

# CHARTING A COURSE:



**RESPONDING TO THE  
INDUSTRY-RELATED  
ADULT BASIC EDUCATION  
NEEDS OF THE TEXAS  
WORKFORCE**

**WORKPLACE SAVVY FOR  
WORKFORCE-RELATED INSTRUCTION**

**HANDBOOK TWO: MODULES FIVE & SIX**



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**Charting a Course** is a direct response to Education Rider 82 (79<sup>th</sup> State Legislative Session, 2005), Destination 2010, and the workforce literacy needs of Texas' adult learners. A number of adult basic education programs across the state have been delivering quality workforce-related instruction to emerging, incumbent, and dislocated workers in their local communities for some time. Many of their strategies and promising practices are reflected in Handbooks One and Two. A special thanks to those who willingly shared their experiences, provided input toward the development of the handbooks, and were courageous enough to try out the handbooks' templates, forms, and suggested strategies in varying stages of development.

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A Message from Texas LEARN  
The Texas Adult Education and Family Literacy Partnership

**Dear Adult Education Practitioners:**

Historically, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESL/ESOL) and job training initiatives have not been closely linked. For Texas' 2.7 million limited English proficient residents (2000 U.S. Census), this has often contributed to limited employment opportunities.

Education Rider 82 provides an opportunity for Adult Education in Texas to respond to the industry-driven educational needs of this adult learner population, with innovative instructional practices and expanded workforce partnerships. The economic impact of having an under prepared workforce suggests that integrated, innovative initiatives must replace sequential programs requiring English language learners to first master the language and obtain a GED certificate before beginning occupational training.

Obviously, educational innovations alone – when not accompanied by critical partnerships and linkages between contextualized English language development, occupational training, and job sourcing – are limited. But adult education can make certain that the instruction delivered is a) learner-centered and b) responsive to what adults need to know and be able to do to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century family, community, and workplace. This commitment forms the very foundation of the Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks.

Determining the education and occupational training needs of English language learners requires an examination of the sectoral changes in the labor market. Information gathered by Texas LEARN in response to Rider 82, under the direction of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and with input from the Texas Workforce Commission, draws attention to industry sectors in which many adults seek entry-level employment:

- Healthcare
- Sales and Service
- Manufacturing / Construction Trades

While entry level jobs are unlikely to pay gainful wages, each of these sectors includes occupations and career path options for which English language learners may qualify, provided opportunities to acquire employment-related language/literacy skills, work readiness skills, and occupational training are accessible.

Qualifying for jobs that pay a living wage in these sectors means that adult learners must have access to a continuum of education and training services. This access can enable learners to continue improving their language and employment readiness skills in an industry-related context while developing the proficiencies necessary for successful employment, advancement, and/or occupational training.

Minimally, workforce-related adult education instruction should include the following:

- Student orientation to educational program expectations as well as the workplace
- Work-related English language instruction as well as reading, writing, and math skills development

- A balanced integration of English literacy and language development with work-related content
- Employment readiness skills (including critical, life, and interpersonal skills)
- An introduction to industry-related environmental print, terminology, and realia\*
- Technical skills instruction, including basic computer literacy and familiarity with job-related technical terminology, equipment, and applications when partnerships make this feasible
- Linkages to / integration with post secondary education and occupational skills training (bridge programs) when partnerships and funding make this feasible
- Links to career opportunities, licensure, and certification in healthcare, manufacturing / construction trades, and sales and service industry clusters

\*realia are objects from real life such as coins, tools, etc., used in instruction

While the responsibility for planning and sustaining workforce-related instruction falls primarily on the shoulders of local adult education administrators and their partners in the local workforce development system, the instructor's role in delivering contextualized instruction is pivotal.

Texas LEARNS is committed to providing adult education programs with tools to plan, implement, and sustain workforce-related educational solutions. A number of Texas' adult education programs are already delivering quality workforce-related instruction to emerging, incumbent, and dislocated workers in their local communities. But for many programs and practitioners, workforce education is relatively new. This handbook is one of several efforts to a) increase adult education practitioners' understanding of their important role in preparing adult learners for the world of work, and b) to offer the instructional support needed to deliver quality workforce-related ESOL instruction.

The materials in **Charting A Course Handbook # 2** have been assembled with adult education instructors in mind and focus on the following:

- a. simple language task analysis and assessment strategies to help identify the language and basic skills needed for workplace success;
- b. context-based instruction responsive to learners' identified language, basic skills, and work-related needs;
- c. confidentiality issues in the workplace;
- d. incorporation of authentic workplace-related materials into instruction; and
- e. documentation of changes in learners' work-related behavior and performance.

Included are practical samples, templates, and strategies for use in planning and delivering instruction responsive to adult learners' employment-related needs. Supportive professional development opportunities can be arranged through any one of the eight regional GREAT Centers in Texas, and sessions can be adapted to meet the specific needs of individual programs.

As instructors, you play a critical role in responding to the work-related educational needs of the Texas workforce. Your role is part of an evolving, dynamic process. As Texas seeks ways to better prepare its workforce, particularly those with limited English language skills, Texas LEARNS is committed to supporting your efforts.

*Joanie Rethlake,*  
Director of Texas LEARNS

## Introduction: How Did We Get Here and Where Are We Going?

*Out of federal funds appropriated in Strategy A.2.5, Adult Education and Family Literacy, the Commissioner shall allocate an amount not to exceed \$850,000 in fiscal year 2006 for the development of a demand-driven workplace literacy and basic skills curriculum. The Texas Workforce Commission shall provide resources, industry-specific information, and expertise identified as necessary by the Texas Education Agency to support the development and implementation of the curriculum.* Education Rider 82, 79<sup>th</sup> State Legislative Session, 2005

This handbook is one of two developed to assist adult educators in Texas in delivering instruction responsive to the workforce-related language, literacy, and basic skills needs of Texas' emerging, incumbent, and displaced workers. **Handbook # 1** deals primarily with the planning process during which program administrators determine program capacity, identify local labor force needs, measure the strength of local partnerships, and develop mutual, achievable goals and objectives. **Handbook # 2** focuses on instructional delivery in response to identified needs.

Whether you are involved in delivering instruction intended for a specific employer or group of employees, or you are trying to address the workforce-related needs of the learners in your traditional adult education classes, you will want to be aware of the resources, tools and support available to Texas programs. It is important for instructors to have a working knowledge of the process of planning, implementing, and sustaining a successful instructional response. Some program administrators will elect to involve instructional coordinators and/or instructors in the planning process, thereby ensuring a strong correlation between identified needs and curriculum and instruction. Make yourself available to such opportunities – the experiences will be invaluable.

### Resources Available to Your Local Program ... Know Where to Find Them

A primer text and desk reference, Joan Friedenbergs' ***Workplace ESL: A Simple Guide to Program Planning and Implementation*** has been made available to every adult education program administrator. A limited number of additional copies are available upon request from Texas LEARNS. The information contained in this text is based on an analysis of programs serving over 10,000 language minority workers at over 100 workplaces throughout the U.S. Although the guide was developed with English language learners in mind, it is an excellent tool for planning and implementing a variety of work-related instructional programs. It includes general information about setting goals and objectives, curriculum development, teaching strategies, and instructional materials that may prove helpful to you, the instructor. Copies are also available for checkout from the [TCALL Clearinghouse library](#).

***Charting a Course: Responding to the Industry-Related Instructional Needs of the Limited Proficient*** (Tondre 2006) is a summary report of findings in response to Education Rider 82. It provides direction to Texas LEARNS in its support of curricular responses to assist adult learners in accessing employment in three sectors: health care, manufacturing, and sales and service. The two page [executive summary](#) provides an overview of the study and recommendations. Access the full report on the TCALL website at [Charting A Course: Responding to the Industry-Related Instructional Needs of the Limited English Proficient](#).

**The Workplace Literacy Resource Center State Leadership Project** is responsible for the development of curricular responses to Education Rider 82. The lead institution in this initiative is El Paso Community College. Curricular modules related to healthcare, manufacturing, and sales and service have been developed for adults with limited English language skills. A preliminary “soft launch” has been completed, and modules have undergone revision and further development based on feedback from learners and instructors. Statewide pilots occurred in the spring and summer of 2007. The curricular modules are designed to be replicated and adapted to the needs of adult education programs across the state. These will be available to programs following the completion of pilot initiatives and final revisions.

**Charting a Course: Responding to the Industry-Related Adult Basic Education Needs of the Texas Workforce, Handbook # 1: Planning and Implementation Tips for Program Planners and Administrators.** Your program administrator should have a copy of this handbook. If given the opportunity, you are encouraged to participate in the training for both handbooks. At the very least, ask to review **Handbook # 1**.

**SHOP TALK** is a series sponsored by Texas LEARNS to highlight promising practices and address issues, concerns, and questions related to meeting the adult education needs of Texas’ emerging, incumbent, and displaced workers. The entire series can be accessed from the [SHOP TALK web page](#).

The **WorkforceLitTex Discussion List** is sponsored and maintained by TEA/Texas LEARNS and the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning (TCALL) Clearinghouse, in collaboration with the Texas Workforce Commission and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Its purpose is to encourage collaborative planning and to exchange promising practices. The discussion list is open to all interested parties. You are encouraged to subscribe by contacting TCALL at [lschroeder@tamu.edu](mailto:lschroeder@tamu.edu).

Finally, the **Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks** which were released in June 2007 are now available on the TCALL website at <http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/taesp/guide/cover.html>. During writing teamwork sessions occurring over the past two and a half years, applicability of the standards and benchmarks to the workplace was taken into consideration. Five of the *Equipped for the Future* (EFF) *Standards for Adult Learning* serve as the springboard for development of the Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks for English as a Second Language (ESL), Adult Basic Education (ABE), and Adult Secondary Education (ASE).

Similarly, the EFF Standards - which encompass the SCANS Skills - also serve as the foundation for a number of the work readiness credentials and certificates that have emerged in recent years. With EFF as the common denominator, writing teams were asked to examine the knowledge, skills, and abilities essential to success in the workplace. The teams cross-referenced those tasks workers in entry-level jobs need to be able to do with the standards and benchmarks they had developed, and identified those with strong work-related components as well as areas where further development is needed. The [Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks](#) are available on the TCALL website. Development of work-related responses continues.

Since no handbook can contain an unlimited number of sample learning activities, additional references and resources are cited at the end of the publication, many with easy access to websites related to workforce/workplace instruction.

## Glossary: Understanding the Language

There are a few core definitions and concepts that frame the parameters of English Language Instruction for Speakers of Other Languages (ESL/ESOL), particularly when it comes to work-related instruction. It is important to be familiar with the terms used in referring to workforce development. Additional terms are clarified in SHOP TALK # 1 and # 2 (glossaries) found the [Texas LEARNS "SHOP TALK" web page](#).

**Bilingual Vocational Training:** programs to prepare learners for a specific occupation using the learners' native language as well as English. Thought to be most effective when the technical instructor and the language instructor function as a unit, integrating language and technical learning while vocational and English language skills are emerging. (Macias, '02)

**Bridge Programs:** designed to support and prepare learners who lack adequate basic skills to enter and succeed in post secondary education and training leading to employment and career path opportunities.

**Content-Based ESL:** concentrates on the subject matter that is being taught. The focus is on content, and language skills development is embedded within the content (TESOL, '05).

**Contextualized Instruction:** an approach that connects learning to the demands of everyday life/real-life tasks versus "learning to know information" that may or may not transfer to an actual task. (TESOL '03)

**Demand-Driven:** used in workforce circles to refer to specific industries and occupations in demand in a particular geographical area.

**Displaced/Dislocated Worker:** an individual who has been terminated or laid off, or who has received notice of termination or layoff from employment, as a result of plant closure or plant relocation; an individual who was self-employed but is now unemployed as a result of a turn in general economic conditions; can include a home-maker who has been providing unpaid services to family members in the home, has been dependent on the income of another family member, and who is unemployed or underemployed and experiencing difficulty obtaining or upgrading employment (U.S. Dept. of Labor, 2004). Between 2001 and

2003, approximately 11.4 million workers were displaced.

**Employment Readiness or Pre-Employment Skills:** minimally, these terms usually refer to short term classes to assist learners in locating job openings, completing job applications, preparing resumes, and participating effectively in job interviews. Optimally, they are extended to include personal and life skills that assist an individual in surviving and thriving in the workplace. These classes are not designed to address specific occupational skills but are a viable link to successful participation in vocational training and are fundable with WIA Title II adult education funds.

**Entry Level Occupations:** usually the lowest paid occupations within an industry or firm, usually requiring minimal work experience and limited educational background as conditions for hire. Criteria differ widely by industry.

**ESL/ESOL:** English as a Second Language or English for Speakers of Other Languages are terms often used interchangeably to describe English language instruction for non-native speakers. Nearly 32 million people in the U.S. speak languages other than English; more than fifty percent of the adults enrolled in ESL/ESOL are Spanish-speaking. Texas alone has 2.7 million residents who speak a language other than English at home (U.S. Census 2000).

**ESOL Worker Competencies:** Language and work related competencies English language learners need to get, survive, and thrive on the job. (Burt,Grognet, '01).

**Environmental Print / Realia:** printed materials, manuals, signage related to a workplace, including tools and equipment used to accomplish a job task.

**Industry-Specific:** directly related to the job skills needed in a particular industry, such as healthcare, manufacturing, and customer service.

