

Contextualized GED: An Overview of Program Models

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Background

Contextualized GED instruction integrates the academic skills students need to obtain their GED with career or occupational knowledge. Using contextualized instruction, students may learn the GED curriculum through the lens of a particular occupation or career field. These students may earn a vocational certificate along with their GED. Other programs contextualize the GED more broadly to career readiness; students of these programs might graduate with a GED and a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) or another “employment ready” credential. Others still are situated as the starting point to vocational training that continues at the college level. Students of these courses may come out of a contextualized class with their GED in hand and ready to continue their training at the college level. These approaches tend to be interrelated and many programs utilize them in some combination. Broadly speaking, then, contextualized GED programs are those in which:

- students obtain their GED and a vocational certificate simultaneously; and/or
- students obtain their GED and a general career readiness certificate simultaneously; and/or
- Students obtain their GED and begin occupational training which they continue in a postsecondary program.

The distinguishing feature of these models is that GED instruction is contextualized; in other words, instructors teach students the subject areas needed to pass the GED exam in the context of a specific vocation, occupational field, or employment readiness certification.

Contextualized GED programming is part of a wider set of relatively new innovations in delivering adult education designed to minimize the time it takes for students to earn credentials that pay off in the labor market and/or to maximize the number of adult education students successfully transitioning to college. Increasingly, having a high school diploma/GED is not enough to obtain work that pays a living wage, offers opportunities for advancement, or meets employers’ skill needs. Here in Minnesota, as the Governor’s Workforce Development Council reports in its 2011 policy advisory, [All Hands on Deck: Fifteen Ideas for Strengthening Minnesota’s Workforce](#), fully 70 percent of jobs in the state will require education beyond high school within the coming decade. Yet today, only 40 percent of working-age adults here possess a postsecondary degree.

In response to these kinds of troubling facts educators, workforce development professionals, policymakers, and other stakeholders around the country have been experimenting with ways to improve adults’ education and employment outcomes. A primary strategy has been integrating vocational and basic skills instruction. This is the approach of Minnesota FastTRAC,

programming in which ABE and community college instructors together teach courses that weave basic math and literacy skills into occupational training. To date, however, contextualized GED courses have not been a part of FastTRAC.

Contextualization & Changes to GED/ABE

A redesigned GED exam is set to be released in 2014; as a result, the number of contextualized GED courses being offered around the country may grow. Along with significant content changes in the five subject-matter tests and a reworking of curricula, the GED will be repositioned as a step in a journey toward postsecondary training, rather than as an end in itself. Epitomizing that shift, the new exam will have two passing points: the traditional one signifying high school equivalency and an additional, higher one indicating college and career readiness.

Even more immediate changes to federal education policy may affect the design and delivery of GED courses. First, effective July 1, 2012, Congress has revoked the “Ability to Benefit” (AtB) provision of federal financial aid, which means that college students will no longer be eligible for aid if they do not have a high school diploma or GED. Current law enables students with financial need (who score high enough on the Accuplacer or another federally-approved, postsecondary-level test) to obtain help paying for college, and thus, make progress toward a certificate or degree that increases their employability. The revocation of AtB will cut off this streamlined pathway to credentials for low-income students. As such, the timing may be right to develop contextualized GED courses here in Minnesota, maintaining an avenue for low-income, non-traditional students to access valuable vocational skills.

A second change with implications for GED programming stems from new data guidelines established by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) at the U.S. Department of Education for the National Reporting System (NRS) – the accountability system for adult education. Currently, the NRS requires ABE providers to measure progress toward outcomes (obtaining a secondary school credential, entering postsecondary education, entering employment, or retaining employment) only for students who state these outcomes as (a) goal/s when they begin classes. The new rules, also effective July 1, 2012, require ABE programs to track outcomes based on student characteristics rather than articulated goals. For example, the NRS will now require tracking employment outcomes for all program exiters who were unemployed when they started classes, not just those who stated obtaining a job as a goal.

