

*A Review of Contextualized Learning and Its Importance
to Career Advancement for Adults in Connecticut*

**A Report to the CT Employment and Training
Commission (CETC)**

**Conducted by the CETC Career Advancement
Committee**

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Introduction

Obtaining a high school diploma was once a guarantee that an individual had the skills and credentials required to get a steady job with decent pay, but this is no longer the case. Vocational training and postsecondary education are becoming more important for securing self-sufficient employment. A growing number of jobs in Connecticut require postsecondary education. In fact, 66% of jobs created by 2018 will require at least some postsecondary education.ⁱ Without basic skills such as reading, math and English proficiency, jobs with high wages, health benefits and room for advancement can be out of reach for Connecticut's citizens.ⁱⁱ

But not all jobs that require postsecondary education require a four-year degree. These jobs, often referred to as "middle-skill" jobs, require training beyond high school, but not a four-year degree, including an associate's degree, occupational certification, or an apprenticeship. In Connecticut in 2009, it was determined that 45% of jobs were middle-skills. However, only 37% of workers had those skills creating a significant middle-skills gap.ⁱⁱⁱ In a 2013 survey of Connecticut employers seeking to hire, 66% said they have difficulty finding qualified workers in their industry.^{iv} Among businesses overall, the greatest demand is for mid-level professionals with fewer companies looking to fill entry level positions. Expectations are the same for 2014 with emphasis on the demand for middle skill employees.

In the absence of workers with the job-ready skills to meet employer needs, positions go unfilled. Small businesses, which are the driving force of our economy, cannot find the workers they need and they do not have the resources to hire and train people to fill these positions. Without the people with the right combination of skills and education to fill these jobs it will be harder for Connecticut to recover from the Great Recession. Jonathan Rothwell, a Senior Research Associate for Brookings Institution's Metropolitan Policy Program, found that "metro areas with higher education gaps have experienced lower rates of job creation and job openings over the past few years."^v

Essentially, the wider the skills gap, the slower the job recovery rate and the higher the unemployment rate. In 2013, the unemployment rate for people in Connecticut with less than a high school diploma was 23.8% and 10.2% for people with a high school diploma.^{vi} Both of these rates are significantly higher than for those with some postsecondary education (8.2%) or a bachelors' degree (4.4%).^{vii} Overall the unemployment rate in 2013 was 8.1%. These rates are unlikely to decline if the state cannot match the skills of the available labor pool to the occupational demand.

Addressing the Skills Gap in Connecticut

In order to better understand the skill challenges facing Connecticut employers and adult workers, the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC) created the Career Advancement Committee in 2010 to undertake the following activities:

- Identify support needed to enhance the career advancement of low-skill/low-wage workers
- Research best practices to help move these workers to good-paying middle-skill jobs
- Identify industry sectors with current and projected middle-skill job opportunities
- Examine Connecticut programs that effectively address barriers to career advancement
- Recommend resource investment and alignment strategies to promote career advancement for low-skill/low-wage workers, including proposed redirection of existing resources
- Recommend state investments to achieve the objective of moving low-skill/low-wage workers into good-paying middle-skill jobs and careers

Led by CETC representatives, the Committee members representing adult education providers, community colleges, Workforce Investment Boards, state agencies and philanthropic organizations, began their investigation of effective models for supporting career advancement.

The Career Advancement Committee commissioned a literature review of promising state policies and practices to better understand efforts underway to address the barriers to career advancement. The report prepared by LukeWorks, LLC. in March 2012 highlighted initiatives across the country that targeted disadvantaged populations such as youth, TANF recipients, ex-offenders and veterans. Contextualized learning emerged as a promising national practice.

Armed with this review, as well as information from Connecticut experts, the Committee recommended to the CETC that a plan be developed for Connecticut that would outline essential components for contextualized learning programs, metrics for assessing participant outcomes, and funding mechanisms to support effective services.

The 2012 CETC Annual Plan included the following recommendation:

CETC recommends increasing support for implementation of contextualized learning programs for low-skill adults, including maximizing the use of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title II funding, and considering effective models such as the State of Washington's I-BEST Opportunity Fund. CETC's Career Advancement Committee, with technical assistance and support from the Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC), Board of Regents for Higher Education and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) should track the impact of these programs on target populations, and make recommendations about future funding. The Committee's analysis should be submitted for CETC review by September 30, 2013 with CETC's recommendations to the Governor due by December 1, 2013.

