UMass
Labor/Management Workplace Education Program
Volunteer Handbook

2015–2016
Welcome to LMWEP

Thank you for volunteering in the UMass Labor/Management Workplace Education Program! We welcome your enthusiasm, participation and skills to enhance LMWEP and the lives of those we serve. If you have any questions about LMWEP, feel free to ask the contacts listed at the end of this handbook.

LMWEP’s mission is to inspire and support innovative worker learning within our University community, the Commonwealth, and beyond. On campus, LMWEP’s goal is to empower UMass staff to learn new skills and gain confidence to improve their lives at work and at home.

LMWEP is a workplace education partnership based at UMass Amherst offering quality, worksite education and training to frontline workers - maintainers, secretaries, trades workers; professional, technical and support staff.

LMWEP offers a range of options, from workplace English classes to introductory computer and office application classes, to ‘Next Steps’ classes that develop valuable leadership and professional people skills.

"LMWEP is our hope on the UMass campus."
- Francis Martin, Jr., President AFSCME Local 1776
Our Roots

Twenty-five years ago, the Labor/Management Workplace Education Program started out with a grant award in our pocket and an untested employer-union partnership. But we set forth with lots of goodwill, a solid belief in participatory worker education, and a resolve to make a difference.

We’ve traveled far and wide these past two plus decades. We’ve transitioned from a small, campus-only worker education program with limited offerings to a regional worker education center able to offer a full-range of learning opportunities. We are proud to provide workplace education programs across Massachusetts and in the Pioneer Valley particularly.

Since 1987 we have doubled our core partners and tripled our teaching staff. We have raised some $6 million in grant awards, launched 25 workplace education sites in our region, and currently are working to set up an on-campus LMWEP Educational Trust Fund. Attesting to the quality of our instructors (and learners), we have received regional, state, and national awards.

“If the UMASS Workplace Education Program is involved, we know the instruction will be high quality, innovative, and effective. Our experience is that LMWEP knows how to connect with learners---knows how to make education in the workplace both enjoyable and meaningful. They are tops.”

- Patricia H. Crosby, Executive Director
Franklin/Hampshire Regional Employment Board
**LMWEP Classes (Spring 2015)**

*For on-campus tutors or classroom aides*

**Workplace English**

Beginning Level English  
*Tuesdays & Thursdays*  
1 to 3 p.m.  
February 10 to April 30

Intermediate Level with Introductory Computer  
*Mondays & Wednesdays*  
1 to 3 p.m.  
February 9 to April 29

English for Dining Commons Staff  
*Mondays & Wednesdays*  
1:30 to 3:30 p.m.  
February 9 to April 29

English for Custodial Services Staff  
*Tuesdays & Thursdays*  
5 to 7 p.m.  
February 10 to April 30

**Computer Courses**

Introduction to Computers  
*Tuesdays*  
9 to 10:45 a.m.  
February 10 to April 21 (No class on March 17)

Introduction to MS Office Pro  
*Tuesdays*  
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
February 10 to April 21 (No class on March 17)
Introduction to Adobe Photoshop  
*Wednesdays*  
9 to 11 a.m.  
February 11 to March 11

Introduction to Drupal at UMass  
*Wednesdays*  
9 to 11 a.m.  
March 25 to April 22

Adobe Acrobat Pro  
*Thursdays*  
9 to 10:45 a.m.  
February 12 to March 12

Introduction to MS Excel  
*Thursdays*  
9 to 10:45 a.m.  
March 26 to April 23

Introduction to Drupal (for USA/MTA Members Only)  
*Wednesdays*  
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
February 11 to March 11

Advanced WORD (for USA/MTA Members Only)  
*Wednesdays*  
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
March 25 to April 22

*In the event of a Snow Day, class will be cancelled. University days that are rescheduled due to holidays will be treated as their true days. Please contact your Instructor if you are unsure if a class will be held.*
**A Brief LMWEP History**

**1987**
- Conceptualization of LMWEP in the spring
- Identification of funding for worker education services by AFSCME member and UMass janitor, Paul Barrows, in January
- Approval of LMWEP funding proposal in August
- Production and airing of LMWEP Recruitment video that stars frontline campus workers
- Launch of tripartite, 20-person Advisory Committee (including Chancellor Oswald Tippo)
- Public Launch of LMWEP at Chancellor’s House in September
- Start of LMWEP classes in workplace English (ESOL) and adult basic education (ABE)

**1988**
- Host campus visit by U.S. Labor Secretary Paul Eustice
- Printing of Blueprint for Workplace Education, a guide to LMWEP
- Positive program evaluation from independent evaluators on and off campus
- Presentation at statewide programs meeting: Effective Recruitment Design
- Launch of Northampton State Hospital Project
- Spotlight Award from State Workplace Education for innovative recruitment practices

