March 21, 2012

Dear Colleague,

We are delighted to provide you with the application for the Designing Contextualized Basic Skills Instruction professional development opportunity. This course, designed for GED and high level ESOL classroom practitioners, will introduce sector-focused curriculum and program design strategies that develop adult learners’ academic competencies and professional awareness in preparation for post-secondary education.

Presented by LaGuardia Community College (http://www.lagcc.cuny.edu/pcap), in partnership with the National College Transition Network (http://www.collegetransition.org/) and the New England Professional Development Network (http://neadultedpd.ning.com/), this five-month course includes two webinars, two phone consultations with LaGuardia Community College faculty and staff, and two face-to-face events – the first in New York City on July 18-19, 2012 at LaGuardia Community College OR August 1-2 at World Education in Boston, and the second at the National College Transition Network conference on November 7, 2012 in Providence, RI. During this multi-platform training, participants will explore best practices in career-focused basic skills instruction and develop their own contextualized lessons.

All interested GED and higher level ESOL teachers are encouraged to apply. Applicants from the same workplace are encouraged to apply and attend as a pair so they can collaborate on the development of lessons that can be implemented at their program. Space for the course is limited so we encourage you to apply as soon as possible. Deadline is April 30, 2012.

Contact Elizabeth de La Garza Vargas edelagarza@lagcc.cuny.edu with questions or if you need further information. Hope you can join us.

Best,

Amy Dalsimer
Director, Pre-College Academic Programming Department
LaGuardia Community College, CUNY
Designing Contextualized Basic Skills Instruction

Project Overview

Recent research suggests that contextualizing basic skills and literacy instruction is an effective instructional approach that engages adult learners and helps them persist because course content is explicitly connected to their career interests and goals.¹

LaGuardia Community College’s GED Bridge to College and Careers program provides career-focused academic preparation that simultaneously develops students’ reading, writing and math skills in preparation for the GED and post-secondary education. Rather than simply “teaching to the test,” as is standard for GED preparation classes, the program includes specially designed sector-focused academic curriculum that integrates material from the fields of health care and business, as well as transitional support to help students identify the career or course of study that is right for them.

A current small-scale, random assignment evaluation of LaGuardia’s GED Bridge to College and Careers Program being conducted by MDRC, an independent research firm, seems to support these findings.² Although the sample size is small, initial findings suggest that preparing students to earn the GED with contextualized, career-focused content, with a strong academic focus and providing post-secondary transition support leads to higher rates of persistence in the preparatory phase and increased transition to education among program participants.

Many adult and workforce educators are interested in contextualized programming as a strategy to improve student success.

LaGuardia Community College and NCTN/World Education are partnering to offer professional development and technical assistance to adult secondary and college transition educators in the Northeast Region. The partnership’s goal is to develop the capacity of adult education practitioners to deliver rigorous, contextualized instruction that will help adult learners become career and college-ready. In this five-month course, GED and higher level ESOL instructor participants will have access to curriculum resources developed by LaGuardia instructors and will develop their own curriculum and unit design goals during the course, so they can implement new strategies and materials in their own classrooms.

Training Goals and Deliverables

This course will develop the capacity of adult education practitioners to deliver rigorous, contextualized instruction to help adult learners become career and college-ready. Participants will have the opportunity to:

- Explore pedagogy and best practices in contextualized basic skills instruction through readings, discussions and classroom examples from the GED Bridge Programs at LaGuardia

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¹ Perin, Delores (2011) http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp?UID=882
² http://www.mdrc.org/project_32_113.html

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• Develop contextualized career-focused coursework to build literacy and numeracy, and professional skills required in college and the workplace by collaborating to create and pilot contextualized lesson plans and participating in Bridge classroom activities

• Identify strategies to integrate college and career knowledge activities into adult education classes by participating in Bridge program transition activities and developing a plan to align academic preparation with transition services

• Use the Common Core State Standards to develop content and classroom assessments, by completing curriculum alignment activities and learning more about how these new standards will be adopted in adult education

• Develop strategies that incorporate technology into basic education and GED classrooms by exploring software and online resources to create student activities and assess learning

• Contribute to the Virtual Community of Practice (VCoP) to share challenges and opportunities in the curriculum development process, through curriculum sharing, reflections, and discussion groups.

