



Communication for Safer Learning Environments



Co-sponsored by:

NGCSU School of Education & Dahlongega Ministerial Association



Creating a Safer World for All Youth
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"Representing the Dahlonge Ministerial Association, I invited YES Institute in 2000 to come to Dahlonge to conduct a Communication Solutions Course for Dahlonge clergy.

Concern about 3 recent suicides in our community and the high incidence of youth suicides in the county had prompted us to seek help. As clergy from many various denominations, we held many different canons of beliefs, however almost all of us were uncomfortable discussing anything related to sexual orientation. I learned about YES Institute from a visiting missionary, I contacted them, and told them about our concerns.

This relationship has grown over five years into an innovative partnership of respect and service for our community, our clergy, and NGCSU. I encourage you to consider participating in this workshop and join us in taking care of the youth we serve, and continue building a stronger, more loving community."

*- Rev. Frank Colladay
President, Dahlonge Ministerial Association*



Department of Education

"The School of Education has been working in the partnership with the Dahlonge Ministerial Association and YES Institute over these past five years. YES has visited our campus and offered various courses and workshops for our faculty and students.

NGCSU contracted YES Institute to conduct an innovative distance-learning graduate class on gender topics for teachers. The evaluations from this class were so outstanding, and comments from participating educators so compelling, we sought to expand this training to our entire faculty. The following workshop, Communication for Safe Learning Environments, will be offered to all NGCSU faculty members. Five (5) PLU's will be awarded to those who successfully complete the course.

*- Dr. Bob Michael
Dean, Department of Education, NGCSU*



Communication for Safer Learning Environments

Overview

This workshop will address the challenges educators face in classroom environments, providing them with tools to respond appropriately and effectively to diverse students and situations.

Educators face unprecedented demands in classroom environments where the only constant is a rapidly changing culture. Not only must they be masterful in the field they are teaching, they are also expected to handle, respond, influence, mitigate, reconcile, or simply ignore many of the most difficult issues of our time. Many members of the Faculty of the School of Education, the teachers of the teachers, **have not received training on many of the topics that forge the day-to-day interactions of students and teachers.** They are asked to teach and proceed as if the demanding, often contentious issues of immigration, ethnicity, sexual orientation, varying religious beliefs, and new frontiers of gender won't affect youth or learning environments. Statistics tell a very different story:

Statistics:

- Immigrant population in Georgia **grew 233%** in 10 years (1990-2000)
- **50%** of male teen suicides are completed by gay youth
- **64%** of middle school bullies will be convicted of a crime **by age 24**
- **28%** high school drop out rate for gay youth
- **Gender selection technologies** offer new "family balancing"
- School officials argue definitions of **science as fact or theory**

Outcome of Workshop

This workshop will prepare educators and local leaders to respond effectively to diverse and contentious issues in our community allowing them to make optimal contributions to healthier environments that are more conducive to learning.

Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of this learning experience, the participants will be able to:

- Address conflict in schools related to race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, gender and/or sexual orientation with accurate, relevant, and recent information using effective communication skills.
- Provide communication tools that can get beyond the divisiveness and fears that stop people from discussing controversial topics.
- Demonstrate effective ways to respond to inappropriate behaviors in schools without using force, pressure or control.

As a result of participation in this workshop you will be able to see and get to the “us,” instead of merely an “us” and “them.” You can openly dialogue about difficult topics without fear of conflict or distress. You will be more skillful in finding common ground with both colleagues and strangers with whom you hold differing points of view. Topics that once were avoided due to contrary beliefs may now be pursued as learning opportunities. New strategies and responses to conflict will be available to make classrooms and communities safer for all youth.

Target Audience

All NGCSU faculty members are invited and encouraged to participate. Class will be limited to the first 20 registrations.

Workshop Format

- **Six sessions of instruction** conducted via distance learning, including lecture portion, video presentations, open discussion, interactive exercises, and a guided field project.
 1. Introduction, statistics and research, experiential reports and discussion
 2. Interactive Exercises, Introduce Communication model
 3. Discuss Field Project*, work teams/partners, group process
 4. Project Presentations
 5. Project Presentations
 6. Results and completion
- **Guided field practice project.** Each workshop participant will create a project for their field of study consisting of:
 1. Assessing and detailing how their field is affected by topics covered.
 2. Designing an education or communication strategy for their field utilizing the newly learned information and skills.
 3. Implementing the designed project.
 4. Writing or verbally presenting on the effectiveness and outcomes of the project.

Workshop Times and Logistics

Workshop sessions will be conducted on **Friday afternoons, 1:00 to 5:00 PM, over an approximate 12-week span.** Exact dates to be determined but will provide sufficient time for field practice project.

Session	#1: January 27, 2006	#4: March 24, 2006
	#2: February 10, 2006	#5: April 7, 2006
	#3: February 24, 2006	#6: April 21, 2006

Workshops will be conducted by YES Institute via videoconference from the YES Education Center in Miami, Florida to a NGCSU distance-learning classroom. YES Institute course leaders will coach and work with each participant in the design and execution of field project and will be available by phone and email for consultation.

Each Participant will be able to access:

- Archived video of classroom sessions on 24-hour web portal designed specifically for this project.
- All class handouts downloadable for 60 days from class date.
- Course bibliography and reference materials available online.
- Online message board to interact with other participants and share ideas.
- Online posting of results, inquiries, and findings for collaboration.