These changes to the NRS reflect the growing emphasis on career preparation and postsecondary credential attainment among adult learners, and a consensus among educators and policymakers that ABE must track these gains for all learners. Like the revocation of AtB, the new reporting requirements may serve as a catalyst to expand a career preparation orientation within ABE, including GED courses contextualized to occupations/career fields.

Several contextualized GED programs already exist around the nation, and this report will describe them in some detail (a variety of programs are cited throughout the document; a list appears at the end, with links to curriculum where available). While no two programs are

exactly alike, many share common characteristics – things like cross-system collaboration, employer engagement, hands-on learning opportunities, and comprehensive support services – all of which will sound familiar to practitioners in the state who are already engaged in ABE transitions, career pathways, and Minnesota FastTRAC. The report will provide further explanation, including examples from around the country, of the three categories of contextualized GED program models introduced above (GED + vocational certificate, GED + career readiness certificate, and GED + postsecondary). First, however, it will take a closer look at the cross-system collaboration upon which all of these program types are typically built. The report will conclude with a discussion of student support services, which are critical to student success across all types of contextualized GED programs, and a brief look at some of the challenges and possible solutions to implementing this type of programming in Minnesota.

Accelerating Opportunity

Some of our best models of contextualized GED programming come from the **Accelerating Opportunity** initiative, managed jointly by Jobs for the Future (JFF), the National Council on Workforce Education (NCWE), and the Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges' Integrated Basic Skills and Training (I-BEST) program. Accelerating Opportunity is a four-year, multistate initiative that builds off a predecessor effort of the same groups, called Breaking Through. Accelerating Opportunity aims to:

- Change the way ABE is structured and delivered at the state and institutional levels.
- Ensure that state policies encourage dramatically improved results in terms of the number of individuals who complete credentials of value in the labor market.
- Substantially increase the number of adults who can earn a GED and a credential and enter the workplace with competitive skills.

In their 2010 report, **Breaking Through Contextualization Toolkit: A Tool for Helping Low-Skilled Adults Gain Postsecondary Certificates and Degrees**, JFF and NCWE describe in detail GED contextualization programs.

Cross-System Collaboration

A review of the literature suggests that contextualized GED programs are not created in a “basic skills vacuum,” but rather are typically borne out of partnerships involving some combination of ABE instructors, community colleges, employers/industry groups, and workforce development providers. This is not surprising, given that contextualized GED programs can be viewed as the first step in career pathways training, which themselves are built on cross-systems partnerships.

Through the collaborative process, stakeholders determine where to build contextualized courses and jointly develop course content. Cross-system partnerships may also be used to identify students for course participation, provide them with support services, and in some cases, deliver instruction.

A. Determining where to contextualize. A first step to building contextualized courses is ensuring that it is useful to the local economy. Educators must rely on employers and workforce development professionals to provide critical information about local or regional skill needs and economic projections – information that enables them to make informed choices about the occupational areas for which they choose to build contextualized courses.

For instance, the [Breaking Through Contextualization Toolkit](#) (see box above) describes how Davidson County Community College (DCCC) in North Carolina uses information gleaned from local employers and WIA providers about labor market demand, job placement rates, and the availability of short-term certificates to identify where to contextualize its Basic Skills program. Through this process, DCCC has contextualized its GED instruction to a number of occupations, including certified nursing assistant; pharmacy technology; phlebotomy; medical office; truck driving; automotive technician; HVAC; welding; and early-childhood education.

For its part, Black Hawk College (BHC) in Moline, Illinois, developed contextualized GED and ESL courses designed to prepare students to transition to the college's Warehouse and Distribution Specialist (WDS) certificate program. As described in the 2010 report, [Bridge Programs in Illinois: Summaries, outcomes, and cross-site findings](#), this selection was made as part of a broader effort to build transportation, distribution, and logistics (TDL) programming at BHC to better serve the needs of local industry connected to the nearby Mississippi River and east-west interstate.