• Present curriculum and share the cumulative learning experiences with colleagues at the November 7, 2012 pre-NCTN Conference institute.

Course Participation

In designing this course, LaGuardia and NCTN were guided by evidence-based research suggesting that effective professional development must be sustained over a period of time (rather than a one-shot workshop), requires active, collaborative learning and should be job-embedded, giving participants real classroom opportunities to evaluate their changed practices and student achievements.³,⁴ Each stage of the course is designed to build a community of educators engaged in innovative curriculum development.

Classroom practitioners and curriculum developers from community based organizations, community colleges and other adult literacy instructional sites are invited to participate. Sending organizations are encouraged to identify a pair of participants to collaborate on professional development activities and support innovative instructional practices at their program sites. Pair learning encourages collaboration, facilitates accountability and results in stronger advocacy for incorporation of contextualized basic skills instructional techniques into existing practice. Of course, all interested applicants will be considered.

To encourage institutional support for professional development, program directors are asked to indicate support for staff participation by attending the kick off webinar and indicating the level of support they can provide for travel and related expenses.


Course Design and Schedule

The course is led by GED Bridge Faculty and includes face-to-face workshops, webinars, phone consultations, and a virtual community of practice (VCoP) that will serve two cohorts of adult educators, one in New England and the other in the Mid-Atlantic States. The course schedule is:

- **Kickoff Webinar, June 26, 2012.** Registered participants will explore pedagogy and best practices in contextualized basic skills instruction and learn more about the GED Bridge to College and Careers Project approach to career-focused basic skills instruction. Trainers will outline the goals of the five month course.

- **Two-day training interactive institute: July 18 – 19, 2012 at LaGuardia Community College in New York City OR August 1-2 at World Education in Boston:** All participants will gather at LaGuardia or World Education for a two-day institute to explore best practices for career focused basic skills instruction and curriculum development. On day one, participants will review authentic materials and activities used in the GED Bridge courses at LaGuardia Community College and participate in lessons from the GED Bridge to Health classes. Day two is devoted to exploring methods and resources for curriculum development. Participants will work in pairs or small groups to identify a career sector for curriculum development and develop a sample contextualized activity for use in their programs. The curriculum development process will continue in the virtual community of practice.

- **Virtual community of practice (VCoP), June 2012—November 2012**
  The virtual community of practice will function as a resource area for all program participants and a platform for curriculum development coaching sessions. A VCoP makes ongoing dialogue and sharing of ideas and challenges possible across time and distance and serves as a repository for curriculum development projects. Ongoing dialogue in the VCoP and in hosted webinars will continue to foster the practitioner community developed at the face to face institute. Interest groups dedicated to curriculum development in one career area will form to focus lesson and unit planning conversations on specific content and skills objectives. Participants will have access to key materials, including samples of the GED Bridge curriculum, and other information about career focused basic skills instruction, post reflections on the process of contextualized curriculum development and participate in coaching sessions and question and answers sessions with instructors from LaGuardia Community College.

- **Pre-conference institute at the National College Transition Network Conference, November 7, 2012 in Providence, Rhode Island.** All course participants will gather for a pre-conference institute to present curriculum materials they designed during the course, share ideas for next steps, and celebrate together. Groups working in specific career areas will have the chance to work in sector groups and participate in a lesson share. Instructors and curriculum developers from LaGuardia Community College and NCTN will facilitate ideas exchange and share resources. All program participants are invited to participate in additional activities and presentations during the NCTN conference on November 8 and 9.

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Participant Time Commitment

1) 1 Informational Webinar (1 hour)
2) 2 Day, Face to face interactive training (2 x 6 hours= 12 hours)
3) 2 Webinars (2 x 1.5 hours = 3 hours)
4) Readings (2 hours)
5) Virtual Community of Practice, including sector focused coaching sessions (5 hours)
6) Pre-Conference Institute (5 hours)

TOTAL COMMITMENT: 28 hours

Benefits of Participating

• Learn from practitioners about implementing career focused skills instruction
• Join a community of practitioners
• Plan contextualized lessons and units in a supportive environment
• Gather tools and materials to use in your classroom

Application Instructions:
The deadline for applications is April 30th. Only completed applications will be considered. Course registrants will be notified during the first week of May.