**Interpersonal Skills:** also described as life skills, soft skills, and pre-employability skills, these include the ability to participate as a member of a team, teach others new skills, serve clients/customers, exercise leadership, negotiate – all critical skills for native and non-native speakers of English.

**ISO:** a series of standards agreed upon by the International Organization of Standardization (ISO) and a prerequisite for global competition. U.S. companies must meet ISO standards in order to compete in the international marketplace.  
[www.techstreet.com/info/iso.tmp](http://www.techstreet.com/info/iso.tmp).

**Job Shadowing:** The process of observing a job being performed, recording the tasks needed to perform the job, and identifying the language, literacy, and basic skills required to do the job effectively.

**Language/Literacy Task Analysis:** a series of activities that help identify the literacy and language related needs of workers. Activities may include meeting with employers about a company's specific needs, interviews/surveys of frontline supervisors, employees (native and non-native English speakers), job shadowing, plant tours, and review of environmental print. Critical to inform instruction.

**Limited English Proficient (LEP):** A term sometimes used to describe individuals with limited English language proficiency. English language learners (ELLs) are those LEPs engaged in activities to improve their English language skills.  
[www.LEP.gov](http://www.LEP.gov).

**Learner-centered Instruction:** Instruction which builds on the strengths, interests, and needs of learners as well as on their conceptual and cultural knowledge.

**O\*NET:** The Occupational Information Network is a unique database and directory of occupational titles, worker competencies, job requirements, and resources designed to support public and private sector workforce

development efforts.

<http://online.onetcenter.org>

**OSHA:** Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor.  
<http://www.osha.gov/>

**Return on Investment (ROI):** direct and indirect benefits to the company.

**Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS, 1991):** a commission formed to advise the Secretary of Labor on the level of skills necessary to enter the workforce. The commission published two reports, *What Work Requires of Schools*, and *Learning a Living: A Blueprint for High Performance*, outlining skills and competencies needed in today's workplace. Employers are often familiar with SCANS; many educators recognize SCANS as the building blocks for better articulated standards such as Equipped for the Future.  
<http://worklink.coe.utk.edu/home.htm>

**Soft Skills:** Non-technical skills that foster an individual's ability to succeed in any workplace. Often used interchangeably with life skills and work readiness skills, examples include teamwork, interpersonal communication, working well with supervisors and co-workers, time management, and conflict resolution. (SCANS, 1998)

**VESL (Vocational ESL):** The study of English words, sentences, text and oral language related specifically to one job or career field. VESL programs are designed to prepare learners for job training or employment in specific occupational areas. They use job-related language and tasks as the vehicle for learning English. Some models fully integrate language skills development and occupational training. (TESOL, '05)

**Work-based, Workforce or Workplace ESL/ESOL Programs:** focus on language and communication skills needed for success in the workplace. Instruction combines English language and literacy learning with varying degrees of employment related content. Curriculum is usually adapted to the needs of the workers and the employer. Focus may be the language skills needed for a particular job or workplace, or more general skills. The primary objective: to improve learners' abilities to function in an

employment or vocational training context  
(*TESOL Standards for Adult Education ESL  
Programs*, 2003).

Charting A Course :

# CHARTING A COURSE:



**RESPONDING TO THE  
INDUSTRY-RELATED  
ADULT BASIC EDUCATION  
NEEDS OF THE TEXAS  
WORKFORCE**

**Module Five:  
Identifying Adult Learners'  
Work-Related Proficiencies and Needs**



## Check Your Workplace Savvy: An Inventory for Instructors

Successful work-related instruction requires us to step into the culture of the workplace as we prepare to deliver quality services. This inventory is designed to help you gauge your knowledge of workforce-related topics and to identify areas in which professional development would enhance instructional planning and delivery. Whether you are addressing workforce-related topics in the traditional adult education classroom or preparing to deliver instruction to a group of workers with specific needs, it is important to develop a fundamental understanding of the workplace and its culture. Please take a few minutes to thoughtfully complete this inventory. A check in the “yes” column indicates you feel you are sufficiently knowledgeable about the topic. A check in the last column indicates a need for additional information.

Your Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities	Yes	More Info
1. I am knowledgeable about my community’s labor market/workforce needs and which companies hire English language learners.		
2. The top two work-related priorities/concerns for most employers are:		
3. I am familiar with local companies’ workplace culture, the products/services they offer, and the nature of employees’ jobs.		
4. I understand the importance of competition and changes in the labor market, issues of profitability, production deadlines, quality control issues, and changes in the local population and economics.		
5. I recognize that there may be differences between employer and employee needs and expectations.		
6. I have participated in a language task analysis (LTA) to identify the language, literacy, and basic skills needed by workers to successfully perform their job tasks.		
7. I have had the opportunity to participate in one or more of the following: meeting with an employer; tour of work facility; job shadowing; employer/employee interviews; review of environmental print (work-related materials) and realia (real-life objects, equipment, etc.).		
8. As an instructor, I know how to use the information gathered in an LTA to plan and provide instruction responsive to the workforce-related needs of English language learners.		
9. I know how to maintain a balance between language instruction and workforce skills development so that learners improve their language proficiency <i>and</i> acquire workforce-related skills.		
10. I have a good understanding of the work-related language and basic skills needs of learners in my current, traditional ESL classes.		
11. I know how to simplify, adapt, and incorporate work-related materials into instruction.		
12. I am familiar with industry standards and the competencies needed in the workplace.		
13. I have a fairly good understanding of the kinds of language, critical thinking, and employment readiness skills needed in the workplace.		
14. I am familiar with a variety of instructional models for delivering ESL using work-related content.		
15. I know how to disseminate information about employees’ proficiencies/progress while protecting their rights to privacy.		
16. I am familiar with alternative assessments activities that can capture changes in a learner’s work-related performance/behavior.		
17. If asked to teach in the workplace, I would be willing to teach at unusual hours, in unconventional settings, adjust instruction to learners’ changing work-related needs, and develop learning activities to simulate job-related processes and situations.		
18. If given the opportunity, I would welcome the opportunity to learn to integrate ESL instruction with occupational training in order to bridge the gap between AE and post secondary education and training.		

Based on my responses to this inventory, my top three priorities for professional development are # \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

## Stepping Inside the World of Work...

A few years ago, a workplace ESL pilot initiative sponsored by an international restaurant chain required instructors to job shadow and work a partial shift before going into the classroom to teach its employees. The experiences were invaluable to both instructors and learners, as the role reversals put the workers in the position of “teaching” the instructor.

As teachers of adult basic education, we usually approach language instruction with the broadest of perspectives, recognizing that adult language learners come to us with a myriad of interests and needs. What are the rationale then for a work-related, contextual approach to English language instruction? There are several:

1. English language instruction with a work-related context focuses on developing language and basic skills development critical to success on the job.
2. Almost all adult learners eventually seek employment or must provide moral and emotional support to employed family members; understanding the world of work facilitates both processes.
3. Teaching language skills as related to occupational applications with actual job materials enables learners to see the connection.
4. Having the opportunity to practice newly learned skills in a context related to work helps learners retain and use new language skills.
5. Research suggests that when language and literacy learning are “embedded” in contextualized instruction, learners are more likely to tap into their prior knowledge and make as much or more gain in “general literacy” as in programs not work-related (Sticht, 2007).

Effective workplace ESL programs are those designed to meet the needs of a business and its workers by successfully translating language learning into improved job performance. In similar fashion, traditional adult basic education ESL classes can include instructional modules that address general workforce-related topics and issues faced by adult learners who are employed or looking for employment. The curricular responses to Rider 82 utilize a modular format to enable instructors to incorporate the learning activities into instruction.

An ESOL instructor engaged in delivering workforce-related instruction can acquire a basic familiarity with the workplace by taking advantage of the following opportunities:

- ◇ tour a manufacturing plant or worksite
- ◇ participate in language task analysis activities (Handbook #1)
- ◇ meet with employers to discuss perceived needs
- ◇ job shadow a worker with limited English language proficiency
- ◇ encourage learners to bring work-related print to the classroom
- ◇ visit your local chamber of commerce website as well as those of local businesses
- ◇ request and pick up literature (company brochures, industrial association newsletters) for use in the classroom
- ◇ interview both native and non-native speakers of English employed in the workplace to obtain baseline information about language skills related to workplace success
- ◇ discuss with frontline supervisors the perceived challenges faced by workers with limited English language proficiency
- ◇ review environmental print that workers are expected to understand and use

## What Are Workplace Basic Skills?

Workplace Basic Skills are the core skills that employees need to do their jobs successfully. These skills are critical to the success of modern businesses. They are also crucial in public sector workplaces such as hospitals, schools and government offices.

Workplace basic skills include literacy skills and other important skills, attitudes and behaviors that are essential to workplace success and high performance.

Gaining basic skills also has a positive impact on employees' attitudes and behaviors. This is often just as valuable to employers as the skills gains themselves.

For example, employees who improve their basic skills are also likely to become more conscientious. Once they become fully aware of what is expected of them and how their efforts fit into the big picture, and then receive the skills to meet those demands, the quality of their work generally rises.

Workplace Basic Skills include:

- Understanding and ability to use prose (such as reports, letters, and equipment manuals)
- Communicating effectively in English
- Understanding and ability to use documents (such as safety instructions, assembly directions, maps)
- Understanding and ability to use numbers by themselves or in charts and tables
- Thinking critically and acting logically to solve problems and make decisions
- Using computers, technology, tools and information systems effectively
- Ability to build and work in teams
- Positive attitude toward change
- Willingness and ability to learn for life

Workplace Basic Skills include the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) definition of literacy skills.

Source: [work-basedlearning.com](http://work-basedlearning.com)

## Who are Texas' Limited English Proficient Adults?

No one profile can adequately describe all adult English language learners. In fact, educators working with this population have identified several sets of characteristics that warrant our attention if we are to support these learners' success.

They range from unskilled to advanced professionals. Some are well educated, with a strong academic background, but they often lack the social and linguistic skills needed for effective communications, team building, and conflict resolution. Others have had minimal formal education and need to upgrade their literacy and English language skills in order to advance in the workplace and benefit from academic, occupational, and on-the-job training opportunities.

Many are highly motivated and possess a strong work ethic; they are looking for opportunities to succeed in the workplace. Generally, they have some difficulty communicating with supervisors, co-workers, and customers. They often depend on others for interpretation or translation. Following written instruction and completing forms are often challenging to the English language learner – just as they are to many native speakers of English.

Today, English language learners in Texas speak more than one hundred different languages. For many of these individuals, English may be their second, third, or fourth language. While the young are quick in acquiring oral and aural communication skills, studies reveal that it takes from 2 to 5 years to become socially adept in a second language and from 5 to 8 years to become academically on a par with native speakers (Burt, 2003). If their English skills remain rudimentary, the chances that English language learners will perform near the bottom of their classes and/or drop out increase. The level of English language proficiency students need to read textbooks, pass tests, excel in their studies, and make successful transitions to post secondary education and training goes far beyond oral and aural communication skills, although active listening skills and the ability to communicate so that others can understand are critical starting points.

### Generation 1.5

Gabriella Nuttall (Nuttall, 2005) refers to English language learners she meets in the post-secondary arena as Generation 1.5 learners. Some have come through the American K-12 system but may have never stepped foot into an ESL classroom in the K-12 setting. Some were born here or came to the U.S. at a very early age, and were never identified as English language learners. In other cases, they might have been enrolled in ESL classes but quickly placed out because of strong oral communication skills and a tendency to work hard and do well in their coursework. Following are some common characteristics of this learner group:

- were born in the U.S. or arrived at a young age
- act like “average” American teenagers but often follow family ethnic and cultural traditions at home
- have learned English primarily by listening and speaking; they are “ear” learners rather than “eye” learners
- have strong oral communications skills
- often tend to do well in coursework that requires oral interaction (e.g., class discussions, debates, interviews)
- are often academically illiterate in their first or home language
- may speak their first or home language fluently but with an American accent and limited vocabulary
- continue to improve their English language skills
- tend to fall behind native speakers in terms of reading and writing skills

- have read mostly fiction if they have read at all
- are not familiar with a variety of academic texts and may read below grade level
- have limited academic vocabulary
- have received formal grammar instruction but may not grasp basic usage relationships
- may find themselves in remedial or developmental classes at the post secondary level

Application Activity: Identify and discuss the characteristics shared by the English language learners in your classroom. You may be able to add to this list, or you may want to revise the list to more accurately describe your students.

I would describe the English language learners in my classroom as .....

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## Topics in Workforce-Related Instruction

What topics are usually addressed in workforce-related instruction? While needs vary at specific worksites and within occupations, there are a number of topics and tasks to consider when planning curriculum and instruction (Grognet, Burt 2002). Not all are necessarily taught to every learner. But combined with the identified needs of the learner, these topics form the backbone of workforce-related instruction.

Activity: Reading. The following reading (a reprint from the ERIC Digest) is a must-read for adult educators venturing into work-based ESL instruction. It includes Grognet's list of work-related topics, which can be used to generate ideas for learning activities as well as discussion among adult learners about their work-related interests. The following questions are designed to guide you through the reading:

Questions to Accompany Reading, ***Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Workplace ESL Programs***, Allene Guss Grognet, Center for Applied Linguistics, Project in Adult Immigrant Education, June 1996.

