

May 10, 2007

Teachers who are Learners:

Advancing Education to Assist English Language Learners

In response to the growing number of English Language Learners (ELLs) on Long Island and the shortage of highly qualified educators trained to respond to the needs of linguistically diverse students, the New York State Department of Education initiated an Intensive Teacher Institute (ITI) to certify currently practicing teachers in the areas of bilingual general and special education and English as a second language. Dr. Valerie Collins, Vice President for Academic Affairs at Molloy College in Rockville Centre noted that Molloy is pleased to offer this critical training to area teachers.

ITI is administered jointly by the Office of Teaching and the Office of Bilingual Education through the Bilingual Education Technical Assistance Center (BETAC) at Eastern Suffolk BOCES. Since Molloy College has New York State approved Master's level programs leading to certification in English as a second language, the College has been an ITI service provider since 2004.

Dr. Honigsfeld, Associate Professor, Division of Graduate Education who has served as Coordinator of the Program, observed that "the ITI program consists of four graduate courses, which are closely aligned to New York State certification requirements. In the past, Molloy successfully worked with two cohorts of ITI participants: 14 teachers from Westbury and 22 teachers from Freeport. Both of these Districts have linguistically diverse students."

Our most recent cohort was established in the Roosevelt Union Free School District. Dr. Honigsfeld commented that "collaboration is key to the success of this program. Molloy faculty worked closely with Lissette Laboy from Roosevelt UFSD." Ms. Laboy is the director of Bilingual and ESL programs and was instrumental in establishing this partnership with Molloy.

The College also enrolled individual ITI candidates, who selected Molloy as their institution of higher education to complete the ITI program. Dr. Honigsfeld concluded that "the validity and usefulness of this program is catching on. To date, we have over 40 certified teachers working in various schools on the Island, mainly serving as mainstream teachers or content area specialists who now also have the knowledge and skills to adjust their curriculum and instruction to include ELLs."

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