Another North Carolina school, Central Piedmont Community College, worked with the state's Employment Security Commission, Job Link, and the Department of Social Services to identify short-term training opportunities that would enable Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) participants to fill local employers skill needs. Using this information, the partners created [Pathways to Employment](#), providing contextualized GED courses that prepare students for entry-level employment in several career fields, including heating and cooling, medical reimbursement, pharmacy, and welding.

B. Developing course content. Once occupational areas have been identified for contextualization, educators may utilize employers, as well as vocational instructors at the postsecondary level, to help inform course content. At DCCC, for example, Basic Skills staff meet with academic deans in selected occupational areas to determine the skill expectations of college-level students; these expectations, in turn, typically reflect the input employers give through their involvement on various college advisory committees. Similarly, in Long Island City, New York, [LaGuardia Community College's Pre-College Academic Programming \(PCAP\)](#) department offers GED Bridge to College and Careers – specifically, GED Bridge to Health Careers and GED Bridge to Business Careers. PCAP instructors meet with academic health instructors to learn more about the tasks and skills required of health care professionals and about the texts the faculty use, so that they may incorporate them into the GED program. (LaGuardia Community College Bridge to College and Careers posts certain curriculum at: http://www.laguardia.edu/pcap/for_educators/)

Similarly, Virginia’s **PlugGED In VA** relies on cross-system collaboration to offer GED curriculum contextualized to digital literacy skills and professional soft skills. Students engage in various project-based learning activities that give them entry-level technology skills identified as critical by local technology sector employers, who have also provided mentors to support program participants. PlugGED In VA is a “two phase” program: as students develop increased skill levels, they move from Phase One to Phase Two, focusing less on GED-related content and more on

professional soft skills and project work, an approach that allows instructors to customize instruction for each participant according to his or her experience and skill level.

(Examples of curriculum can be found in the **PlugGED In VA Instructor’s Manual**.)

Strategies for Developing Contextualized Curricula

Contextualized GED instructors must understand the academic and career competencies that their students need. The **Breaking Through Contextualization Toolkit** describes some common methods instructors use to gain the knowledge they need to develop contextualized course curricula. Instructors may:

- Meet with technical and noncredit/workforce instructors who can explain the technical skills required in a career field, based on their direct work experiences or the competencies they cover in their different career courses.
- Meet with employers in the career field who can share on-the-ground knowledge about the skills needed by their employees, advances in the field, and deficiencies among new hires.
- Use WorkKeys, which has job profiles containing detailed information about job tasks and skill levels required to perform successfully on the job.
- Job shadow a professional in the career field.
- Attend or observe technical classes at the college.
- Review syllabi from other courses.

The **Breaking Through Contextualization Toolkit** describes how, in some instances, instructors have also developed course content using WorkKeys, which has job profiles containing detailed information about the tasks and skill requirements associated with different occupations. Other strategies for gaining occupational knowledge (listed in the box on the left) include job shadowing, attending or observing vocational classes, and reviewing syllabi from other courses.

C. Selecting participants, offering support services & joint instruction. In some cases, cross-system collaboration can incorporate things like participant selection and/or joint instruction. In Virginia, for instance, the Southwest Regional Adult Education program and Southwest Virginia Community College have partnered to provide instruction in the PlugGED In VA program. Arizona has built contextualized GED programs through robust partnerships between the Adult Education and Workforce Development systems in what is known as the **Arizona Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (AZ I-BEST)**. Under AZ I-BEST, public assistance recipients without a high school diploma are given the opportunity to earn their GED and complete an occupational certificate simultaneously. GED courses have been contextualized to a variety of occupational areas – including health care, electrical training for construction, and dental technology – with college educators providing occupational content, ABE teachers delivering basic skills instruction, and workforce personnel offering job seeking skills and placement services.