**1989**
- Diversity Issues Workshop to 150 Plant employees
- Start of UMass operating funds for LMWEP
- Launch of Health Education and Literacy Project on campus
- First learner book published, Joe Gregoire’s Journal
Start of Spanish for the Workplace at Northampton State Hospital

First non-grant operating funds provided, via an award from AFSCME International

Launch of Next Steps: LMWEP offerings that address people skills like: leadership, communication, problem-solving, teamwork, critical thinking, diversity

First newsletter for participant learner writings published, “The Learner Letter”

1990

National New Ideas Award from the College and University Personnel Association for our Empowerment Education for Blue-collar Workers

Collaboration with the Teams Project from the School of Education (students as tutors)

Worker education services for Massachusetts Department of Public Works in Northampton

Video of learners interviewing each other and evaluating their experience in Next Steps

UMass workers receive 100% work release time for class attendance

...fast forward...

2007

Major funding contributions to LMWEP by the Physical Plant administration

Launch of Central Berkshires needs assessment project

Presentation of BayState Works Project at Regional Employment Board

97th meeting of Advisory Committee: Prof. Sarah Poissant, Chairperson
LMWEP celebrates 20 years of successful, innovative workplace education partnership with UMass

2008

- Computer classroom upgraded with 15 new desktop computers and new data projector
- LMWEP's computer offerings greatly expanded to include classes most MS Office Suite applications
- New classes in Dreamweaver and Website Design offered for first time
- Expanded collaboration with Commonwealth College’s Community Service Learning Program, the IMPACT! Program, and other CSL programs on campus
- Over 20 CSL volunteers from the above programs assist in LMWEP’s on-campus classes as tutors

2009

- Move to new South College space with 2 dedicated classrooms, office and meeting space for first time
- LMWEP adds more ESOL levels to class offerings
- Waitlists for computer classes indicating great interest and need on part of UMass staff
- LMWEP consults with UMass Boston on setting up a workplace education program there
- State-wide grant to do workplace needs analysis at multiple cafeteria worksites in K-12 schools across Massachusetts (MassTERI)

2010

- LMWEP becomes core partner with UMASS’ Commonwealth Honors College’s Community Engagement Program (CEP)
LMWEP welcomes its first Citizen Scholar and community service student liaison volunteers from CEP

New classes in Digital Photography Basics offered for first time

First Financial Literacy workshop series begins in collaboration with the Five College Credit Union

LMWEP initiates on-campus anti-bullying effort with Giving and Getting Respect class

2011

LMWEP celebrates 10 years of participation in College for A Day at Holyoke Community College with 10 UMass workers attending

Collecting Workers’ Stories: An oral history project conducted by students from Commonwealth College as part of their Capstone class

MassTERI project in K-12 schools pilots workplace education classes in 3 cities across the Massachusetts

First workshops in Home Buying 101, Understanding Union Contracts, and Insider View of Hiring Decisions offered

2012

New English classes: LMWEP tutors hold first 1-on-1 evening English tutoring sessions & first English for Dining Services class held!

Kindred Voices II, the second anthology of the Workers Writing Project, is published

Workplace English for 1199 union members in western Mass. started to offer ESOL classes to personal care attendants from Holyoke and Springfield.

2013
- LMWEP put up all new Drupal-based website with online registration for the first time!
- LMWEP celebrates 25th Anniversary on campus with gala event attended by 350 people!
- Community Works Project started, a construction trades pre-apprenticeship education program for low-income residents in Holyoke and Springfield, especially those under-represented in the trades (women and people of color)

2014
- New computer classes offered, including Introduction to InDesign and Drupal for UMass staff
- English and computer classrooms moved into new spaces with 15 new computers upgraded with latest software
- English for Custodial Services started.
- First workshops in Home Retro fits to save energy, solar hot water and solar electricity offered!
SHAEC: Southern Hilltowns Adult Education Center
- Based in Huntington, MA
- Offers community-based adult education in computer skills, career guidance, and General Educational Development (GED) preparation, among other things. The center holds classes for the entire community and anyone living in the region can attend.

MassTERI: the Massachusetts Training, Evaluation, and Research Initiative
- Based in three school systems in Lawrence, Monson, and Pittsfield.
- MassTERI’s mission is to contribute to the mastery of skills and workplace competencies of school nutrition personnel by providing evidence-based training, evaluation, and research. This workplace initiative began offering classes in 2011.

Community Works
- Began in Springfield, MA but grew to include Holyoke, MA
- Aims to give low-wage workers in the two economically hard-hit communities access training for and access to apprenticeship programs in the trades, to become carpenters, electricians, plumbers, and other jobs in the construction industry.

Early Childhood Education Initiative:
- Contextualized ABE and ESOL for low-wage early childhood educators at sites in Holyoke and Springfield.