In furtherance of this recommendation, the Career Advancement Committee staff conducted a literature review on examples of contextualized learning programs. Little research has been done nationally to document the impact of fully implemented contextualized learning programs. Connecticut also lacks this standardized assessment of its current programming. The most rigorous research exists in the 2010 study by Columbia University on the effectiveness of Washington State's I-BEST program.

In lieu of a full evaluation, the Committee members and staff reviewed Connecticut programs to identify how providers are using contextualized learning to increase the skills of their clients and the challenges and opportunities associated with these efforts. Committee members conducted site visits to two organizations that are utilizing contextualized learning strategies to compare their work to the essential elements and funding strategies identified in the national research. This report highlights the findings of these activities followed by recommendations to be adopted by the state for investment in innovative contextualized learning programs.

Contextualized Learning: One Solution to the Skills Gap

Educational experts have identified teaching in context, also known as contextualized learning, as an effective strategy to accelerate a student's path from education to employment. ***Contextualized learning, or teaching in context, is the concept of relating subject matter content to meaningful situations that are relevant to students' lives.***^{viii}

There are many formats to implement contextualized learning. The purpose of these strategies is to help a student learn or improve their basic skills while also teaching the technical skills to prepare them for employment. Examples include basic skills applied to an area of discipline, embedded instruction, integrated curriculum, theme based instruction, functional context education and workplace literacy.

The contextual approach recognizes that:

- Learning is a complex, multi-faceted process that goes beyond drill-oriented, stimulus and response methodologies; and,
- Learning occurs only when students process new information in such a way that makes sense to them in their own frame of reference (memory, experience, response).

Two contextualized learning strategies commonly used are **contextualized basic skills instruction** and **integrated education and training**. With contextualized basic skills the instructional objective is to teach the academic skills aided by the applications of learning. For integrated education and training the objective is technical skill building with basic skills reinforcement for those who lack some level of proficiency in the basic skills.^{ix}

Contextualized basic skills instruction is an instructional approach that creates explicit connections between the teaching of reading, writing or math and instruction in a discipline or technical field. Contextualized basic skills instruction uses industry and occupational knowledge to support the learning of basic reading, math and language skills. The approach can include a range of activities from single lessons dedicated to learning English in the context of an occupational application to a program where an individual receives their high school diploma or equivalent.

Community colleges across the country have adopted contextualized basic skills instruction to teach students basic skills in the context of a career. One example is LaGuardia Community College's GED Bridge to Health and Business Careers. The foundation of the GED Bridge program is its "contextualized curriculum." The curriculum has two broad goals: first, to build the skills that are tested on the GED exam through the use of content specific to a field of interest (health care or business) and, second, to develop general academic habits and skills that prepare students to succeed in college or training programs.^x In addition to contextualized GED instruction, the program offers activities such as career exploration, resume writing and career planning workshops, case management, attendance, and performance monitoring and interventions.^{xi}

An evaluation of the GED Bridge program published in May 2013 found that participants of the GED Bridge program experienced significant positive outcomes compared to those in the traditional GED Prep course. Compared with students who went through the traditional GED Prep course, Bridge students were much more likely to complete the course (68.2% versus 46.5%); Bridge students were far more likely to pass the GED exam (52.8% versus 22.4%); and Bridge students enrolled in college at much higher rates than students in the traditional GED Prep course(24.1% versus 7.2%).^{xii}

Integrated education and training allows students to gain literacy (or language) and occupational skills simultaneously. This approach helps educationally underprepared adults achieve success by integrating basic skills and career-specific training that moves students faster to certificate or degree completion. These training strategies are critical as they focus on the attainment of technical skills, certificates and certifications and postsecondary degrees while reinforcing students' basic skills development.

The most well known example of the integrated education and training strategy is Washington State's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) Program. The program was developed in response to studies performed by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges that indicated that students were unlikely to complete a long-term basic skills class and then successfully transition to college level vocational programs. The I-BEST model challenges the traditional notion that students must first complete adult basic education or ESL before moving to college level course work by pairing ESL or ABE instructors with vocational or content area instructors in Washington's 34 community colleges to co-teach college level vocational courses.