1. What are the five interrelated steps in planning employment-related English language instruction, whether conducted at the workplace or in an adult education setting? Check off the steps in which you as an instructor are likely to be involved. Who do you assume is responsible for the other steps?
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2. Highlight in your reading the step Grognet feels is the most critical in planning employment-related English language instruction. How can you conduct a modified needs analysis for your classroom? Describe a process you might follow.
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3. Circle the topics identified by Grognet that can be easily incorporated into your classroom instruction.
4. Describe three critical ingredients to planning lessons, according to Grognet.
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5. Name three strategies for adapting authentic, work-related materials for use with English language learners and native speakers with low literacy skills.

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6. Name three learner-centered instructional strategies cited in the reading.

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7. Aside from standardized, commercially available tests, how can changes in performance and behavior be measured?

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## Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Workplace ESL Programs

Allene Guss Grognet  
Center for Applied Linguistics  
Project in Adult Immigrant Education (PAIE)  
June 1996

Any employment-related English as a second language (ESL) program, whether conducted on the job or as pre-employment training, is a result of five interrelated steps:

1. Conducting a needs analysis of the language and culture needed to perform successfully in a specific workplace or occupation. The needs analysis leads to the development of objectives for the program.
2. Developing a curriculum, based on the objectives, that identifies tasks and skills for verbal interaction on the job, and tasks and skills for reading and writing on the job. The curriculum should also prioritize these tasks and skills.
3. Planning instruction by gathering text material and realia, determining classroom activities, and identifying opportunities for learners to put their skills in practice outside the classroom.
4. Determining instructional strategies that include a variety of activities that focus on the objectives, keep the class learner-centered, and include as much paired and group work as possible. Strategies for assessment should also be determined when planning instruction.
5. Evaluating the program on both a formative and summative basis.

These steps are discussed below from the point of view of what the educator needs to consider in planning, implementing, and evaluating a program. However, throughout the process, the educator must remember that the "buy-in" of the business partner, especially at the level of the frontline supervisor, is indispensable to the success of any workplace ESL program (Kirby, 1989; Westerfield & Burt, 1996).

<a href="#">Needs Analysis Curriculum</a>	<a href="#">Lesson planning</a>	<a href="#">Adapting written materials</a>
<a href="#">Learner-centered instruction</a>	<a href="#">Learner-centered strategies</a>	<a href="#">Assessment</a> and <a href="#">Evaluation</a>

### **How should a needs analysis be conducted?**

The needs analysis is perhaps the most crucial of the steps, because the remaining steps are based on it. Much has been written about how and why to do a needs analysis. Philippi (1991) describes a detailed process of observing workers on the job, interviewing all stakeholders, and collecting all written material to determine the basic skills needed on the job to do a specific job. Thomas, Grover, Cichon, Bird, and Harns (1991) provide a step-by-step guide on how to perform a task analysis for language minority employees. Burt and Saccomano (1995) discuss the value of a needs analysis that goes beyond the work floor to include union meetings and other places where workers interact on the job. Auerbach and Wallerstein (1987) talk about a needs assessment process that is more participatory as workers themselves identify the issues they wish to explore in the class. And Taggart (1996) points out that the emergent curriculum development process that takes place as the class progresses provides timely information to service providers and is less costly for employers.

Participatory learner-generated needs assessment is not antithetical to the traditional needs assessment process. Grognet (1994) stresses that for adults learning English as a second language, any instruction to help them succeed in the workplace is in their best interest and is by definition learner-centered. Lomperis (in press) asserts that having a curriculum framework generated from a pre-program needs assessment can facilitate the process of soliciting input from learners in the classroom. Finally, Mansoor (1995) speaks of the necessity for the needs analysis to be performed not solely for the jobs the participants have, but for the positions they aspire to, as well.

If the learners are already on the job, the analysis is conducted in that specific workplace. If learners are preparing for a job, several different environments in that occupation can be used for the needs analysis. In interviewing or surveying supervisors, managers, and nonnative and English-speaking employees, the same kinds of questions should be asked so that information from all these sources can be compared (Alamprese, 1994; Lynch, 1990).

For example, managers and supervisors might be asked if they perceive their employees experiencing difficulty in such common workplace tasks as following spoken instructions; explaining or giving instructions; reporting problems; asking questions if they don't understand something; communicating with co-workers; communicating on the telephone; communicating in group or team meetings; making suggestions; reading job-related manuals; filling out forms; writing memos, letters, or reports; reading notices, newsletters, or short reports; doing job-related math computations; interpreting graphs, charts, or diagrams; or following safety standards and measures. Employees or learners should also be asked if they have difficulties with these tasks. Next, or simultaneously, educators go to the workplace to see the jobs performed and the language used on the job. At the same time, all of the written materials used in the workplace or in that occupation—for example, manuals, notices, safety instructions, and office forms—should be collected and analyzed for linguistic difficulty. Meetings and other team activities should also be observed for language use.

Perhaps the most important part of the needs analysis is the reconciliation, where one takes the information from managers and supervisors, employees and learners, puts it together with personal observation, and lists and prioritizes the language needed on the job. This in turn leads to forming the objectives for the program. Program objectives developed in this way are based not only on what one party has reported, and not solely on observation, but on a combination of factors.

### **What major areas should be considered in curriculum development?**

While needs vary within each worksite or occupation, there are general areas that should be considered in curriculum development. Some of these areas, with examples of specific linguistic and cultural competencies, are outlined here. Not all tasks and functions are taught at every worksite to every participant. However, along with the information from the needs analysis and from learner input, these topics form the backbone of the curriculum.

## Workplace Curriculum Topics

### 1. Workplace Communication Expectations

- greeting coworkers
- asking questions
- making "small talk"
- reporting problems and progress
- calling in sick or late, requesting time off or permission to leave early
- responding to interruption and criticism
- making suggestions
- accepting and declining requests and invitations
- asking for and giving clarification and verification
- apologizing

### 2. Following Directions and Instructions

- identifying listening strategies for directions
- understanding quality control language
- understanding words of sequencing
- asking for, giving, and following directions
- giving and responding to warnings
- understanding and following worksite rules
- following safety rules

### 3. Job-Specific Terminology

- identification of one's job
- enumeration of the tasks
- description of the tasks
- identification and description of tools, equipment, and machinery
- identification of products and processes

### 4. Cross-cultural Factors

- food and eating habits
- personal hygiene, habits, and appearance
- cultural values of America and the American workplace
- understanding workplace hierarchies
- understanding "unwritten rules"
- recognizing problems and understanding appropriate problem-solving strategies

### 5. Company Organization and Culture

- management functions
- union functions
- personnel policies, procedures, and benefits
- performance evaluations
- rewards and recognition

### 6. Upgrading and Training

- understanding career opportunities
- understanding the need for training
- understanding what a "valued" worker is

Other factors also matter. Understanding situations in which pronunciation makes a difference, such as in describing work processes and procedures or in giving oral instructions, is important as are literacy initiatives (e.g., reading posted notices, production reports, and forms; writing an accident report; and keeping a written log). However, for the language minority worker, the curriculum should start with workplace communication and end with company organization and culture, and skills upgrading.

### **What should be considered when planning lessons?**

Lesson planning includes gathering text material and realia (e.g., those manuals, signs, and job aids that were analyzed during the needs analysis process) and any tools and equipment possible. From these, classroom activities that involve listening, speaking, reading, and writing can then be designed. However, language practice should not be limited to the classroom. Learners should leave the classroom after each session able to perform at least one new linguistic skill. For example, they might be able to pronounce the names of three pieces of equipment, know how to interrupt politely, or use the index of their personnel manual to find information on sick leave policy. To this end, instruction must include activities that use language needed by learners either on the job or in the wider community.

The educator may have input into revising written materials used at the worksite as a way of resolving worker performance problems on the job (Westerfield & Burt, 1996). Guidelines for adapting written material found on the job follow:

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### **Adapting Written Materials**

- Make the topic/idea clear.
  - Reduce the number of words in a sentence and sentences in a paragraph wherever possible.
  - Rewrite sentences in subject-verb-object word order.
  - Change sentences written in the passive voice to the active voice wherever possible.
  - Introduce new vocabulary in context and reinforce its use throughout the text.
  - Eliminate as many relative clauses as possible.
  - Use nouns instead of pronouns, even though it may sound repetitious.
  - Rewrite paragraphs into charts, graphs, and other diagrams wherever possible.
  - Make sure that expectations of prior knowledge are clear, and if necessary, provide background material.
  - Eliminate extraneous material.
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## **What are characteristics of learner-centered instruction?**

All workplace ESL (and all adult ESL in general) should be learner-centered. If language learning is to be successful, the learners' needs, rather than the grammar or functions of language, must form the core of the curriculum and the instruction.

Many educators, among them Auerbach (1992), Auerbach and Wallerstein (1987), and Nash, Cason, Rhum, McGrail, and Gomez-Sanford (1992), have written about the learner-centered ESL class. In a learner-centered class, the teacher creates a supportive environment in which learners can take initiative in choosing what and how they want to learn. The teacher does not give up control of the classroom, but rather structures and orders the learning process, guiding and giving feedback to learners so that their needs, as well as the needs of the workplace, are being addressed. In a traditional teacher-centered classroom, where the teacher makes all the decisions, learners are sometimes stifled. At the same time, too much freedom given to learners, especially those from cultures where the teacher is the sole and absolute classroom authority, may cause learners to feel that the teacher has abandoned them (Shank & Terrill, 1995). The teacher must determine the right mix of license and guidance.

### The following are characteristics of learner-centered classrooms:

What happens in the language classroom is a negotiated process between learners and the teacher. The content and sequence of the workplace curriculum is seen as a starting point for classroom interaction and for learner generation of their own occupational learning materials. The language presented and practiced in a good adult ESL text is usually based on situations and contexts that language minority adults have in common. When one adds to this the exigencies of a particular workplace or occupation, another layer of learning is presented to the learner.

Problem solving occupies a good portion of any adult's life, so it is not surprising that problem-solving activities are a necessary part of learner-centered curricula. Problem-solving exercises should be prominent in any workplace classroom. Learners can be asked what they would say or do in a particular situation, or about their own experiences in circumstances similar to those presented by the teacher. Learners can also be asked to present the pro's and con's of a situation, to negotiate, to persuade, or to generate problem-solving and simulation activities from their own lives. By presenting and solving problems in the classroom, learners become confident in their ability to use language to solve problems and to take action in the workplace and in the larger social sphere. These problem-solving activities are especially valuable in high-performance workplaces where work is team-based and workplace decisions are made through group negotiation (Taggart, 1996).

The traditional roles of the teacher as planner of content, sole deliverer of instruction, controller of the classroom, and evaluator of achievement change dramatically in a learner-centered classroom. When the classroom atmosphere is collaborative, the teacher becomes facilitator, moderator, group leader, coach, manager of processes and procedures, giver of feedback, and partner in learning. This is true whether the teacher has planned a whole-

class, small-group, paired, or individual activity. (See Shank and Terrill, 1995, for discussion of when and how to group learners.)

In managing communicative situations in a learner-centered environment, teachers set the stage for learners to experiment with language, negotiate meaning, make mistakes, and monitor and evaluate their own language learning progress. Language is essentially a social function acquired through interaction with others in one-to-one and group situations. Learners process meaningful discourse and produce language in response to other human beings. The teacher is responsible for establishing the supportive environment in which this can happen. This does not mean that the teacher never corrects errors; it means that the teacher knows when and how to deal with error correction and can help learners understand when errors will interfere with effective, comprehensible communication.

### **What are learner-centered instructional strategies?**

Some strategies that are especially useful for workplace ESL programs are:

- Using authentic language in the classroom.
- Placing the learning in workplace and other adult contexts relevant to the lives of learners, their families, and friends.
- Using visual stimuli for language learning, where appropriate, and progressing from visual to text-oriented material. While effective for all language learners, this progression taps into the natural learning strategies of low-literate individuals who often use visual clues in place of literacy skills (Holt, 1995).
- Emphasizing paired and group work, because learners acquire language through interaction with others on meaningful tasks in meaningful contexts. It also sets the stage for teamwork in the workplace (Taggart, 1996).
- Adopting a whole language orientation-integrating listening, speaking, reading, and writing-to reflect natural language use.
- Choosing activities that help learners transfer what they learn in the classroom to the worlds in which they live.
- Treating the learning of grammar as a discovery process, with a focus on understanding the rules for language only after learners have already used and internalized the language. In this way, grammar is not a separate part of the curriculum, but rather is infused throughout.
- Integrating new cultural skills with new linguistic skills. Learners acquire new language and cultural behaviors appropriate to the U.S. workplace, and the workplace becomes a less strange and frightening environment.

Various types of exercises and activities can be used in a learner-centered environment. These include question and answer, matching, identification, interview, fill-in, labeling, and alphabetizing; using charts and graphs; doing a Total Physical Response (TPR) activity; playing games such as Concentration and Twenty Questions; creating role-plays and simulations; developing a Language Experience Approach (LEA) story; or writing in a dialogue journal. (See Holt, 1995, and Peyton and Crandall, 1995, for a discussion of these and other adult ESL class activities.)