In one AZ I-BEST program, Rio Salado Community College and Phoenix Workforce Connection have partnered to offer a dental assisting technology course where, four days a week, a college instructor provides vocational content for three hours and the last 30 minutes of class are given over to a GED teacher to contextualize the material. The instructors collaboratively create curriculum outlines in weekly meetings. Every Friday, students attend a 3.5 hour class with the GED instructor alone. Employment counselors from the Workforce Connection provide career readiness support and assistance with things like child care and transportation.

Contextualized GED Program Models

Occupational Preparation

This approach to contextualized GED programming enables students to obtain the technical skills required for entry-level work in a particular occupational category. In addition to their GED, students of these courses may exit with an occupational/vocational certificate, or simply possessing the skills needed for to fill entry-level jobs in certain industries. Not surprisingly, occupation-specific GED instruction is well suited for those students certain of the career path they want to pursue, and for those looking to gain marketable skills quickly. To help ensure students select the right GED+ vocational course, some programs have them take a career aptitude test or interest inventory.

Numerous programs around the country operate this model. Examples include Indiana's **GED+** program, which enables students to earn a GED along with a career certificate for 15 different occupations, including CNC operator, pharmacy technician, and welder. North Carolina's Pathways to Careers program also prepares GED students for employment in pharmacy and welding, as well as several other fields. Here in Minnesota, the **Hubbs Center for Lifelong Learning** in Saint Paul offers a number of occupational prep courses – many of them designed as entry points to skills training students will need to continue, but some, like the ServSafe Food Safety Class and Retail/Customer Service, provide learners with employment-ready certificates. While occupational courses at the Hubbs Center have traditionally been offered separately from GED instruction, the center recently launched its first integrated program, contextualizing GED prep to its Child Development class.

In Virginia, the Department of Education – Office of Adult Education and Literacy contracted with the **Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center** (VALRC) to produce instruction guides for teaching the GED contextualized to both health care and hospitality. VALRC notes the benefits of offering a career-based GED curriculum:

- It can help to expand a GED program and increase the incentive for students to attend.
- It offers opportunities to partner with local employers, who may commit to interviewing GED completers, giving them an advantage in finding a job.
- It may help a GED program satisfy the NRS goals of obtaining and retaining employment.

The literature from VALRC cautions, however, that the success of contextualized GED courses depends on several elements:

- The students' interest in this particular career choice.
- The involvement and interest level of employers/partners in the career field.
- Recruitment strategies.
- The teacher's ability to instruct in workplace skills as well as GED content.

Some programs offer GED instruction contextualized to a broad career field, rather than specific occupations. Not surprisingly, using broad career fields allows for more flexibility; the curriculum is less restrictive than it would be if one had to weave the skills from a single occupation into the GED subject areas. The [Breaking Through Contextualization Toolkit](#) describes some of the advantages of contextualizing the GED using career fields:

- Career fields offer a large pool of career content to draw upon when designing course activities and assignments.
- A course covering a career field is relevant to a larger student population. This is particularly important for small community colleges (including those in rural locations) that may not have enough students interested in a particular occupation to fill a course contextualized for that occupation alone.
- Contextualizing using career fields/career clusters can offer students an increased ability to generalize the content. Even if they switch their occupation of interest within the same career field, they still benefit from the skills/credits obtained in the program.

This broader approach comes with its own set of challenges. The Toolkit warns:

- It is more difficult to build the technical, in-depth skills required for a particular occupation, which may reduce the likelihood that students will earn occupational credits that count toward a credential for a contextualized course.
- It may be difficult for instructors to gain a good enough understanding of all the different occupations within the career field to create course activities that represent the range of occupations in the field.