I-BEST is a very specific model and requires fidelity to the structure and activities for replication. Because of this, other states and localities are now developing their own versions of the I-BEST model in an effort to accelerate learning, skills acquisition and movement into the labor market. Gateway Community College was awarded an Accelerating Connections to Employment (A.C.E.) grant from the U.S. Department of Labor as part of a multi-state initiative to implement an enhanced I-BEST model. The enhanced model includes:

- industry engagement at the front-end which informs program design and connection to in-demand jobs;
- coordinated recruitment and assessment activities;
- career navigator assigned to each cohort of students;
- coordinated delivery of support services and resources;
- intensive job placement and retention assistance; and,
- development and piloting of alternative measures of progress for low-skilled job seekers.

Another innovative model is the multi-state effort Accelerating Opportunity, a project led by Jobs for the Future and rolling out in eight states across the country. This effort, supported with philanthropic dollars, is developing programs that integrate adult education and professional/technical training in partnership with educational institutions, Workforce Investment Boards and employers in key industry areas. Requiring team teaching for 25% of all instruction, the project is developing pathways that begin with adult basic education or English language instruction and lead to college level certificates and beyond. They are providing comprehensive student supports and ensuring the achievement of marketable, stackable, credit-bearing credentials.

Connecticut can also look to other states for policy experience as it considers supporting more contextualized learning activities. Many states have moved to institutionalize and financially support contextualized learning programs as a means to align adult education and community college programs, support innovative instructional strategies and services, and leverage federal, state, and private resources. For instance, the Maryland Workforce and Career Pathways Act called for the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation to administer a new, \$2 million program to fund local consortia of community colleges, workforce investment boards, adult education providers, and other partners to develop programs that integrate adult basic education with occupational training and help

low-skilled adults earn industry-recognized credentials. While the bill stalled in committee, a legislative work group has been formed to develop a strategy for implementation for next year's session. Colorado's legislature passed a bill to support an accelerated education and training program patterned after Washington's I-BEST program. The bill provides the community college system the ongoing authority to develop and offer I-BEST type programs in collaboration with junior colleges, vocational schools, the Department of Education and local workforce development programs.

Contextualized Learning Efforts in Connecticut

Connecticut continues to focus its efforts towards advancing the skills of unemployed and underemployed adults in the state. Using contextualized learning as a promising practice, Connecticut training providers are working to serve clients by providing comprehensive programs that build the basic and technical skills needed to enter the workforce more quickly and better prepared to meet the needs of employers.

In Fiscal Year 2012-2013, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) invested \$240,000 in Program Improvement Project (PIP) grants specifically to implement I-BEST programs. PIP grants are federally funded through Title II of the Workforce Investment Act to provide opportunities for the expansion and improvement of educational programs and services for adults who lack the level of basic skills and literacy necessary to be effective parents, citizens and employees. CSDE was first to implement I-BEST in 2010 with two years of incentive money. CSDE continues that support with WIA Title II resources which support the educational not technical aspects of the training. In addition to these federal funds, philanthropic entities, such as the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, have invested significant funding to pilot and expand contextualized learning programs in the state.

The CT Department of Labor has allocated state appropriations to pilot I-BEST programming for Jobs First Employment Services customers through the five Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs). Implementation of these pilots is expected to begin in December 2013. The maximum cost per participant under the grant is \$5,000. WIBs are expected to leverage other funding from public and private sources to provide a full array of services. The state appropriation designated for JFES I-BEST pilots, is \$1,548,300 for FY 2014 and \$1,367,900 for FY 2015. WIB allocations for FY 2014 were made based on the statewide JFES caseload distribution. WIB allocations for FY 2015 will be based on statewide JFES caseload size, adjusted for WIB contract compliance and performance in the initial program year.

Promising Contextualized Learning Programs in Connecticut

Connecticut training providers continue to enhance teaching strategies and provide support services to better serve their adult students. Educational training alone is not enough to prepare someone to be successful in the labor market. In addition to more comprehensive training, providers are also incorporating wrap around services that address multiple barriers to success. Learning from national best practices, CT providers are making great progress and offering better quality programs that meet the needs of CT residents. New London Adult Education, Capital Workforce Partners and CT Center for Arts and Technology are three providers who have shown a commitment to incorporating contextualized learning and additional support services to serve their students.