## What about assessing learner progress?

Testing is part of teaching. Funders may mandate that programs use commercially available tests such as the Basic English Skills Test (BEST) and the Comprehensive Adult Student Achievement System (CASAS). These tests, when used in combination with program-developed, performance-based measures, can provide a clear picture of what has been learned in the class. (See Burt and Keenan, 1995, for a discussion of learner assessment in adult ESL instruction.) Performance-based tests measure the learner's ability to apply what has been learned to specific, real-life tasks. Actual job artifacts such as pay stubs, job schedules, and company manuals can be used to assess linguistic skills. Further, program-developed materials lend themselves well to workplace ESL instruction in that they allow both learners and teachers to see progress in the outlined objectives over time. Some program-developed assessment instruments are discussed below.

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### Program-Developed Assessment Instruments

1. Checklists (e.g., aural/oral, reading, writing)
2. Learner-generated learning logs
3. Portfolios (e.g. written class work, learner self-analysis, program-developed tests)

*Checklists.* Objectives for the course, or even for each lesson, can form the basis of a checklist. For instance, an *aural/oral checklist* for high-beginning learners might include such items as 1) uses level-appropriate words and phrases to respond verbally to spoken language; 2) uses extended speech to respond verbally to spoken language; 3) initiates conversation; 4) participates in small group or paired activities; 5) follows oral directions for a process; and 6) asks for clarification.

A checklist for *reading* might include such items as 1) recognizes appropriate sight words(e.g., words on safety signs); 2) recognizes words in context; 3) shows evidence of skimming; 4) shows evidence of scanning; 5) reads simplified job aids or manuals; and 6) reads paycheck information.

A checklist for *writing* might include entries such as 1) fills out simple forms; 2) makes entries into work log; and 3) writes requests for time-off.

*Learner-generated learning logs.* In a notebook, such page headings as "Things I Learned This Month" "Things I Find Easy in English" "Things I Find Hard in English" "Things I Would Like to Be Able to Do in My Work in English" create categories that help learners see growth in their English language skills over time. If learners make an entry on one or more pages every week, then review the logs with their teachers every three months, they usually see progress, even if it is slight. This also helps teachers to individualize instruction.

*Portfolios.* These individual learner folders include samples of written work, all pre- and post-testing, self-analysis, and program-developed assessment instruments. Portfolio contents also tend to show growth in vocabulary, fluency, and the mechanics of writing over time.

### **What kind of program evaluation is necessary?**

*Formative evaluation*, performed while a program is in operation, should be a joint process between a third-party evaluator and program personnel. Together, they should review the curriculum to make sure it reflects the program objectives as formulated through the needs analysis process. They should also review all instructional materials (e.g., commercial texts and program-developed materials) to see that they meet workplace and learner needs. Finally, the third-party evaluator should periodically observe the classroom to evaluate instruction and learner/teacher interaction.

*Summative evaluation*, done at the completion of a program, should evaluate both the learner and the program. Learner evaluation data can be taken from formal pre- and post-tests as well as from learner self-analysis, learner writings, interviews, and program-developed assessments (Burt & Saccomano, 1995).

A summative program evaluation should be completed by a third party. The third party evaluator analyzes the above summative data that includes information from all the stakeholders (i.e., teachers, employers, union representatives, and learners) about what worked and did not work in the program, and why. The evaluator also looks at relationships among all the stakeholders. This analysis will yield more qualitative than quantitative data. However, there are processes to quantify qualitative information through matrices, scales, and charts, as discussed in Alamprese, 1994; Lynch, 1990; and Sperazi & Jurmo, 1994.

### **Conclusion**

By following the steps discussed in this digest, a workplace or pre-employment ESL program should meet the needs of employers, outside funders, and learners. The best advertisement for a workplace program is employers choosing to continue instructional programs because they see marked improvement in their employees' work performance. The best advertisement for a pre-employment program is learners using English skills on jobs they have acquired because of their training.

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## Language Competencies in the Workplace

For adult learners with limited English proficiency, language competencies cut across occupational domains such as manufacturing, healthcare, and sales and service. Increasingly sophisticated levels of language skills are needed by English language learners if they are to take advantage of opportunities to advance and pursue careers. Advances in technology and changes in workplace organization have redefined the nature and level of essential skills and knowledge workers need to function effectively in today's workplace. The chart below provides a useful summary of the communication and critical thinking skills demanded in the workplace.

### ESOL Worker Competencies

**To get a job** (other than through familial connections), English language learners must be able to orally provide personal information, express ability, express likes and dislikes, and ask and answer questions. They also need literacy skills to read a want ad and complete an employment application.

**To survive on a job**, English language learners need to be able to follow oral and written directions, understand and use safety language, ask for clarification, make small talk, and request reasons or explanations related to specific job tasks or company policies. If there are manuals and job aids involved, they need to be able to locate written information; find facts or specifications in text materials; determine the meaning of technical vocabulary and those enabling words attached to them like twist, stir, insert, and pour; and cross reference text information with charts, diagrams, and illustrations.

**To thrive on a job**, they must be able to have discussions; give as well as follow directions; teach others; hypothesize; predict outcomes; state a position; express an opinion; negotiate; interrupt; and take turns. On a literacy level, knowing how to access and use written information from diverse sources is critical.

(Grognet 1996, Burt, 2002)

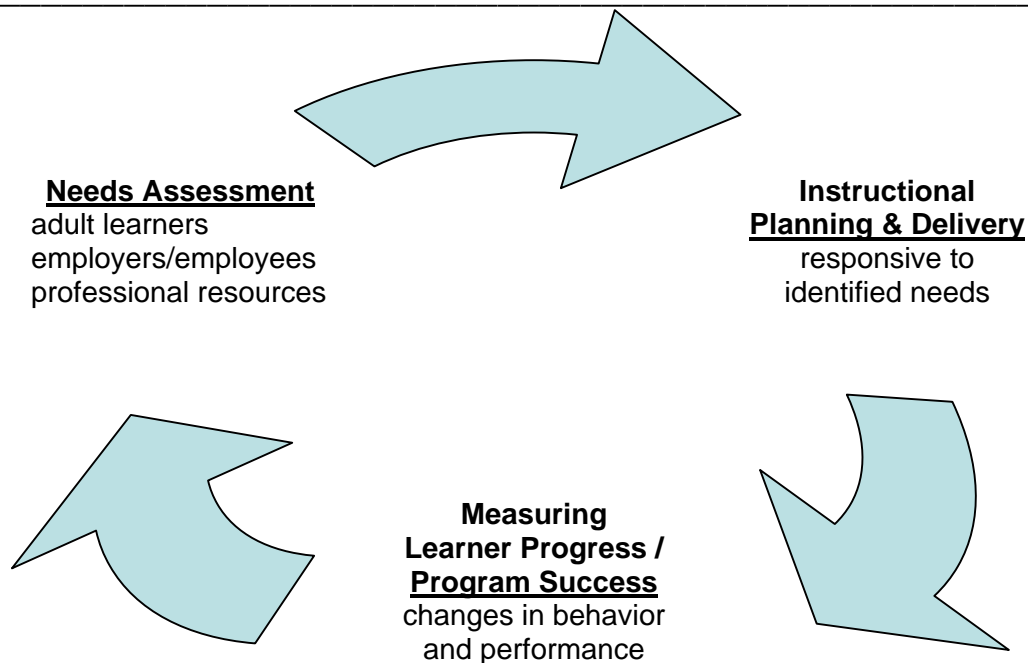
Are there historical precedents for adult education's involvement in workplace education, and particularly workplace ESOL? The Workforce Investment Act (WIA), July 1998, identifies "workplace literacy services" as part of the adult education and literacy services provided by local adult education programs. Adult education programs play a critical role in assisting non-native speakers of English – an ever growing percentage of America's workforce – in obtaining the language skills needed to get a job, survive on a job, and thrive in a job, with the potential for upward mobility.

### Differences between Traditional ESL and Work-Related Instruction

*The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills* (SCANS, 1991) report efficiently states the distinction: "The most effective way of learning skills is 'in context'; that is, placing learning objectives within a real environment rather than insisting that students first learn in the abstract what they will be expected to apply." The curriculum in workforce-related instruction must be contextually appropriate and designed to achieve the learning objectives identified as priorities. In addition to curricular differences, other factors such as assessment, evaluation of learning outcomes, and overall curriculum delivery formats may differ significantly from a more traditional, academic basic skills program.

# Language Task Analysis Activities: Why They're So Important

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The diagram above is helpful in illustrating the cycle that makes for successful educational programs that are learner-centered. It especially applies to the planning and delivery of workforce-related instruction because it is all-inclusive:

- The needs assessment, language task analysis, or literacy audit (i.e., identifying the language and basic skills needed in order to perform successfully in the workplace) solicits input from learners/employees but also from local employers, other stakeholders, and professional resources.
- The needs assessment guides the planning, development, and delivery of instruction; in other words, instruction responds to identified needs.
- Learner progress and program success are connected to how well the identified needs are addressed.

Standardized assessment tools by themselves do not generally capture all of the significant changes in performance and behavior that make individuals successful and valued employees. Certainly, the *BEST Plus* can be used for baseline assessment of English language proficiency and to measure learner progress. In some communities local workforce development networks utilize the *CASAS* for placement, to measure learner progress, and to inform programmatic changes.

Both assessment tools are nationally recognized and approved means of measuring basic English language competencies and are aligned with the entry-level descriptions issued by the National Reporting System (NRS). By themselves, however, they do not capture all the information needed to plan workforce-related instruction.

As an instructor, the additional assessment may be left to you. If a program has a viable partnership with a local employer, your program administrator should have the opportunity to arrange to conduct a language task analysis and to involve you in the process.

These systems, when used in combination with program-developed, performance-based assessments, can provide a better snapshot of changes in learners' work-related behavior and performance, thereby measuring the learner's ability to apply what has been learned to specific, work-related tasks. Additional assessments may include the following:

- assessment activities that indicate whether the learner has learned what has been taught (teacher-made and text-related pre/post assessments)
- documented teacher observations
- learner demonstrations of knowledge and skills learned
- learners' self evaluations and reports of knowledge and skill applications
- testimony of changes in workers' performance / behavior as observed by frontline supervisors, quality control personnel, and management
- work-related achievements (promotions and eligibility for other employer-sponsored training opportunities)

The opportunity to take part in a literacy audit, a language task analysis, or a job task analysis is always a valuable experience – one that provides an inside look at what happens at the workplace and that can inform instruction. **Handbook #1**, developed to assist program administrators in planning and implementing workforce-related instructional services, includes a number of activities that can be used to identify the language proficiencies and basic skills needed in the workplace. Additional activities are included in this handbook.

If your program administrator has expressed an interest in workforce-related instruction or has participated in related professional development, he or she should have a copy of **Handbook #1**. Even if you do not foresee being involved in the delivery of instructional services in the workplace, you will still want to become familiar with the language task analysis activities included in **Handbook #1**. Many can be adapted for use in your classroom. Samples are included in the following pages for use with your adult learners. But before looking at the samples, read the scenario below and discuss the questions that follow:

Activity: The learners in your class who are employed often complain about company correspondence and other documents written in jargon or obscure language at a level that even native speakers might not fully comprehend. This makes it especially difficult for the non-native speakers to comply with written instructions and company policy.

1. In addition to the data you have from the baseline assessment your program conducts, what else would you like to know about the learners' needs?
2. How might you access additional information about the learners' needs?
3. How could you use the additional information in planning instruction?

## Sample of Workplace Audit Interview Questions

	Questions	Notes
<b>Background</b>	<p>What is your title and job description?</p> <p>How long have you been in this job?</p> <p>How did you learn this job? What special training do you have for this job?</p> <p>How important are reading, writing and math to the successful completion of your job?</p> <p>What is the most challenging part of your job?</p> <p>What is the most important part of your job?</p> <p>What could go wrong if you don't do your job correctly?</p>	
<b>Literacy Tasks</b>	<p>Are there books, manuals, forms or charts you use to do your job?</p> <p>Which of these is hardest to read?</p> <p>How often do you use these (charts, forms, etc.) in doing your job?</p> <p>If you were training a new person to do your job, what would he/she have to know before you could teach him/her?</p> <p>What would a new person find most challenging about your job?</p> <p>What reports, memos, summaries or other written messages do you read or write in your job?</p> <p>What math or science skills do you use ?</p> <p>What technical equipment do you use?</p> <p>What special measuring skills/tools do you need to do your job?</p> <p>What computer equipment (or computerized machines and tools) do you use in your job?</p>	

<p><b>Training and Promotion Opportunities</b></p>	<p>Which parts of your job would you like to do better?</p> <p>What skills do you need to move to a different or better job?</p> <p>Are you currently being trained (or are you training someone) to do this job?</p> <p>What is most difficult about the training you are in now?</p> <p>How has your job changed since you first started it?</p> <p>Will you be trained for another job?</p> <p>Can you show me the training manuals or work tasks that are most difficult for you?</p>	
<p><b>Problem Solving</b></p>	<p>Explain what information you are looking for when you read a work manual (form, chart, etc.).</p> <p>Tell me, step by step, how you get information from this manual, chart, etc.</p> <p>Tell me, step by step, how you got the information when you were new on the job.</p> <p>How did you know to do that?</p> <p>How did you learn that part of your job?</p> <p>Where else could you get this information?</p>	

**Additional questions/comments:**

Source: [www.work-basedlearning.org/toolkit.cfm](http://www.work-basedlearning.org/toolkit.cfm) (2006)

# Foundation Skills Student Self-Appraisal

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## Instructions

### Step 1:

Read each statement on the next page and check the box that best describes your typical behavior.