Career Readiness

The 2009 [Guide to Adult Education for Work: Transforming Adult Education to Grow a Skilled Workforce](#), produced by the National Center for Education and the Economy, notes the ABE programs tend to provide students with, at best, unsystematic information about career pathways planning. To ensure that adults are making informed decisions about pursuing training, the Guide argues that ABE instruction should be infused at all levels with information about regional labor markets; career options in growth industries that provide family-sustaining employment; and education and training pathways to prepare for them for those jobs.

Indeed, a growing number GED programs are contextualized to prepare students more broadly for the workplace – either in addition to, or instead of, focusing on a specific occupation or career field. Students of these programs might exit with a career readiness certificate of some sort along with their GED (and, in some instances, a vocational certificate as well). For example,

Skill Up Kentucky is a contextualized GED program that emphasizes “professional soft skills” to enhance students’ marketability. At the end of this six-month adult education program, students earn their GED, the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), Microsoft digital literacy certifications, and college credits in the contextualized field of study. Note that an approach that emphasizes computer literacy can simultaneously prepare students for the new GED test, which will be computer based.

Similarly, **PlugGED In VA** is designed so that at the end of six months, successful program participants will have earned both a GED and NCRC, developed a technology portfolio, and been given the opportunity to earn several Microsoft certifications. Further, PlugGED In graduates earn community college credit, are eligible for post-secondary scholarships, and given an opportunity to interview at a local technology facility. And, as part of an overarching effort to revamp its adult education programming in 2010, Louisiana officially expanded the purpose of adult education beyond literacy and GED attainment to focus on work-readiness and sustainable employment. Through its new **WorkReady U** program, students prepare and test for the GED as well as the NCRC (and receive employment placement assistance and postsecondary enrollment support).

A 2011 report by Jobs for the Future, **From GED to College Degree: Creating Pathways to Postsecondary Success for High School Dropouts**, recommends that “work readiness preparation” be core component in all ABE programs so that students acquire academic and job skills concurrently, making them more employable. The report notes that this will require a shift from contextualized learning focused on “life skills” (e.g., writing a letter to a friend, reading a menu, etc.) to contextualized learning focused on the skills needed in the workplace. To the extent possible, classrooms should simulate a workplace environment where behaviors required to keep a job are expected (e.g., timeliness, assignment completion, proper attire, team work, etc.).

College Preparation

Many contextualized GED programs position themselves as the starting point for skills training to be continued at the postsecondary level (this is sometimes referred to as “GED Plus”). Indeed, there has been a significant push in Minnesota and around the country in the last decade or so to help ABE students transition into college programs (through Bridge programs and other innovations). **From GED to College Degree** describes the impetus behind this push: nationwide, nearly 680,000 people take the full battery of GED tests each year, more than three-quarters pass, nearly half of all GED holders eventually enroll in postsecondary education, yet just four percent persist to earn a degree.

Thus, some contextualized GED courses have been developed as part of a larger career pathways training model, and aim to better prepare students not just for employment, but for further skill acquisition at the postsecondary level. These courses may be specifically designed to get students ready for college-level work in a particular field. At La Guardia Community College, for example, instructors in the GED Bridge to Health Careers program teach GED preparation through case studies, a technique that is often used in college-level health care

studies. Students learn material pertinent to the GED exam, as well as content and skills that prepare them for credit-bearing college coursework, such as writing extended essays that draw on multiple sources.

At Black Hawk College, the ESL instructor developed a contextualized reading, writing, and math curriculum applicable to the college's larger TDL industry cluster curriculum. To prepare her contextualized ESL curriculum, she used TDL course texts to identify the academic skills and occupational vocabulary her students would need to know to successfully transition to the postsecondary-level program. Along with their GED, Warehouse Distribution students can earn an Inventory Specialist Certificate and, ultimately, an Associate in Science degree in Supply Chain Management – which has recently been articulated to a baccalaureate degree program in Supply Chain Management at Western Illinois University. As reported in [Bridge Programs in Illinois: Summaries, outcomes, and cross-site findings](#), of the 25 students enrolled in the contextualized GED program in the spring of 2008, 84% completed and 100% entered some form of postsecondary instruction.