New London Adult Education received an I-BEST PIP grant from the CSDE to provide enhanced education and training in allied health, hospitality and service industries. New London Adult Education

collaborated with a variety of partners including the local Workforce Investment Board, CT Department of Labor and local employers. The programs use integrated education and training strategies delivered by adult literacy and vocation skill instructors. Classes are team taught with a minimum of 50% overlap of instructional time to reinforce learning gains in reading, writing, math and oral communication. Support services are also provided that include but are not limited to childcare, test fees, uniforms and textbooks. The I-BEST offerings include CNA; Pharmacy Technician; EMT; EMR; Automotive Technician; Nail Technician with OPI certification; Culinary Arts with food handler certification; and Bartending and Hospitality with S.M.A.R.T. certification.

New London Adult Education targets a cross section of high school completion and English language students to serve a diversity of student backgrounds and needs. In 2012, 90 students were trained in one of seven vocational areas with 95% of students completing training and 92% earning an industry credential. Also, 76% of students enrolled in CDP/GED programs earned a high school diploma and 72% of program completers gained employment. Average CASAS testing gains show an 8 point increase in listening, 6.6 increase in reading and a 9.29 increase in math.

The Hartford IBEST Construction Project, a consortium of Capitol Region Education Council, Capital Workforce Partners and Capital Community College, targets low-income adults and young adults who lack basic skills and are interested in pursuing careers in the construction industry. Funding for the project was provided by the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. The program was modeled after the Washington I-BEST model but made modifications such as alternating technical and academic instruction, and engaging additional partners such as the Workforce Investment Board and its One Stop Career Centers. In addition to technical and academic training, Hartford Jobs Funnel staff provided case management and support to students. Staff worked with students to address barriers to participation, encouraged and motivated students and held students accountable for tardiness and inappropriate behavior.^{xiii}

Since the start of the program in January 2012, the Hartford IBEST Construction program ran two cohorts targeting students first with a GED and the second with an average CASAS score of 232 in reading and 218 in math. To date, the program has served 33 students with 24 (73%) completing training and receiving at least one industry recognized credential. Credentials include OSHA 10, Aerial Lift, Fork Lift, CPR & First Aid, Lead: Renovation, Repair and Painting, and Lead Safe Weatherization. Average CASAS testing gains for both cohorts include a 3.6 increase in reading and a 5.7 increase in math.

Connecticut Center for Arts and Technology (CONNCAT) offers programs with the mission to inspire, motivate, and prepare youth and adults for educational and career advancement, through after-school arts, and job training programming. CONNCAT offers two adult learner programs in the healthcare industry. Utilizing integrated education, the programs prepare the students to earn healthcare credentials while also addressing math and literacy. Basic skills are addressed during assessment and math instructors and literacy tutors are readily available. In addition to educational support, CONNCAT offers career development activities, life skills and financial literacy workshops, intensive learner evaluation and support and placement assistance. CONNCAT is currently funded by private resources.

The target population for CONNCAT's adult learner programs are individuals who are 18 years of age or older; a U.S. citizen; possess a high school diploma or equivalent; Connecticut resident; and are underemployed or unemployed. To date, the program has served 97 adult learners in both Medical Coding and Phlebotomy Program. Of the 97, 51 adult learners have successfully completed the program

and 30 are currently enrolled and have not yet completed. Five (5) adults have received the NPA Certification in Phlebotomy and three (3) adults received certifications in Certified Professional Coding. Twenty-nine (29) completers are awaiting or currently placed in an externship; 22 adults are employed; and three (3) are enrolled in postsecondary education.

Building a Connecticut Framework for Contextualized Learning

Identifying Essential Program Components

Based on its research and Connecticut's experience to date with contextualized learning strategies, the Career Advancement Committee recommends adoption of the following program components to promote standardization of contextualized learning programs and services and desired participant outcomes.