### Step 2:

Review the appraisal according to the following sections to determine your workplace foundation skill areas of strength or weakness:

<b>Basic Employability Skills</b>	Statements 1-6
<b>Basic Workplace Knowledge</b>	Statements 7-14
<b>Basic Workplace Skills</b>	Statements 15-23
<b>Lifelong Learning Skills</b>	Statements 24-30

### Step 3:

Discuss your results with a partner and your instructor. Talk about your areas of strength and how they can help you on the job. Talk about the areas you can improve and why. Then, work with your instructor to develop a plan to strengthen those areas you need for success on the job. One part of your plan will be to learn more about how to apply specific strategies to improve your foundation skills and knowledge.

The Foundation Skills Wheel included in this handbook, a sample lesson and this foundation skills student self-appraisal were developed by project staff at the Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy at Penn State University as part of a Work-Based Foundation Skills Project. Additional learning activities can be accessed at <http://www.able.state.pa.us>. Click on Resource Center and then on Lesson Activities.

## Student Self Appraisal

<i>Read the statements below and check the boxes that are most like you.</i>	Almost never like me	Sometimes like me	Quite a bit like me	Almost always like me
1. I have few conflicts with other people at work.				
2. I am on time for work.				
3. I release stress in healthy ways.				
4. I work well in a team.				
5. I solve problems at work.				
6. I make decisions at work.				
7. Safety is important to me at work and at home.				
8. I understand how this company operates.				
9. I know who to go to if I have a problem at work.				
10. The quality of my work is important to me.				
11. I understand how this company makes a profit.				
12. I understand the parts of my paycheck.				
13. I know what product or service this company provides.				
14. I know how I help provide that product or service.				
15. I understand what I read.				
16. When my supervisor tells me how to do something, I understand and go do it.				
17. I can write clearly and others can understand it.				
18. When I talk with my supervisor, I am understood.				
19. I can do math including fractions, decimals and percentages.				
20. While I work, I pay attention to what is going on around me.				
21. I can use the computer with ease.				
22. I can use e-mail and the Internet.				
23. When I need something to do a job, I go find it.				
24. I enjoy learning something new every day.				
25. I learn as much as I can when I begin a new project.				
26. I have set educational goals for professional development.				
27. I have used skills at work that I learned in life.				
28. I have used my work skills outside my work place.				
29. I am flexible when changes happen at work.				
30. I am willing to learn new skills when my work changes.				

The Foundation Skills Wheel included in this handbook, a sample lesson and this foundation skills student self-appraisal were developed by project staff at the Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy at Penn State University as part of a Work-Based Foundation Skills Project. Additional learning activities can be accessed at <http://www.able.state.pa.us>. Click on Resource Center and then on Lesson Activities.

## Sample Quick Assessment / Needs Survey

There are several ways the following survey can be used to identify learners' work-related needs. Review and determine if and how you might use it.

1. Think about the language needs of those with limited English proficiency at the workplace and assign a number to each language activity.

**1 = major problem**

**2 = occasional problem**

**3 = no problem**

<input type="checkbox"/> a. speak to the supervisor <input type="checkbox"/> b. speak on the telephone <input type="checkbox"/> c. speak to other workers <input type="checkbox"/> d. understand instructions <input type="checkbox"/> e. understand work procedures <input type="checkbox"/> f. understand pay statement <input type="checkbox"/> g. understand company benefits <input type="checkbox"/> h. write work orders <input type="checkbox"/> i. use correct grammar <input type="checkbox"/> j. use correct pronunciation	<input type="checkbox"/> l. report problems <input type="checkbox"/> m. ask questions <input type="checkbox"/> n. understand company notices <input type="checkbox"/> o. respond to criticism <input type="checkbox"/> p. work safely <input type="checkbox"/> q. solve work-related problems <input type="checkbox"/> r. understand quality control <input type="checkbox"/> s. make suggestions <input type="checkbox"/> t. participate in meetings <input type="checkbox"/> u. other _____
--	--

2. Number of employees you supervise: \_\_\_\_\_. How many have a difficult time speaking/understanding English? \_\_\_\_\_. Do employees speak other languages on the job? \_\_\_\_\_. If so, give examples of where and when:  
 \_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you know of any conflicts due to language or cultural barriers? Describe.  
 \_\_\_\_\_

4. What problems have occurred due to lack of communication skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) or mathematical skills? Give examples.  
 \_\_\_\_\_

5. What kinds of technical training does your company offer?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

6. Are communication skills a barrier to participation in this training? In what way?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

7. What topics do you think need to be addressed in English classes?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

8. How could improvements in communication skills be measured in the workplace?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

\*Excerpt from *Workplace Instructor Training (WIT)* CD-ROM and Workbook. Adapted and used with permission of the Employee Training Institute for Workforce Training and Development, San Diego Community College District. To order: <http://www.trainwitheti.com>. Texas LEARNS and TCALL both have limited copies on hand. The workbook includes many excellent sample assessment surveys.

## Sample Quick Math Assessment / Needs Survey

Think about the math skills employees need to perform their jobs successfully. Then complete the following activities:

1. Circle the letter(s) of the skill areas you think should be addressed in work-related math instruction.
2. Rank the top ten skill areas you think are the highest priority for employees. Start with #1 as highest priority and #10 as the lowest priority.

1. ____ Count by 1's, 2's, 5's, and 10's	11. ____ Use/interpret ratios (e.g., 2:1)
2. ____ Identify Roman numerals	12. ____ Read/interpret charts, graphs
3. ____ Perform simple addition/subtraction	13. ____ Measure with various instruments (e.g., micrometer, scale, etc.)
4. ____ Perform simple division/multiplication	14. ____ Use calculator or adding machine
5. ____ Perform calculations with fractions	15. ____ Calculate with time (e.g., time zones, 24 hour clock)
6. ____ Perform calculations with decimals	16. ____ Calculate with money
7. ____ Convert fractions/decimals to percents	17. ____ Work with negative numbers
8. ____ Convert U.S. measurements to metric	18. ____ Solve for unknowns
9. ____ Read/interpret measuring instruments (e.g., micrometer)	19. ____ Specify other:
10. ____ Estimate and round off numbers	

Please answer the following questions:

3. Which job positions use math? How much math is used on the job? What kinds of math skills are employees expected to know now? In the future?
4. What kinds of assignments involving math are difficult for some employees? Please give specific examples.

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## Sample Quick Assessment / Needs Survey

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Department / Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

Length of employment at company \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever studied English before? \_\_\_\_\_ When? \_\_\_\_\_ Where? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your native language? \_\_\_\_\_

How many years of education do you have (native country or U.S.)?

Circle one:            1-4            5-10            10 or more

Do you have any certificates, diplomas, or degrees? \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Review the topics below and circle five that are most important to you in your work:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Speak to supervisor</li> <li>b. Speak on the telephone</li> <li>c. Speak to other workers</li> <li>d. Understand instructions</li> <li>e. Understand work procedures</li> <li>f. Understand pay sheet</li> <li>g. Understand company benefits</li> <li>h. Write work orders</li> <li>i. Understand written work orders</li> <li>j. Use correct grammar</li> <li>k. Use correct pronunciation</li> <li>l. Explain what you need</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>m. Report problems</li> <li>n. Ask questions</li> <li>o. Understand company notices</li> <li>p. Respond to criticism</li> <li>q. Work safely</li> <li>r. Understand safety regulations</li> <li>s. Solve work problems in groups</li> <li>t. Understand quality control</li> <li>u. Make suggestions</li> <li>v. Participate in meetings</li> <li>w. Other _____</li> </ul>
---	--

**2. Which of these people do you speak English with?**

	Several times a day	Once a day	Several times a week	Once a week	Never
Supervisor					
Team leader					
Co-workers					
Customers or clients					
Workers from other departments					
Managers / administrators					
Family / friends					
Other					

**3. In what kind of situation do you use English with others?**

	Face-to-face	Telephone	Letter/memo	Email	Never
Supervisor					
Team leader					
Co-workers					
Customers or clients					
Workers from other departments					
Managers / Administrators					

**4. Is it difficult to speak English in these situations?**

	Very difficult	A little difficult	Not difficult	Don't use English
Talking with supervisor				
Talking with team leader				
Talking with co-workers				
Talking with customers or clients				
Talking with managers or administrators				

**Comments / other information:**

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## Things To Know About Industry and Partnerships...

As unemployment rates continue to fall, the value of employees increases. A welcome by-product: an increased focus on a potential employee's attitude, work ethic, flexibility, loyalty, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. Often the ability to fit into a corporate setting and the ability to learn take precedence over an individual's technical qualifications. Many companies believe they can teach technical skills if the potential employee possesses critical language, literacy, life and employability skills.

In 2005 – 2006, the Manufacturing Institute of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) and Jobs for the Future (JFF) conducted a study of effective practices being used to increase the productivity of non-native speakers of English employed in manufacturing industries. The study cites successful initiatives that both promote business goals and strengthen workers' English and technical skills. These worksite-based programs integrate technical skills training with English language instruction. Employers support the programs because they have a measurable, positive impact on the bottom line. When employers invest in helping workers improve their English language proficiency, it makes good business sense, and often productivity increases.

Nine in ten respondents to the NAM survey indicated a moderate to severe shortage of qualified, skilled production workers, including frontline workers such as machinists, operators, craft workers, distributors, and technicians. The survey included the following information:

- Employers acknowledge that they are relying increasingly on immigrants to fill these positions.
- A significant number of these workers enter the workforce with little or no English language proficiency – skills many consider crucial to the manufacturing sector's long-term competitiveness and productivity.
- The challenge escalates for employers whose business models rely on a high quality product that requires workers who can learn new skills or learn how to operate new machinery quickly.
- These employers are less able to accommodate workers who cannot communicate in English.

For years, many publicly funded ESL providers have lacked either experience and/or interest in working with employers to provide instruction customized to business needs. Reasons include limited funding of course, but also federal regulations, a disconnect between the mission of public literacy programs and the goals of employers, the existence of already long waiting lists in many programs, and the fact that these programs believe they are doing a great job and see no need to change.

All of these reasons are legitimate. Adult education programs in Texas receive very limited state funding, and federal funds can not be used to provide any kind of occupational training, making the "integration" of ESL instruction and work skills development a difficult model for practitioners to embrace. It is also certainly true that there are long waiting lists for "free" adult education classes, oftentimes with unwieldy numbers of learners packed into existing classes. But a continued disconnect between the world of work and regular adult education classes is hard to justify. After all, adult education's charge is to help learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to be effective citizens and community members, to contribute to their families' well being, and to meet the demands of a changing workplace in a changing world. Currently,

*Bridging the gap between potential and reality becomes a matter of priorities. Resisting the traditional tendency to view adult education, post secondary education and training, and workforce development as separate service systems, partners and policymakers must focus on their interdependence. Texas' workforce, the state's economic success, and its ability to remain globally competitive depend on it.*

Center for Public Policy  
Priorities, 2003

adult education programs are limited in their capacity to address the workforce-related instructional needs of adult learners, and too few employers have committed to a systematic, sustainable solution for their employees. Employers must view ESL instruction as a business asset essential to the firm's profitability. Rarely do employers view "regular" or "traditional" ESL instruction as a satisfactory response to their workplace needs. Additionally, support from state and local level workforce development agencies is inconsistent and varies by region.

Rather than reinforce this stalemate, Texas LEARNS has chosen to respond to the workforce-related needs of adult learners with a number of its own initiatives, including

- research and study of the adult basic education needs of Texas' emerging, incumbent, and displaced workers with limited English language skills;
- industry-related curricular responses to Rider 82;
- SHOP TALK – an online series that highlights promising practices and addresses issues, concerns, and questions related to meeting the adult education needs of the state's workforce;
- the study of bridge models linking/integrating adult basic education and post secondary education and training; and
- professional development and technical assistance for adult educators delivering workforce-related instruction.

Partnerships are discussed here because they can play such an important role in instructional planning. Programs that integrate language and literacy services with jobs skills training are potential lifelines for educationally disadvantaged adults. The gap between entry level, low wage employment and well paying jobs with career opportunities continues to widen. A critical realization by businesses and industry is their recognition that workers needed to replace the soon-to-retire baby boomers do not have the necessary skills to move into and through the pipeline and onto career path opportunities.