In addition to college-level course content, contextualized GED programs often aim to prepare students for the college experience more generally. In many places, courses are housed on college campuses, fostering a sense of familiarity and belonging among adult education students. Students participating in the contextualized GED program at North Carolina's DCCC visit for-credit classes as part of an effort to connect with other students pursuing degrees in their career areas of interest. La Guardia's PCAP program offers "college student for a day" and provides "college knowledge" – things like understanding the concept of a credit hour or applying for financial aid. Of the 500 students served through PCAP since 2007, 70% have earned their GED and 65% of those GED earners have transitioned to postsecondary training and education programs.

Student Supports

With increasing frequency, adult education programs are offering not only academic and vocational skills training, but a range of support services designed to ensure that students successfully complete their course of studies; contextualized GED programs are no exception.

The WDS program at Black Hawk College, for example, employed a part-time "transition coordinator" (funded through Illinois Shifting Gears initiative) who was responsible for recruiting students for the bridge courses and then supporting them throughout the program. The BHC transition coordinator provided the students with a range of services, from coaching and encouragement to academic and financial aid advisement, and assistance in finding resources for childcare and transportation. In addition, prior to the beginning of the WDS courses, the coordinator developed an orientation session for the instructors that included brief biographical sketches of each student. The sketches were intended to raise awareness about the diverse circumstances from which the students hailed, and to bring sensitivity to the challenges they faced.

In addition, the transition coordinator also offered four Orientation/Transition workshops for the WDS students, designed to bond the previously separate cohorts (GED and ESL); assist the students in completing course registration materials; and introduce them to the college campus, resources, services, and policies. As students neared the end of the WDS program, the coordinator provided them with interview practice, résumé preparation, and employer contacts.

Comprehensive support services are also integral to the success of the Pathways to Employment program at Central Piedmont Community College. The Department of Social Services partners with the college to recruit TANF participants, and provides an on-site social worker to assist with personal problems, such as childcare and transportation, that may interfere with those participants' attendance and success. Once the course itself ends, students may access the colleges' Job Placement Services department to help find employment. In addition, the Work-Based Learning program at CCCC offers some graduates an opportunity to use their time in class toward work experience. The program is similar to an internship, where students receive academic credit for working with a local employer.

Note that Minnesota FastTRAC is moving toward the implementation of a "navigator" – a staff person from the partnership whom the students can turn to for guidance and troubleshooting on a variety of academic and personal issues.

Challenges & Potential Solutions

A. Instructor workload. One of the greatest challenges to implementing contextualized GED programming is the work it requires of the instructors. Instructors must become highly knowledgeable about the vocation/s or career field/s they are teaching; and they must take the time and have the skills to incorporate that information into lesson plans designed to prepare students to pass the GED subject tests. Again, collaborating with vocational instructors at community colleges (which, in some cases, may mean utilizing integrated instruction similar to the FastTRAC model) and employers will help ABE teachers understand the technical skills they will need to impart to students.

"Contextualization is not easy to develop or to implement, yet it presents the opportunity to create a program or course that meets the distinct needs of a vulnerable population, offering a unique approach for reaching low-skilled adults. Research and practice indicate that contextualization can motivate students and ease transitions into higher-level academic and career courses. Moreover, this approach makes it possible to introduce career skill development at the earliest stages of basic skills coursework, rather than forcing students to wait until they complete all basic skills courses."

From [Breaking Through Contextualization Toolkit: A Tool for Helping Low-Skilled Adults Gain Postsecondary Certificates and Degrees](#), 2011.

Given the work expected of instructors, incentives to teach contextualized courses, such as stipends for curriculum development, could be critical. Further, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) – ABE Office can support instructors by providing a repository of contextualized curricula that includes both course content from around the country that is publicly available and curriculum that may developed by ABE programs within the state. In

addition, MDE-ABE/ATLAS can offer training and resources to support instructors' efforts to design and implement contextualized GED courses.

