who do you know in the career you’re interested in?
What sorts of questions do you have for someone working in the career?
What do you think a CNA does?
What do you like about math? science?
What don’t you like about math? science?
What do you think college is life is like?

What are you passionate about?
What do you know about the career?
What subjects/classed did you do well in? Why?
How do you like to study – describe where and when you typically do your school work?
Where would you go to get information about college?
Who would you talk to if you had questions about college?