#### Industry Skills Standards: How Do They Impact Adult Education?

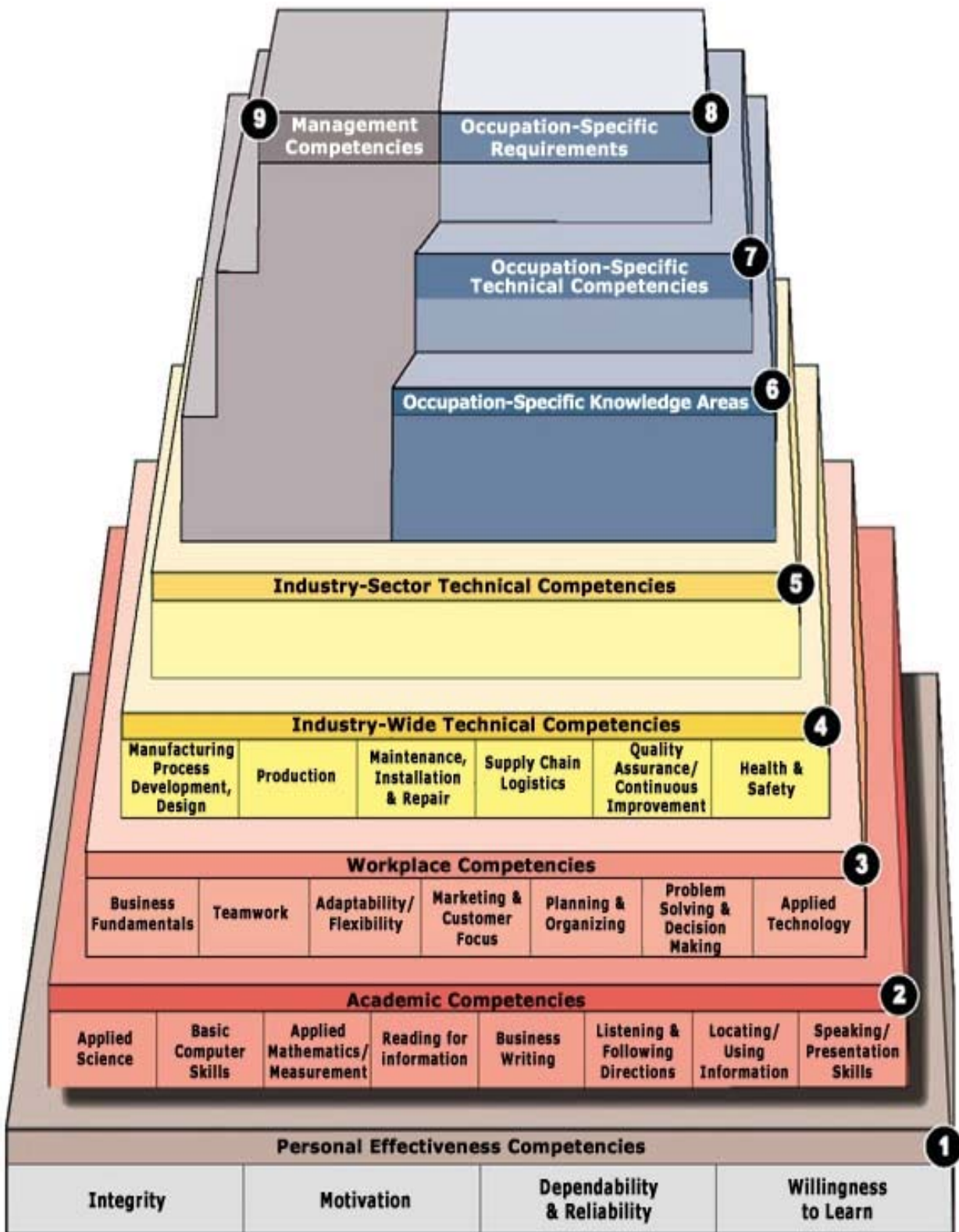
Industry skill standards identify what people need to know and be able to do to successfully perform work-related functions within an industry. Many industries have well defined skill standards that specify the knowledge and competencies required to perform successfully in the workplace. The standards are usually developed along a continuum, ranging from a) general work readiness skills and b) core skills or knowledge for an industry, to c) skills common to an occupational cluster and 4) specific occupational skills. The federal government has identified 16 economic sectors with some level of skills standards:

agriculture and natural resources	mining and extraction
manufacturing, installation, repairs	construction
energy and utilities	transportation
communications	wholesale and retail
hospitality and tourism	financial services
health and social services	education and training
legal and protective services	business and administration
property management / maintenance	research and development

Activity: Skills standards for some industry sectors are quite extensive and comprehensive. For example, the graphic representation of competencies for the advanced manufacturing industry describes nine tiers of industry-related competencies. These competencies are considered fundamental to a large number of occupations and industries, and many are already familiar to adult educators and are often addressed to some degree in many adult education classrooms.

Examine the graphic that follows and answer the following questions:

1. Which of the competencies included in Tier 1 are already addressed to some degree in your adult education classroom? Give an example for each.
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
2. What other terms are sometimes used to refer to the skills in Tier 1?
3. What nationally recognized graphic is used in adult education and literacy circles to capture most of the competencies identified in Tiers 2 and 3? (included in handbook).
4. Cite two ways industry skills standards can be used by educators and workforce development professionals.
  - 
  -
5. Cite two ways in which industry skills standards can help employers.
  - 
  -
6. How can an understanding of industry skills standards help incumbent, emerging, and displaced employees?
  - 
  -



Graphical Representation of the Model for Competencies in the Advanced Manufacturing Industry, High Growth Job Training Initiative, 2006. "Advanced manufacturing: is defined by the U.S. Department of Labor / Employment and Training Administration (ETA) as the use of technology or other productivity-enhancing business processes in the manufacturing enterprise and/or value-added supply chain. For additional information, see <http://www.doleta.gov/sqa/sqa/SGA-DFA-05-07.pdf>

For educators and workforce development professionals, these standards are helpful to

- define curriculum essentials
- achieve improved, more relevant training outcomes
- align adult basic education with post secondary education and training as well as state and local workforce development needs

For employers, skill standards can guide their training needs analysis, help them improve current training programs, and enable them to work with education and training providers to develop appropriate curricula. Employers' requests for educational services cover a full range of topics that include the following:

- an integration of survival English with industry-related language skills that enables individuals to succeed in the workplace;
- an understanding of the critical nature of English language proficiency when it comes to job safety and communications;
- work-related math and technology skills critical across industry and business sectors;
- employment readiness skills, critical thinking and life skills such as knowing how to access and use information; problem solving and decision making skills; attention to detail; working with others, and work ethics.

For employees (incumbent, emerging, or displaced) industrial skill standards can provide guidance in planning and pursuing a career path, help individuals learn to describe their skills to employers, and identify skill areas requiring further development.

Tier 1 of the graphic describes competencies essential to all life roles in the family, community, and the workplace. Industry sometimes referred to these competencies as “soft skills”.

Tier 2 identifies critical academic competencies also likely to apply in varying degrees to all industries and occupations. For example, the level of mathematical competency required varies, depending upon the work setting (e.g., retail, health, aerospace manufacturing).

Tier 3 describes a number of the workplace traits, interpersonal, and self-management competencies also represented in Pennsylvania's adaptation of the EFF the Foundation Skills Wheel (also included in this handbook).

There are many job opportunities in the industry clusters experiencing high growth in Texas. Three of these industry clusters are healthcare professions, manufacturing and trades, and sales and service. Each of these sectors includes occupations for which English language learners may qualify, provided the opportunities to acquire employment-related language/literacy skills, work readiness skills, and pathways to occupational training are accessible.

Learners need to know that entry level jobs are potential springboards to earning a living wage, but a strong commitment to continuing their learning has to be part of the plan. The following illustrations identify job opportunities in each sector.

## Healthcare-related occupations

- Certified Nurse's Assistant
- Phlebotomist
- EKG support
- Radiography support
- Physician's office
- Medical records and billing
- Data entry



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## Sales and Service

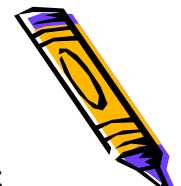
- Retail sales
- Customer service
- Hotels, hospitality, and tourism
- Food service and preparation
- Guards for asset protection/traffic control
- Suppliers
- Transportation & distribution
- Middle management and supervisory positions



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## Manufacturing / Craft Trades

- Welders
- Pipefitters
- Heavy machinery operators
- Light and heavy truck drivers
- Heating, refrigeration, air conditioning techs
- Plumbers
- Electricians
- Auto/diesel/truck mechanics
- Machinists
- Plastics injection moulding
- Computer & electronic mfg and assembly
- Logistics (shipping and handling, inventory management, warehouse management)



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Tondre, TESOL 2007

## The Employer's Critical Role

High growth industries are pressed to develop a pipeline of new workers with strong academic foundations in math, science, and language. Many employers are also looking for ways to help incumbent workers keep pace with rapid changes due to innovation and technology. Finally, employers need to replace and retain a skilled workforce expected to retire in the next ten years.

Many industrial sectors include entry-level occupations and career ladder options for which English language learners may qualify, provided they can acquire employment-related language/literacy skills, work readiness skills, and familiarity with critical occupational terminology. Bridge programs connecting adult basic education to post secondary education and training – programs that pay attention to the academic and vocational needs of second language learners – are generating increased levels of interest. These transitional components are often where the continuum of services is fractured.

Vocational English for Speakers of Other Languages (VESL or VESOL) often include a unique feature in which to engage employers. This is the addition of some kind of workplace experience, which can take any one of a number of forms. For example:

- Internships offered by employers and facilitated by local workforce development networks. These require commitments from employers as well as support services from the local workforce development network. There are both paid and unpaid work experiences, each with important benefits. Participants gain work experience, insight into the culture of the workplace, and industry-related information that can facilitate their commitment to further education and training. Employers, on the other hand, get a preview of potential employees' work skills, plus the opportunity to learn about English language learners' work ethic and ambitions. A reference from an employer – and in some cases, a job offer - are added bonuses.
- When internships are not available, other avenues must be explored to introduce learners to work-related settings. This can be accomplished through guest speakers from business and industry, or with the assistance of the local workforce development board's business services division, which can arrange for learners to participate in plant tours, new employee orientation, and job shadowing opportunities.
- Another way to help learners explore employment interests and opportunities is to introduce them to virtual factory tours via the internet – also a great way to extend instruction through the use of computer technology and expose learners to other native speakers of English (<http://www.superfactory.com/content/tours/htm>).
- Can you suggest other ways to get business and industry engaged with adult basic education?

## Setting Mutual, Achievable Goals and Objectives

Identifying appropriate goals and objectives is critical to the success of workforce-related educational services. Whether you are designing instruction to be delivered to a specific group of employees, or you are trying to address workforce-related topics within traditional adult education, time spent on goals and objectives pays off. Knowledge and thoroughness are critical in offering solutions/strategies that are innovative.

Friedenberg (Workplace ESL Guide, pp.9-11) suggests goals be limited: one is essential, and three are the maximum. Objectives are related to the goal(s) but are much more specific and are usually presented in a list format following the goal(s). Review the steps Friedenberg recommends following when planning work-based instruction for a company's employees:

- **Review results** of the language task analysis as well as meetings with employer(s) and other stakeholders to determine if education is the appropriate response to the identified needs.
- **Reach consensus** with company management and employees in determining priorities for education services. How will each benefit?
- **Assess** employees' language, literacy, and/or employability skills and proficiencies prior to finalizing a proposal for services. Sometimes this is not feasible, but note that without pre-assessment, you forfeit baseline information and run the risk of having learners with a very wide range of skills / proficiencies lumped together by employers who may not understand the complexities of the language learning process.
- **Define** mutually agreed upon clear and achievable goals. Make certain that employers understand the options for services, the variables, and what can be realistically expected in return for their investment.
- **Make program objectives measurable** in terms of performance – the desired changes in performance or behavior (i.e., improved reading or math skills; team work; ability to apply computer literacy skills; increased productivity; improved communications with supervisors).
- **Describe and prioritize** instructional objectives, with time constraints in mind.
- **Discuss expectations** of the employer, the service provider, and the instructor to ensure successful program delivery (see checklists).
- **Draft and present a written proposal** for services, with specifics regarding program costs, adult education's contributions, fees for services, the employer's and other stakeholders' contributions (a first draft can be faxed or sent via email, with discussion to follow).
- **Identify a single point of contact** for all future communications.
- **Finalize** a written, signed agreement to provide services (see sample templates).

*DOL does not presume that all workers have proficiency in English and the U.S. culture. It takes seriously the special challenges faced by workers with limited English language skills. DOL recognizes that if this growing segment of our population is to compete for gainful employment, and states are going to 'grow their own' pool of qualified workers, access to education and training opportunities is critical.*

*Adult education can help provide these opportunities.*

*From Simply Better!  
Business Services*

Now read Friedenberg's recommendations a second time and determine which can be applied to the delivery of workforce-related instruction in a regular ESL classroom. Which steps would you keep? Which would you eliminate?

# Charting A Course:



**RESPONDING TO THE  
INDUSTRY-RELATED  
ADULT BASIC EDUCATION  
NEEDS OF THE TEXAS  
WORKFORCE**

**Module Six:      Delivering Instruction Responsive  
to Identified Needs**



# THE EFF WORK READINESS PROFILE

## What New Workers in Entry Level Jobs Need to Be Able to Do

**New workers need to be able to use these EFF Skills...**

**well enough to successfully carry out these critical entry level tasks:**

### **Communication Skills**

Speak So Others Can Understand  
Listen Actively  
Read With Understanding  
Observe Critically

### **Interpersonal Skills**

Cooperate With Others  
Resolve Conflict and Negotiate

### **Decision Making Skills**

Use Math to Solve Problems and Communicate  
Solve Problems and Make Decisions

### **Lifelong Learning Skills**

Take Responsibility for Learning  
Use Information and Communications Technology

Acquire, use and share information accurately and in a timely manner.

Use appropriate technology to get the job done.

Understand Systems.

Monitor and Correct Performance.

Work as part of a team to achieve goals and objectives.

Work through conflict constructively.

Provide direct, accurate and timely responses to customer questions and concerns.

Take responsibility for completing one's own work accurately, on time, to a high standard of quality.

Demonstrate integrity.

Avoid absenteeism.

