Toward Contextualized Teaching and Learning in the Basic Skills Initiative

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Career Ladders are . . .

Long-term, comprehensive educational strategies designed to enable individuals to combine school and work in order to advance over time to better jobs and to higher levels of education.

Series of connected education/training programs—and related supportive services—that connect to employment within specific industry or occupational sector. Each step is designed to prepare for advancement to the next level of employment and education.
Contextualized Teaching & Learning

- Strategies to link foundational skills & academic or occupational content
  - concrete applications
  - specific context of interest to the student

Includes:

- Design of curricula
  - integration of basic skills & content

- Teaching
  - use of cases, project-based learning and other student-centered practices

- Assessment
  - examining application of knowledge and the transfer of skills
A Research Based Approach . . .

- Makes it relevant to their own lives
  - Effective
  - Engages hard-to-reach students
  - Motivates them in math, written and oral communication, and problem-solving . . .

- Affective benefits
  - increased learner confidence,
  - development of enthusiasm and
  - interest toward long-term goals and the education required to achieve them

*(Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in CA Community Colleges, p. 58)*
WA “Tipping Point” Study

WA State Board for Community & Technical Colleges
Longitudinal Study (Ford Foundation; CCRC)

What did they find?

- Only 20% basic skills students completed voc-ed program, certificate or credential
- 1 yr of post-secondary education + certificate is the “tipping point” for meaningful earnings gains ($7,000/year more);
- plus strong job demand for that skill level
- 1-full year means student prepared for further higher education

Why is it important?

- Research trusted and quoted throughout workforce and college systems and by policy makers
- Reframed discussion about education of under-prepared, low-income youth and adults
- Broad influence across state policy – “work first” short-term training will not get students to the “tipping point”
- Led to creation of new, contextualized programs and infusion of career pathways throughout state workforce and educational policy
**Integrated Basic Education And Skills Training**

**What is it?**

- Paired ABE/ESL w/ CTE instructors to provide support and develop **basic skills in context**
- Full-time, cohort based learning community
- For-credit instruction
- Support services & single point of contact
- Focus on 1-year+ education programs to enable students to reach ‘tipping point’
- Programs require additional coordination and faculty time
- I-BEST students are funded at the equivalent of 1.75 FTE (capped #)

**What did they learn?**

- I-BEST students earned 5 times more college credits on average and were 15 times more likely to complete workforce training than traditional ESL/basic skills students
- Results from first 10 colleges led to enhanced FTES reimbursement & funding to expand program to the other 24 colleges via planning grants and training institutes
- Led to additional supports from state and system: Opportunity Grants (2007)
  - Student: $1,000 PLUS tuition/fees
  - Community College: $1,500/FTES for support services and counseling
  - Students in job specific, high demand programs
Career Advancement Academy

- Learning Community
- Intensive Support Services
- Career Pathway
- Contextual Learning
- Math
- Reading
- Career and Guidance Studies
- Writing
Instruction includes:
- Cabinet and Furniture Making for the Trades.

Faculty: Wood Technology, ESL, Math and a Bilingual Assistant Instructor

Leading to: entry level crafts positions and continued education in Advanced Woodworking and Furniture Making

A Partnership of the East Bay Career Advancement Academy, Laney College & the local woodworking industry
Los Angeles Healthcare Career Advancement Academy

- Partnership: LAVC-LACC-ELAC-L.A. County Hospital-SEIU-Community Organizations
- Curriculum contextualized to Healthcare
- Career Counseling
- Intensive Support Services
- Clear Transitions to Continuing Education and Career Advancement
- Targets low income, underprepared youth and adults
1. Basic Reading Comprehension & Writing for Healthcare Employees
2. Basic Math for Healthcare Employees
3. Critical Thinking & Rational Decision-Making for Healthcare Employees (Embedded in Curriculum)
5. Computer Applications for Healthcare Industry
What kinds of resources would be most helpful in supporting your work around contextualized teaching and learning?
(e.g., professional development; networking with other peer experts; exposure to innovative models; additional research & information; other)

How could others support your efforts to strengthen contextualized approaches at your college?
(e.g., college leadership; non-CTE faculty; counseling faculty; others)

How could external partners support you?
For more information . . .

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