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NorQuest College English in the Workplace training responds to the needs of Alberta businesses

Common Ground improves employee communication and cultural understanding

EDMONTON – The Centre for Excellence in Intercultural Education at NorQuest College launched a one-of-a-kind resource today that supports a growing number of Alberta businesses with increasingly diverse workforces. *Common Ground: English in the Workplace*, funded by Alberta Employment and Immigration, is a made-in-Alberta solution that enables business owners and human resource facilitators to teach English to employees in rural and urban work settings.

Common Ground: English in the Workplace is aimed at business and industry in rural communities with few English language training resources and at businesses in urban regions. It consists of three components: how-to guide for employers, how-to guide for facilitators and an employee training manual.

“Following a successful eight-month pilot project, Common Ground is being used by a variety of Alberta businesses in many different industries,” says Anna DeLuca, dean of Language Training and Adult Literacy at NorQuest College. “This includes manufacturing, food processing, food service, hospitality and tourism.”

“The Government of Alberta is proud to support Common Ground as it strengthens Alberta communities by collaborating with employers and increasing access to programs for immigrant workers,” says Employment and Immigration Minister Thomas Lukaszuk. “This is another example of how NorQuest College is relevant and responsive to the needs of adult learners, both inside the classroom and inside the workplace.”

Days Inn employee Lizbeth Brito benefited from Common Ground with a better understanding of her coworkers, increased job satisfaction and a job promotion.

“The program was great for me because the terminology is what we use every day in the hotel,” says Brito. “I understand other workers and customers better and my English is better so now I don’t feel so frustrated.”

“As a first-time instructor, I was able to roll out the program with ease,” says Kara Chwackinski, human resources manager with the Little Potato Company in Edmonton. “The materials gave me confidence to know what I should be doing to maximize employee understanding and I was able to add my input and adapt it to the specific needs of our employees.” The Little Potato Company employs just over 80 people, with 82 per cent of their workers born outside North America.

To download a free copy, visit http://www.norquest.ca/cfe/intercultural/proj_commonground.asp

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About Common Ground: English in the Workplace

Consists of three components:

1. How-to Guide for Employers
 - Helps to assess if this program is an appropriate resource for their company
 - Provides step-by-step instruction on how to setup processes
 - Provides a variety of assessment tools pre- and post-program
2. How-to Guide for Facilitators
 - A series of questions and answers to help prepare facilitators to teach English in the workplace
 - Special emphasis on teaching through an intercultural “lens”
3. Training Manual
 - 10-weeks of modules including assignments on safety, pronunciation clarity, intercultural awareness, idioms and conversation how to's.
 - Vocabulary lists for the following industries: food processing, manufacturing, food service, hospitality, and tourism.

To download a free copy of *Common Ground: English in the Workplace*, visit http://www.norquest.ca/cfe/intercultural/proj_commonground.asp

About the Centre for Excellence in Intercultural Education

Dedicated to involving and transforming businesses and community organizations through customized, innovative and practical intercultural training grounded in applied research, the Centre for Excellence in Intercultural Education is part of NorQuest College's commitment to develop intercultural and communication competence in Canada.

The Centre specializes in a broad range of language and cultural training services:

- Training and professional development through customized courses, on-site workshops and RBC Speakers Series presentations.
- Coaching on intercultural and workplace integration solutions
- Integrating intercultural and language instruction into educational programs
- Consulting with private, public and non-profit organizations on cultural and intercultural diversity issues
- Developing solutions through applied research

About NorQuest College

NorQuest College is Edmonton's community college with campuses in Edmonton, Wetaskiwin and Stony Plain, community learning centres in seven other Alberta communities and online distance learning available in more than 200 communities in Canada. NorQuest delivers post-secondary diplomas and certificates in a variety of health, human services, business and industry career programs, and has expertise in adult literacy, academic upgrading, English as a Second Language (ESL), Aboriginal education, and learner supports for students with disabilities.

As the largest community college in Alberta, NorQuest serves about 10,000 full- and part-time students each year. NorQuest is designated by the Alberta government as the regional steward responsible for the Edmonton region, from Camrose to Jasper and Drayton Valley to Whitecourt.

For more information, visit www.norquest.ca.