Demonstrate promptness.

Maintain appropriate grooming and hygiene.

Manage time effectively.

Cope with a work situation or tasks that change frequently.

Identify actual or potential problems related to one's own work: report them, and help to fix them.

Learn new/additional skills related to your job.



## Connecting NRS Levels to Workforce-Related Instruction

NRS Levels for ESL	Entry Level Descriptors (what a learner functioning at this level should be able to do)
<b>Beginning ESL Literacy</b>	Individual functions minimally or not at all in English and can communicate only through gestures or a few isolated words, such as name and other personal information; may recognize only common signs or symbols (e.g., stop sign, product logos); can handle only very routine entry-level jobs that do not require oral or written communication in English and in which all tasks are easily demonstrated. There is no knowledge or use of computers or technology. Employment choices extremely limited.
<b>Low Beginning ESL</b>	Individual functions with difficulty in social situations and in situations related to immediate needs. Can provide limited personal information on simple forms, and can read very simple common forms of print found in the home and environment, such as product names. Can handle routine entry-level jobs that require very simple written or oral English communication and in which job tasks can be demonstrated. May have limited knowledge and experience with computers.
<b>High Beginning ESL</b>	Individual can function in some situations related to immediate needs and in familiar social situations. Can provide basic personal information on simple forms and recognizes simple common forms of print found in the home, workplace and community. Can handle routine entry level jobs requiring basic written or oral English communication and in which job tasks can be demonstrated. May have limited knowledge or experience using computers.
<b>Low Intermediate ESL</b>	Individual can interpret simple directions and schedules, signs, and maps; can fill out simple forms but needs support on some documents that are not simplified; and can handle routine entry level jobs that involve some written or oral English communication but in which job tasks (writing simple notes/messages based on familiar situations, for example) can be demonstrated. Individual can use simple computer programs and can perform a sequence of routine tasks (with direction) using technology (e.g., fax machine, computer).
<b>High Intermediate ESL</b>	Individual can meet basic survival and social needs, can follow some simple oral and written instruction, and has some ability to communicate on the telephone on familiar subjects; can write messages and notes related to basic needs; can complete basic medical forms and job applications; and can handle jobs that involve basic oral instructions and written communication in tasks that can be clarified orally. Individual can work with or learn basic computer software, such as word processing, and can follow simple instructions for using technology.
<b>Advanced ESL</b>	Individual can function independently to meet most survival needs and to use English in routine social and work situations. Can communicate on the telephone on familiar subjects. Understands radio and television on familiar topics. Can interpret routine charts, tables and graphs and can complete forms and handle work demands that require non-technical oral and written instructions and routine interaction with the public. Individual can use common software, learn new basic applications, and select the correct basic technology in familiar situations.

## A Checklist for Instructors Delivering Workplace Education

When preparing to deliver industry-related instruction, an ESL instructor should be prepared to perform or participate in the following tasks:

- ◇ Accompany the adult education provider to an initial meeting with employer representatives to discuss employee participants, selection criteria, class location, and employee and class schedules (see education service provider's checklist).
- ◇ Participate in language task analysis activities designed to assess the needs of both employer and employee and to identify the work-related language skills required by employees to perform their jobs successfully.
- ◇ Meet with all employee participants to administer initial assessments.
- ◇ Review assessment results and make recommendations regarding the configuration of classes and the selection of instructional materials; maintain confidentiality and protect individuals' privacy.
- ◇ Participate in orientation, arrange for a work site tour, or job shadow employees at their work stations prior to the start of instruction.
- ◇ Review the objectives of the workplace education program, understand the expectations of the employer and employees, and plan instruction responsive to these needs.
- ◇ Maintain regular communication with the employer's designated contact and employees' supervisors regarding instruction, participants' attendance and progress, and opportunities for reinforcing learning in the workplace.
- ◇ Prepare and maintain a learner's portfolio for each employee participant for the purpose of documenting learning process.
- ◇ File frequent and regular attendance reports with the employer's designated contact and the supervising education service provider.
- ◇ Work with the education service provider in the preparation of a mid-point formative report and an end-of-course summative evaluation.
- ◇ Participate in planning sessions and onsite visits prior to and during the instructional cycle.
- ◇ Be prepared to apply sound language learning principles and demonstrate sensitivity to employees' particular needs.
- ◇ Be flexible and cooperative with company personnel, and follow agreed upon protocol for communication.
- ◇ Be open to experimentation and able to implement a variety of instructional approaches.
- ◇ Be prepared to develop lessons and activities based on job materials and contextual workplace needs.

Note: similar checklists for the employer and the program administrator are included in Handbook #1.

## Developing Work-Related ESL Learning Activities

Whether you are teaching a class at a worksite, providing instruction focused on needs identified by employers and employees, or incorporating work-related topics into your regular classes, the balance between work-related content and language skills development is critical. Mastery of work-related content does not always equal improved English language proficiency, and one should not be sacrificed in exchange for success in the other.

The integration and transferability of work-related content and English language skills to the workplace requires careful planning. Adult learners participating in a 2002-2003 piloting of a retail sales curriculum adapted for use with English language learners reported that, while their knowledge of retail sales increased significantly, their ability to use the English language to communicate did not (Center for Literacy Studies, June 2003). Both instructors and participants emphasized the need for additional attention to communication skills development. After all, language learning requires time and opportunities to practice and apply the skills being learned.

Defining the parameters of curriculum development is all about local capacity. Program administrators, along with instructional staff have several options to consider:

1. A program focused on addressing workforce-related topics in regular adult education classrooms, may use generic instructional materials – not a bad choice, provided the materials focus on what learners and research tell us is needed. Pre-packaged, “boiler plate” instructional materials – either commercially available or developed by other adult educators to meet similar needs and often available online – can work well when supported with appropriate professional development for instructors.
2. Some projects develop one curriculum for similar positions across an industry and make them available to programs with similar needs. For example, curricular responses to Rider 82 are designed to provide general introductions to three industry clusters with entry level job opportunities as well as career advancement: healthcare, manufacturing, and sales and service. They focus on job opportunities and career path options in each industry, and contextual learning drives instruction. Actual work-related materials, work-related situations, and industry-related vocabulary/ terminology are incorporated into the curricula. Rider 82 curricula are modular in format and designed to be adapted to different settings across the state.
3. A third option for programs (with workforce and business partners willing to share the cost) is to customize curriculum and instruction in response to the specific needs of an employer, its employees, or another group being prepared for employment in a particular industry or occupation. Some customized curricula focus on particular jobs and jobs tasks in a specific industry.

The ultimate goal is to merge an ESL curricula with adaptations that respond to learners’ specific interests and work-related needs. Before program staff select one of the options described here, several questions should be answered:

- Does the program have the capacity to develop its own work-related curriculum? Capacity here refers to time, cost, and staff with workplace savvy and experience in curriculum development. Curriculum development is very labor intensive; who will pick up the tab?

- What are the local labor force needs? Are employers looking for workers who can perform specific jobs in an industry, or do they need individuals with good language , literacy, employability, and work readiness skills who can succeed in on-the-job training?
- Are there local partners who can provide access to a continuum of education and training not available in adult education? What kind of commitment can be expected from them in terms of fees for services, opportunities for student internships, or funding for bridge programs that take learners to the post secondary level?

Typically, employers are looking to the service provider to identify employees' work-related needs and propose instructional solutions that respond to those needs. A commercial text may be used as a "core" text, but instructors should be prepared to use worksite-related materials to contextualize instruction. There is no need, however, to reinvent the wheel. The *References and Resources* section at the end of this handbook includes a number of websites where free instructional materials can be downloaded. Another source of inexpensive materials, the Career Development Resource Center (a TWC-sponsored service) has available at minimal cost (from five cents to \$2) brochures, charts, and workbooks – some in both Spanish and English – that address generic employability skills and help individuals learn about career options.

As an instructor, you play a critical role in the delivery of workforce-related instruction, especially if you are being asked to teach a class for a particular employer or group of employees. Program directors are encouraged to include instructors in the five-step process Grognet recommends in preparing to deliver workplace ESL:

1. participate in a language task analysis that identifies the work-related needs of the learners
2. develop or select a curriculum responsive to the identified needs
3. incorporate the workplace into instructional planning
4. keep instruction learner-centered
5. monitor and measure learner progress and program success

### **Identifying Instructional Goals and Objectives**

In adult education, there is a tendency to try to be all things to all people. Instructors find that meeting all the needs of adult learners can be a very exhausting if not impossible challenge. In delivering work-related instruction, following a few basic rules can save your sanity:

1. Don't be tempted to promise what you can't deliver
2. Keep goals and objectives simple, realistic, and achievable in the time allotted; use the ratio of 1:3 for developing goals and objectives
3. Plan for instruction to be delivered in short cycles or modules
4. Know upfront how you will assess/measure learners' needs and progress

Workforce-related ESL instruction focuses on the language skills workers need to successfully perform their jobs and includes many of the following characteristics:

- Actual job-related materials (forms, documents, signage) are used in instruction
- Instruction is organized around the language needed to perform job tasks, not around discreet job skills
- Instruction includes problems and simulated situations that enable the learner to apply language and literacy skills in the workplace

- Learning activities link language and literacy skills, critical thinking skills, and work readiness skills
- Instruction builds on the learner's prior knowledge/knowledge of the job; learners are a source of topics and materials
- Learning activities give learners opportunities to work together in teams, to solve problems
- Instruction is linked to the needs of both employer and employee
- Instruction optimizes learners' opportunities for practice, reinforcement, and application
- There is a clear connection between identified needs, instruction, and assessment
- Language components (vocabulary, grammatical structures, language functions, pronunciation) are integrated around topics of importance/interest to the learners
- Learners' literacy skills – in their primary languages as well as English – are considered

The Five Step Model employed in the development of curricular responses to Rider 82, the OTAN (Outreach and Technical Assistance Network) Online Lesson Plan Builder at <http://www.adultedlessons.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=aboutlp>, and the template being used in developing learning activities to accompany the Texas Adult Education Standards and Benchmarks (June 2007) all employ a similar format for developing learning activities that maximize learners' opportunities to practice and apply language and work-related skills:

1. Warm up/review (drawing on learners' prior knowledge)
2. Introduction of new material
3. Presentation
4. Practice
5. Evaluation/evidence
6. Application/extension

# Ten Ways to Make Your Classroom Workforce-Friendly Practical Tips from the Field

The following is a collection of practical applications teachers have submitted to national, state, and local discussion groups over the past year (If you do not currently subscribe to a national discussion list for English as a Second Language or Workplace, go to [www.nifl.gov](http://www.nifl.gov). If you do not subscribe to the Texas adult basic education teachers listserv maintained by TCALL, go to <http://www-tcall.tamu.edu>). The learning activities included here correspond to the Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks and can easily be adapted using the lesson plan template included in the June 2007 Implementation Guide. A copy is included in this handbook for your use. The template, as well as additional learning activities, are also available online at <http://www-tcall.tamu.edu>.

## #1

*Familiarize learners with forms they might encounter in the workplace. Collect resources learners are likely to come across in the workplace. Samples can be found in many commercial texts, but you can also encourage individuals to bring in employment-related forms (be prepared to remove specific, proprietary names and references before using them for the class as a whole). Some suggested materials include:*

◇ Email messages	◇ Memos	◇ Signs
◇ Standard operating procedures	◇ Inventory tracking forms	◇ Repair orders
◇ Parts lists	◇ Training manuals	◇ Quality control checklists
◇ Schematic diagrams	◇ Forms for communicating between shifts	◇ Organizational charts
◇ Suggestion forms	◇ Insurance information	◇ Company cafeteria menus
◇ Safety regulations and procedures	◇ Employee handbooks	◇ Company newsletters
◇ Job orders	◇ Union information	◇ Leave forms
◇ Lists of tools and equipment used	◇ Job descriptions	◇ Injury/accident report forms

## #2

*Two of learners' greatest fears are interacting with English speakers and answering the phone. Try mock discussions that they might have with customers face-to-face or on the phone. Practice telephone conversations requiring learners to answer calls and take messages. Develop scenarios and dialogues – or better yet – have them share real life experiences and develop the scenarios together. Find out what a particular employer expects from employees in terms of giving out information or taking down information.*

## #3

*Have students surf the net for employers' websites (their own employer or a local company they might be interested in working for). Have them copy or write three bullets that describe the company, or ask them to find specific information online or in a company brochure. For example:*

1. Where is the company located? What is the company's logo?
2. How many employees does the company have locally? Worldwide?
3. What product does the company make or services does it provide?
4. Can one apply for a job online? Are job descriptions available?
5. Are job openings posted online?
6. Other:

#### #4

Find out what kinds of jobs learners have. If possible, group learners by similar job functions. Using picture dictionaries, poster paper, and markers, and have the groups identify the tools they use in their work. Then, depending on learners' proficiency levels, help them write three statements about their work. Suggestion: provide them with a short list of action verbs that would help them describe the job tasks they perform. Keep in mind that many English language learners are highly proficient workers; the objective is to help them become comfortable talking about the skills they have – a good skill in itself!

#### #5

*The Learning Edge* is an online newspaper for adult learners. Many of the issues (#5, 6, and 7) include workforce or work-related articles and are rich in work-related basic skills development. You'll find stories and lessons that address communication in the workplace (what to say, how to say it, and what not to say); workplace safety; essential workplace skills (use of memory, problem-solving, active listening, speaking so others can understand, etc.) The site includes workplace stories about the skills individuals use in the workplace, and there are even quizzes learners can use to rate their employability. Go to <http://www.thewclc.ca/edge>.