1. Complete the participant application online. To begin your application, log onto: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JJM7N5N

2. Provide your program director or supervisor with the information about the course and the link to their component of the application. The link to the supervisor page is: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JWKLB8P
Designing Career Focused Basic Skills Instruction

July 18-19 Workshop

New York City Travel Information

To find out more about the New York City Training Location, visit:
http://www.lagcc.cuny.edu/About/Visit/

LaGuardia Community College is located in the westernmost section of the borough of Queens in New York City. The Port Authority Bus Terminal, Grand Central Terminal, and Penn Station are minutes away, just across the bridge in Manhattan. The closest airport is LaGuardia Airport, about 20 minutes away by car. More travel details will be provided as the workshop approaches. The list below includes local accommodations. We recommend making an advance reservation, as summer is the busiest time for NY area hotels. All course participants are responsible for their own travel arrangements.

Hotel Options

LIC/Astoria

Verve Hotel: 40-03 29th St., from $139 (Orbitz)
http://www.vervehotel.com/

La Quinta Inn, Sunnyside, NY
http://www.lq.com/lq/properties/propertyProfile.do?ident=LQ6014&propid=6014

Manhattan

Loews Regency Hotel, 540 Park Avenue New York, from $205 (expedia.com), near the E subway line that stops at Court Street, near LaGCC.

Comfort Inn Times Square South: 305 W. 39th St., from $229 (kayak.com), near Times Square
http://www.comfortinn.com/hotel-new_york-new_york-NY325

Element New York: 311 W. 39th St., from $249 (Kayak.com), near Times Square

Shoreham Hotel: 33 W. 55th St., from $197 (kayak.com), Midtown near Central Park
http://www.shorehamhotel.com/

All prices pre-tax

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Designing Career Focused Basic Skills Instruction

August 1-2, 2012 Workshop

LODGING OPTIONS IN BOSTON

Dates: Wed, Aug 1, 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM and Th, Aug 2, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Location: World Education, 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, tel. 617-482-9485
World Education is located in Boston’s Seaport District, a 10 minute walk from South Station train and Red Line subway station and a 15 minute cab ride from Logan airport.

LODGING OPTIONS

Irving House Bed & Breakfast http://irvinghouse.com
Harvard Square, Cambridge
Tel. 617-547-4600

- 5-minute walk to Red Line subway for easy 20-minute transport to World Education which is also on the Red Line
- Includes free breakfast, free wireless, free parking
- Limited off-street parking. 14 spaces available on first-come, first-served basis. If no space available, they have another free lot 3 blocks away.

The rates listed for August 1 & 2, 2012 + taxes (14.45%):

- Shared bath with single bed, $135, for one person - 11 rooms available
- Shared bath, with two single beds, $175, for two people - 3 rooms available
- Private bath, full size bed, $200, for one or two people - 5 rooms available
- Private bath, queen size bed, $210/225, for one/two people - 16 rooms available
- Private bath, queen size bed and two single beds, $240/255/270, for two/three/four people - 5 rooms available

Comfort Inn http://www.comfortinn.com/
900 Morrissey Blvd, Dorchester (part of Boston)
Tel. 617-287-9200

- $169 + taxes (14.45%)
- Free breakfast and parking
- Free shuttle to the JFK/UMASS stop on the Red Line for easy 15-minute transport to World Education, near South Station on the Red Line

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5 Blossom Street, Beacon Hill, Boston
Tel. 617-742-7630
• $199 + taxes (14.45%) A block of 10 rooms reserved under World Education name at this rate until June 25.
• Parking $40 a day
• Mass. General stop on the Red Line for easy 15-minute transport to World Education, near South Station on the Red Line

Seaport Hotel  http://www.getaroom.com/hotels/seaport-hotel
1 Seaport Lane, Boston
• $249 + taxes (14.45%)
• 3 blocks from World Education
• Free wireless
• Parking $32 a day