Discussion Guide for *Supporting Student Success through Professional Development*

Earning a postsecondary degree or credential has become a prerequisite for the growing jobs of today's economy. At the same time, data on educational attainment and skills show that there are at least 36 million Americans without basic literacy skills in need of educational credentials for work[1]. In addition, once enrolled at a postsecondary institution, too many of the nation's adult learners are not prepared for the academic rigor required for success with about one-third enrolling in remedial courses during their first or second year of college[2]. The social and economic consequences for these adult learners are severe for them, their families, and their communities, where large numbers of lower-skilled adults can hamper economic development.

Supporting the learner in gaining the foundational literacy and numeracy skills to facilitate postsecondary transitions, whether it is at an adult education classroom or at a developmental education program, is crucial and starts with a commitment from community college leadership. And, adult education student success at college campuses can only be achieved at the classroom level if adult educators have access to professional development opportunities which lends support to their work with learners in the classroom.

Featured Schools

Amarillo College - Amarillo, TX
Gateway Community College - New Haven, CT
LaGuardia Community College - Queens, NY
St. Louis Community College - St. Louis, Missouri

As part of the *Supporting Student Success (SSS): Adult Education and Remedial Education Reform in Community Colleges* project, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education contracted with the Manhattan Strategy Group to:

- Document and capture examples of coordination, alignment and partnership between adult education and developmental education at four community colleges. This was accomplished using a framework designed from *Unlocking the Gate's*[3] literature review of promising developmental education reform strategies.
- Develop, design and disseminate peer-led virtual learning opportunities such as webinars and Communities of Practices (CoPs) led by the four community colleges. The project will produce three videos, each to be accompanied by a Discussion Guide.
  Note: archived webinars and CoPs can be found in the "Resources" section of this discussion guide.

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[1] U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Services, National Center for Education Statistics, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2012 Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC).

[2] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study – NPSAS: 12.

[3] Elizabeth Zachry Rutschow and Emily Schneider, "Unlocking the Gate: What We Know About Improving Developmental Education," MDRC, June 2011, http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/full_595.pdf

How to Use this Discussion Guide

The goal for this Guide is to prompt discussion about access to professional development activities at your institution, department and/or adult education program. This Guide should be used before, during, and after the accompanying video with institutional leadership, departmental chairs, and program level administrators and instructors. Prior to viewing the video and to optimize self-reflection, we recommend a quick review of the reflective questions below.

Reflective Questions

Before viewing the video, write down your responses to key questions below:

- What does professional development mean to you?
- What do you consider high-quality professional development?
- Why is professional development important? What is the impact on students?
- Are there changing contexts that requires a re-examination of professional development at your adult education program and/or institution? If yes, please explain.
- What is my institution and program's overall philosophy on professional development?

While viewing the video, write down your responses to key questions below:

- Does the video's reference of the "cultural transformation in professional development" resonate with your adult education program?
- If so, how?
- The video mentions professional development having "a plan of action on the back end" so that there is a foundation for operationalizing your plan. Does a professional development plan exist? If so, is there a need to revisit it?

Video: Supporting Student Success through Professional Development
https://youtu.be/tF29btAKtdo

Next Steps

After you view the video, review your notes and organize your overall thought process to develop a plan for implementing ideas:

Identify the purpose of the targeted effort:

What/How	What needs to be done/ By When?	Individual(s) Responsible?
1. What type of professional development is needed at my program or institution?		
2. Describe how this type of professional development has the potential to support institutional vision and faculty development, ultimately benefitting learners.		
3. How are the examples in the video applicable to my program or institution?		
4. What are some important lessons learned from the video about the impact of professional development at all levels of your institution and/or program?		

Articulate

What/How	What needs to be done/ By When?	Individual(s) Responsible?
5. What does it mean from a professional development standpoint to "serve the students we have and not the students we wish they were?"		
6. What does it mean to be a value-driven institution or adult education program?		
7. What are strategies to infuse staff and leadership feedback into our professional development plan at my institution or adult education program?		
8. Who else needs to be part of this conversation and/or see this video?		

Other considerations

What/How	What needs to be done/ By When?	Individual(s) Responsible?
9. Who are the stakeholders that need to be engaged and "at the table?"		
10. What are other important action steps that ought to be included?		

Resources

SSS's webinars are recorded and available for viewing on the Postsecondary Completion LINCS group. For more on this project and related topics, please visit the following discussions/webinars in the LINCS Community:

- Re-Visioning Instruction and Support at Community Colleges to Support the Whole Student (discussion)
- Building Bridges Between Adult Basic Education and Developmental Education (discussion)
- Intensive Skill and College Readiness Programs at Community Colleges (discussion)
- Supporting Student Success via Contextualized Learning (webinar)
- Supporting Student Success: Accelerated Curriculum for Impact (webinar)
- Supporting Student Success: The Hybrid Approach (webinar)
- Supporting Student Success: Supporting the Whole Student (webinar)