Program Design

- 1. Identify curriculum strategy:** As a first step, program staff must determine which contextualized learning curriculum strategy they will pursue. Per the research in this report, the Committee recommends that programs implement either contextualized basic skill instruction or integrated education and training strategies which help learners go further, faster.
- 2. Co-teaching model:** Programs must bring two or more instructors together to design and deliver contextualized learning curriculum to a group of students. This team teaching of basic and technical skills, which should happen at least 25% of the time, as required in the Accelerating Opportunity project, provides students the ability to grasp the higher level technical content as it is being taught and encourages collaboration among the two disciplines.
- 3. Employer participation:** Whether the next step for students after program completion is postsecondary education or employment, ensuring employer participation in the process is critical. Industry participation must include, but not be limited to, program planning and curriculum review, career awareness and exposure, internship opportunities, and job placement.
- 4. Reliable occupation selection:** Selection of occupational training must be identified using current, relevant labor market data with programs designed to meet the scale of demand. This data is available through the CT Department of Labor as well as regional and local data provided through the Workforce Investment Boards.
- 5. Evaluation and continuous improvement:** Evaluation tools enable program staff to assess program design and identify best practices and areas for improvement. In addition to collecting the quantitative metrics identified in the report, including credential attainment and employment, evaluation methods should include surveys and interviews that capture customer satisfaction and feedback on program elements.

Program Implementation

6. **Recruitment strategies:** Identifying a target population is the first step to create a successful recruitment strategy. Once identified, recruitment must be intentional and take into account the best avenue to reach potential participants. Adequate time and resources must be given to recruiting the best suited participants to ensure program success.
7. **Assessment:** During the intake process, an assessment of the student's academic level and personal barriers must be completed. Information gathered will ensure that the individual matches the target population and will better prepare staff to serve the individual. Structured similar to the SDE Student Success Plan model, participants must create a structured plan that identifies a target goal and maps out the path to get there, including course selection. This can happen during the intake process but should be periodically reevaluated based on progress towards goal.
8. **Career exposure:** It is important to create opportunities for students to explore career options and understand the related job responsibilities. It is also important to provide job shadowing and other activities to expose students to the work environment in their chosen career field.
9. **Case management:** It is critical that programs provide students with the academic, career and personal support they need to succeed in the training. Time and resources must be allocated to selecting and orienting students to the program, addressing their academic and personal barriers to engagement, and completion and promoting their career and job readiness.
10. **Life skills training:** In addition to basic skill and technical training, participants must address the personal or "soft" skills that are required to succeed in training and employment and are critical to participant success. Examples include opportunities to demonstrate job readiness as well as problem solving, team building and conflict resolution skills.

Placement and Retention

11. **Job placement:** Programs must dedicate staff and resources to identify local job opportunities that align with the training provided and work with students on resume building and interview skills. Programs should be designed to directly help students to secure employment related to their field of study.
12. **Retention tracking and support:** Programs must dedicate time and resources to tracking the continued placement and retention of students. In addition, it is important that programs provide support services such as coaching and peer mentoring to promote long term persistence and success.

Identifying Program Metrics

Currently, Connecticut contextualized learning programs are being funded and guided by multiple state agencies as well as philanthropic organizations. There is no single point of data collection and no clarity or standardization of the information on student participation. A small number of programs, such as the Hartford IBEST Construction Project and the CTDOL IBEST programs are being evaluated by third party evaluators but many are not. Because of the limited and inconsistent data we have on Connecticut programs, we are unable at this time to track the impact of contextualized learning programs as suggested in the CETC recommendation.

To address this challenge, the Career Advancement Committees suggests the following baseline metrics should be collected on all contextualized learning programs:

- Number of participants served
- Number of participants enrolled in training
- Educational attainment
- Credential achieved
- Employment outcome
- Wage at placement and at six month and one year marks
- Retention at six month and one year marks

In addition, Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) is addressing the challenge of inconsistent metrics through The Alliance for Quality Career Pathways. This is a two year, 10 state effort to develop a framework of criteria and indicators that define a high quality program, and a set of shared performance metrics for measuring and managing the success of these efforts. The CETC should track the results of this effort and determine if the metrics identified can help to document the impact of contextualized learning on Connecticut students.

Identifying Program Funding

Implementing contextualized learning requires substantial investment. Many states have identified a variety of state, federal and private dollars and braided them together to support robust programming. The Center for Law and Social Policy’s (CLASP’s) *Funding Career Pathways and Career Pathways Bridges: a Federal Toolkit for States* (2010) helps to identify these funding mechanisms and how they can be used to support the essential elements of contextualized learning programs.