Together, the off-campus satellites serve approximately two hundred and fifty people per year.
Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers

It is your right:

- To be assigned a job that is worthwhile and challenging.
- To receive the orientation, training, and supervision necessary to do the job.
- To feel that your efforts have real purpose and contribute to the organization's mission.
- To receive feedback and evaluation on the work that you perform and be allowed to give feedback concerning all aspects of your work with LMWEP.
- To be treated with respect within the organization.
- To receive a prompt response to any questions or comments you might have.
- To expect that your time will not be wasted by poor planning or coordination by the organization.

It is your responsibility:

- Not to take on more responsibility than you can handle. Don’t burn yourself out!
- To ask for help when in doubt. Someone will always be there to help you out!
- To meet time commitments and be on time for class and to notify your Instructor if you will need to miss a class.
- To perform the tasks assigned to you to the best of your ability. Give it your all.
- To provide input on ways your tasks might be better performed. How can we make tutoring even better?
- To respect those confidences entrusted to you.
- To be open-minded and respectful towards opinions shared with you!
WORKING WITH ADULT LEARNERS

Names
Adults can set great store by the use of their names. We can see this in the way some people react immediately if their names are mispronounced or misspelled. By using the class members’ names, you can:

- pay someone the compliment of recognizing his or her individuality within the group,
- encourage them to contribute,
- draw one member more actively into the group,
- acknowledge a person with a moment’s attention,
- focus on an individual, and
- gain or regain a learner’s attention.

Anxiety
Adult learners can be anxious about:

- not understanding,
- not being as ‘clever’ as the rest of the group,
- failing,
- being judged
- making a fool of themselves.

Preoccupations and Distractions
When an adult attends a class it is only one activity among many in a crowded adult life. Adults have:

- relationships,
- occupations, jobs
- interests,
- hopes and desires,
- pleasures, and
- worries (money, health, kids, etc.)
During a class these other parts of their lives vie for the learners' attention. Learners can become preoccupied. They look at you, nod in the right places and apparently comply with your directions. But they can actually be seeing and hearing very little – and learning nothing. As the tutor you may need to provide variety, shifts in pace, and changes in activities and method. You are, in effect, continually competing for each person’s attention.

**Belonging and Recognition**

People need to belong and feel part of a group. We need affection. In an adult education class, you will notice that it takes some time for the group to form a sense of cohesion. Be supportive in helping individuals find their place and encourage the group to support one another.

Adults, like all of us, need recognition. In the course of your tutoring you will give them this by showing respect for what they already have done and who they are. Your relationship with your class will be a dual one – a relationship with the group and a set of relationships with the individual people in that group.
SOME TUTORING TIPS

As a tutor you will help learners who are struggling with a task by assisting them with:

- Breaking down complex problems into easy-to-understand parts.
- Describing a problem in words to improve student comprehension.
- Helping learners see patterns and connections in concepts to assist understanding.
- Being positive and giving specific praise to affirm learners’ strengths and successes.
- Not doing the work for a learner.
- Not telling a learner the answers.

With ESL learners:

- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Simplify vocabulary.
- Check often for comprehension: sometimes learners will nod along without understanding things.
- Use non-verbal cues.
- Use lots and lots of visuals! - it’s much easier to show what a tiger is than to describe it.
- Ask someone to translate: if there are many Spanish or Chinese speakers in a class, ask them what the word is in their language.
- Ask them to repeat words after you: pronunciation is especially difficult.
- Refrain from continually correcting them.
- Ask them to teach you something, or ask about their home life or their country.
- Have fun and use humor.
COMPUTER CLASSES & THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Because age is a basic determinant of the digital divide, the extension of adult education in learning digital skills is one of the most important policy decisions to make for closing the divide. The problem is that most people who are more than 35 years old, even in the developed countries, have not learned any digital skills during their years of schooling. If they did not enter a job requiring computer work after finishing their schooling, they must learn these skills themselves if they are to learn them at all. They learn from computer books and courses, from their children or from other proximate persons, and most often at home. Unfortunately, governments offer no structural solutions for this problem. Talk about “lifelong learning” abounds, but investment in it is scarce. Community technology centers, libraries, and some subsidized social and cultural educational institutions that offer cheap computer courses are, most often, the only options. Only a small part of the adult population uses these provisions to learn digital skills. The image of these institutions is that they are made for “poor people” and minorities.

For this reason, there is room for public and private initiatives in adult computer education for much larger parts of the population, emphasizing both distant education at home and a combination of distant education and classes or meetings in attractive local surroundings. The presumption made here is that this type of education is required not only for people who have never touched a computer or had access to the Internet. The lack of digital skills is spread across a much larger part of the adult population, even in advanced high-tech societies. This is a hidden problem that could be brought to the surface by a farsighted public educational policy and attractive commercial offerings.

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