B. Making connections. Successful contextualized programming also depends on creating courses that are relevant to the local economy. ABE instructors and program managers will need labor market data and information from employers and industry groups about skills gaps and job vacancies to decide which vocations to contextualize the GED to. Again, this is asking a lot of instructors; MDE-ABE could provide a supporting role here, ensuring that local programs are linked to Regional Labor Market Analysts at the Department of Employment and Economic Development and to employer groups. This work could perhaps be undertaken in the field by Regional Transition Coordinators.

C. Course selection. Another challenge to contextualized GED programming is aligning courses with students' career interests and instructors' capacity. Again, decisions about where to contextualize should be made in light of local labor market needs, but ABE programs will have to narrow down options from there. At first, programs may want to stick to courses where curricula already exists – health care, hospitality, child development, and some of the other career areas referenced in this report. Additional courses can be built as local employer/industry needs change, student interests coalesce around certain career fields, or more curricula become available. Alternatively, some ABE programs may choose to implement GED+ career readiness certificate courses, preparing students for employment more generally. As mentioned earlier in this report, this approach may work particularly well in more rural areas, where amassing enough students interested in the same career could make it impractical to offer GED courses tied to a specific vocational certificate.

D. Costs. Finally, contextualized instruction can be expensive, with costs for staff training and curriculum development, materials, student recruitment, career aptitude assessments, support services, and the like. Support for this work could come from ABE Supplemental Services Grants and/or from FastTRAC funding (by lobbying for dollars that can reach a large number of learners on the lower rungs of career pathways). Additional resources could be sought through public funding (for example, the Minnesota Job Skills Partnership Pathways or Low-Income Worker grants) or philanthropic grants that aim to serve low-income, low-skill adults and respond to local labor market needs. Further, ABE could leverage its partnerships with local Workforce Investment Boards to share the costs of delivering the NCRC for programs that want to contextualize the GED to a work readiness certificate.

Resource List

Jobs for the Future and the National Council for Workforce Education provide strategies for establishing, teaching, funding, and recruiting for contextualized programs based on models from a number of states in their 2010 report, [Breaking Through Contextualization Toolkit: A Tool for Helping Low-Skilled Adults Gain Postsecondary Certificates and Degrees](#):
http://www.jff.org/sites/default/files/BT_toolkit_June7.pdf

The Jobs for the Future 2011 report, [From GED to College Degree: Creating Pathways to Postsecondary Success for High School Dropouts](#), offers ideas for GED instruction geared specifically to college preparation.
http://www.jff.org/sites/default/files/FromGEDtoCollegeDegree_042211.pdf

The 2009 [Guide to Adult Education for Work: Transforming Adult Education to Grow a Skilled Workforce](#), produced by the National Center for Education and the Economy, builds off of recommendations by the National Commission on Adult Literacy to refocus adult education to better prepare individuals for work. It contains strategies for curriculum development and instruction delivery, not limited to GED courses.
http://www.ncee.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/adult_ed_work_guide.pdf

The University of Illinois – Urbana, Office of Community College Research and Leadership’s 2010 report, [Bridge Programs in Illinois: Summaries, outcomes, and cross-site findings](#), overviews a variety of approaches to providing low-skill adults with “on-ramps” into postsecondary programs and career training.
http://occr.illinois.edu/files/Projects/shifting_gears/Report/SG_PP_6_Sites_Report.pdf

La Guardia Community College Bridge to College and Careers posts certain contextualized GED curriculum at http://www.laguardia.edu/pcap/for_educators/

Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center posts its [GED Career Bridge to Health Care Curriculum](#) at <http://www.valrc.org/publications/healthcare/index.html> and its [GED Career Bridge to Hospitality Curriculum](#) at <http://www.valrc.org/publications/hospitality/index.html>