Below is a sample, based on the report, of how CT can use multiple sources to fund various elements of a contextualized learning program. The four federal departments that administer these funding streams are Labor, Education, Health and Human Services, and Agriculture.

| Federal Funding Program | Sample Essential Program Elements | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| | Business engagement and systems and partnerships | Program/ curriculum innovation | Student success services | Tuition and education and training costs |
| Employment Services (Wagner Peyser Act) | X | | | |
| TANF | X | | X | |
| Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training | | | X | |
| WIA Title I | | X | | X |
| WIA Title II | | X | | X (academic prep/tutoring) |
| Carl Perkins Career and Technical Education | | X | X | |

| | | | | |
|----------------------|--|--|--|---|
| Pell grants | | | | X |
| Trade Adjustment Act | | | | X |

In Connecticut, programs that are operating with federal or state grants may be limited to particular activities or target populations with often very modest funding, while programs operating on foundation grants may have fewer constraints and can implement the full range of program elements with more significant funding. These grants can range from \$25,000 as in the example of the CSDE PIP grants which are limited to supporting the educational and support service components of contextualized learning to the \$100,000 awarded to the Hartford I-BEST Construction Project to support a wider array of training and support service activities. With limited resources, components such as program design and planning time, staff and case management are reduced or other private resources must be leveraged to meet those costs. Research and experience has shown that the elimination of these services can affect the success of the programs.

Recommendations

Many of Connecticut’s state agencies and philanthropic organizations are eager to support contextualized learning programs. However, leadership is needed from the CETC and its key state agency members to move this work forward. Given the variability of current efforts underway in the state, the Career Advancement Committee recommends the following to promote consistency in program offerings, funding and participant outcomes:

1. The CETC, and its member state agencies, should adopt the essential components outlined in this report as the standards for all contextualized learning programs and require these elements in all state RFPs. These funding opportunities should either provide or require leveraging of the necessary resources to fully implement these elements. In addition, these agencies should offer multi-year funding whenever possible and resources for evaluation to document the impact of these projects.
2. The CETC must support culture change in adult education to promote adoption of contextualized learning and its widespread implementation. The State Department of Education should offer training and technical assistance for instructors and agencies to learn about the contextualized learning essential elements as well as to offer more experienced providers of contextualized learning programs with the opportunity to learn from one another and adopt new promising practices.
3. The State Departments of Education and Labor should adopt a set of metrics in line with the essential program components to document and track performance outcomes for all contextualized learning programs supported by public funding. Outcomes should be reported to the CETC to document the strengths, challenges and outcomes of these programs and shared with the state legislature, program providers and other interested stakeholders.
4. The Career Advancement Committee should continue to convene Connecticut practitioners and other stakeholders including funding agencies to track progress on contextualized learning

programs, identify and share information on state and national promising practices and prepare an annual update to the CETC on the status of contextualized learning programs in the state.

Conclusion

The CETC's Career Advancement Committee is convinced that Connecticut's support of contextualized learning programs is critical. Other states are already setting policy and implementing and funding efforts to address the skills gaps of their adult workforce. Connecticut leaders must do the same and in short order if we expect to advance the careers of the state's current and future workers and help meet the immediate and long term needs of its employers.

ⁱ Wider Opportunities for Women (2012). *The Basic Economic Security Tables for Connecticut*.

ⁱⁱ Wider Opportunities for Women (2012). *The Basic Economic Security Tables for Connecticut*.

ⁱⁱⁱ National Skills Coalition (January 2013). *Connecticut's Middle-Skills Jobs*.

^{iv} Connecticut Business and Industry Association (2013). <http://www.cbia.com>

^v Rothwell, Jonathan, Brookings (August 2012). *Education, Job Openings, and Unemployment in Metropolitan America*.

^{vi} CT Department of Labor presentation to the CT Employment and Training Commission. December 12, 2013.

^{vii} CT Department of Labor presentation to the CT Employment and Training Commission. December 12, 2013.

^{viii} DeLott Baker, Hope and Karandjeff (October 2009). *Contextualized Teaching and Learning*.

^{ix} Perin (July 2011). *Facilitating Student Learning Through Contextualization: A Review of Evidence*.

^x Martin and Broadus (May 2013). *Enhancing GED Instruction to Prepare Students for College and Careers*.

^{xi} Jobs for the Future (Spring 2010). *Breaking Through Practice Guide: Accelerating the Pace of Learning*.

^{xii} Martin and Broadus (May 2013). *Enhancing GED Instruction to Prepare Students for College and Careers*.

^{xiii} Cross Sector Consulting (July 2013). *Hartford IBEST Construction Project Evaluation Report*.

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