#### #6

The Massachusetts Worker Education Roundtable ([www.umass.edu/roundtable](http://www.umass.edu/roundtable)) has designed a Workplace Health and Safety ESOL Curriculum to help students learn about and exercise their workplace health and safety rights. The curriculum can be adapted for various levels of ESL as well as ABE instruction. It is learner-centered and engages students in authentic scenarios and discussion and builds on their own experience. Includes all handouts for learners.

#### #7

The Workforce Education LAB (Learning Activities Bank) is an interactive resource of work-related basic skills lessons for use by instructors in the workplace and in traditional adult education programs. It can also be accessed directly by adult learners. The LAB is funded by Verizon and is a part of LINCS (Literacy Information and Communication System), a project funded by the National Institute for Literacy. It is part of the Southern LINCS special collection of resources on workforce education. A sample lesson, Interpreting Workplace Memos and Notices, is included in this handbook. To access others that address content standards and benchmarks, go to <http://slincs.coe.utk.edu/gtelab/find.html>.

#### #8

ADULTINSTRUCTION.ORG offers online ESL instructional materials in Tools for ESL Lesson Planning (Los Angeles Unified School District), a book of techniques, sample lesson plans, activities, and other resources for teaching ESL. There is also a link to ESL Action Photos\* (created by Barry Bakin as part of a National Institute for Literacy ESL mini-grant competition) which can be incorporated into instruction (other use strictly prohibited). Go to website, <http://www.adultinstruction.org/teachers/index.htm> and click on instructional materials, then Tools for ESL Lesson Planning.

#### #9

Let your fingers (and those of your students) do the walking - Use the Internet to:

- scope out local companies. Industry-related information about products manufactured and/or services provided, employment applications, job openings, expansion and/or downsizing projections can often be found on employers' websites.

- locate labor market information (LMI) for your community. The local workforce development region (LWDB) in which your community is located gathers and publishes information about projected job growth and employment opportunities.
- locate information about employment, career pathways, education and training requirements. One source is O\*NET OnLine, the Occupational Information Network providing information on high growth industries, occupation descriptions, job families, skill requirements, etc. <http://online.onetcenter.org>

#10

Check out the Career Development Resources (CDR) at the Texas Workforce Commission. CDR offers a collection of inexpensive hardcopy and electronic labor market and career information products. For English language learners, there are three side-by-side English/Spanish publications addressing employment-related topics such as first day on the job, the work ethic, job-hunting, and teamwork. For ABE/ASE learners, *Pathways to Personal Independence* is an excellent resource aimed at helping workers identify career paths that can move them from entry-level jobs to economic freedom. In addition, there are brochures and charts that can be used to generate interest and discussion in any classroom. Most materials range in price from 5 cents to \$2.00. Order form is available at <http://www.cdr.state.tx.us>.

Of course, the most accessible resource you have is the Texas Adult Literacy Clearinghouse maintained at Texas A&M University by the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning. A lending library, free materials, the Literacy Links newsletter, the website, listservs, and announcements are all at your disposal. <http://www-tcall.tamu.edu> or [tcall@coe.tamu.edu](mailto:tcall@coe.tamu.edu)

## If It Looks Like A Duck...

Then perhaps you are already delivering workforce-related instruction without labeling it as such. As an adult education instructor, chances are that you already appreciate and try to address some of your students' work-related needs and concerns in the classroom. Students may already be asking you to help them understand work-related forms, handbooks, or benefits packages. But actually integrating workforce-related topics into instruction requires a conscious decision on your part. It also requires that you understand the knowledge, skills, and tools needed by learners to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Adult education programs differ in their capacity to deliver workforce-related instruction to English language learners. Decisions about delivery are influenced by funding and instructor availability, local partnerships and collaboration within workforce development systems, and linkages to post secondary education and training as well as local businesses and industries. For practical purposes, we will focus on two of the most likely scenarios in which you, the instructor might be asked to deliver workforce-related ESL instruction:

Traditional ESL Instruction With a Workforce-Related Twist. Since all adult basic education classes are expected to help learners address their family, community, and workplace needs, most traditional ESL instruction must include some attention to workforce-related language and employability skills development. The extent of the workforce focus is largely determined by the program director's guidance, program priorities, instructor preparation, assessment of learners' needs, and the intensity of the classes. Learning centers with staff sufficient to allow for small group activities are often able to schedule instructional components specifically geared to learners' workforce-related needs and interests. This is a viable option when separate classes focused specifically on one group of employees' instructional needs cannot be offered.

Vocational English as a Second-Language (VESL or VESOL) courses are offered to students with low levels of English language proficiency but a high or immediate need for employment or reemployment. These courses are usually of high intensity (meeting up to 20 to 25 hours per week) and of short duration (three to four months or less). Most VESL programs are either a) general orientation courses for specific industries and occupations, or b) courses that prepare learners to access entry level jobs, provide opportunities for hands-on training, or prepare learners for more advanced education and certification.

Sound adult learning theory and the principles of second language learning form the foundation of any successful occupation-related ESL instruction. This handbook is not a substitute for strong professional development in the principles of adult second language learning.

### **One Solution: A Modular Approach to Instruction**

*How can an adult education program expand its attention to workforce-related instruction without restructuring the entire program?* A modular approach to instruction can be incorporated into regular adult education instruction fairly easily, providing all learners access to workforce-related topics. This seems to work especially well in small programs for which offering separate and distinct workforce-focused classes is not feasible.

Modular approaches to instructional delivery – usually high in intensity and short in duration – have proven to be both successful and efficient. The window of instructional opportunity for adult learners is often limited by both time and funding, plus unemployed adults must find ways to support themselves and their families. Courses of short but intense duration seem to reduce attrition, are easier to access by those already employed, and by their very nature familiarize participants with the real pressures of the work environment. The modular approach

also allows both programs and learners maximum flexibility. In the report, *Charting a Course: Responding to the Industry-Related Adult Basic Education Needs of the Limited English Proficient* (Tondre 2006), recommendations include a modular approach to tackling adult learners' needs, with attention to the following components:

- student orientation to the world of work
- work-related English language instruction as well as reading, writing, and math skills development
- a balanced integration of English language / basic skills development with work-related content
- employment readiness skills (including critical, interpersonal, and life skills)
- the use of industry-related environmental print, terminology, and realia
- familiarity with technology, including basic computer literacy, job-related technical terminology, equipment, and applications
- integration with vocational skills training when partnerships make this feasible
- links to postsecondary technical education and training leading to career opportunities, licensure, and certification in healthcare, manufacturing, and sales and service industry clusters

The capacity to offer all of these components requires the leveraging of local resources as well as strong partnerships with local workforce development networks, business and industry, and post secondary education/training providers.

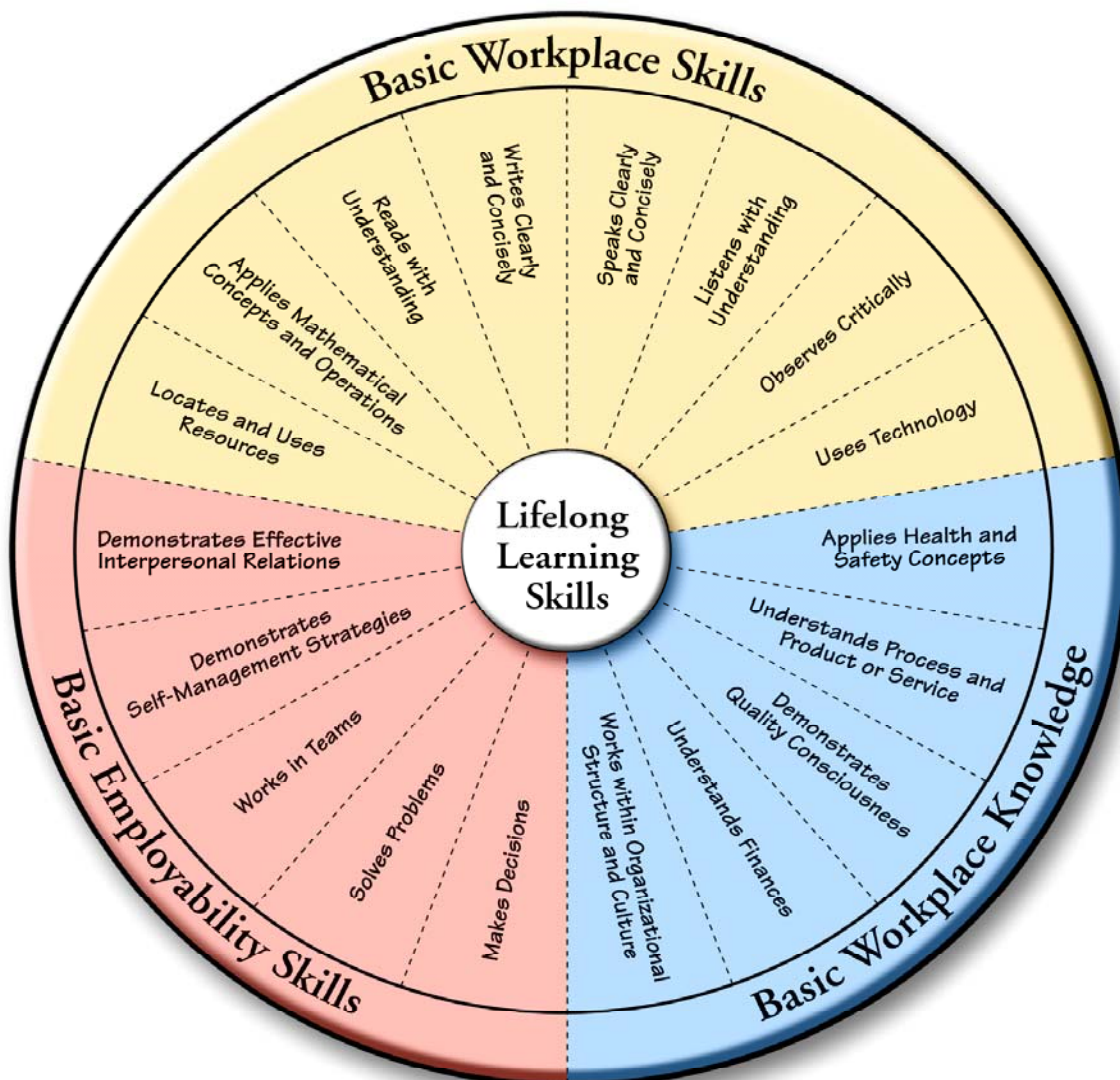
The curricular responses to Education Rider 82 (79<sup>th</sup> state legislative session, 2005), developed under the direction of El Paso Community College, are modular in nature to afford maximum flexibility in use. Three industry clusters – healthcare, manufacturing, and sales and service – are being addressed in response to this state legislation. The responses include references to additional activities, commercially prepared and web-based materials, software and other multi-media products that can be used to enhance or extend learning beyond classroom instruction.

## Addressing EFF Foundation Skills in WP Instruction

Another nationally recognized literacy and basic skills resource, *Equipped for the Future* (EFF), describes in detail what adults need to know and be able to do in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Workplace Foundation Skills Framework that follows is an adaptation by Pennsylvania's Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) system of EFF's Content Standards Wheel. It describes the literacy, language, and basic skills and competencies all adults need to obtain or maintain jobs, and to advance to higher paying positions. By clicking on the Skills Wheel in the upper right hand corner of the website, you can access ABLE's *Focus Bulletin* and information about the downloadable Resource and Instructor's Guide (<http://www.pawerc.org>).

As a visual, the wheel can be used to initiate discussion with learners, employers and local workforce development partners. The wheel identifies the work-related needs of three groups often served by Adult Education:

- The emerging immigrant workforce with little or no work or educational history
- Recent hires in need of additional education opportunities in order to advance
- Long-term employees needing to upgrade their skills to meet job demands



## Addressing the Foundation Skills in WP ESL Instruction (cont'd)

Application Activity: After examining the wheel, use the chart to identify ways you already address work-related proficiencies needed by English language learners. Then explore ways to help learners develop other proficiencies not currently addressed in instruction.

Foundation Skills	How am I currently addressing these in the classroom? (be specific)	How can I enhance instruction/help learners develop these skills?
<p><b>Basic Workplace Skills</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. locates/uses resources</li> <li>2. applies mathematical concepts/operations</li> <li>3. reads w/ understanding</li> <li>4. writes clearly/concisely</li> <li>5. speaks clearly/concisely</li> <li>6. listens w/ understanding</li> <li>7. observes critically</li> <li>8. uses technology</li> </ol>		
<p><b>Basic Workplace Knowledge</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. applies health/safety concepts</li> <li>10. understands process and product or service</li> <li>11. demonstrates quality consciousness</li> <li>12. understands finances</li> <li>13. works within organizational structure/culture</li> </ol>		
<p><b>Basic Employability Skills</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. makes decisions</li> <li>15. solves problems</li> <li>16. works in teams</li> <li>17. demonstrates self-management strategies</li> <li>18. demonstrates effective interpersonal relations</li> </ol>		

## Instructional Scenarios: It's That Duck Again...

Where does workforce-related ESL instruction occur? Location does not necessarily determine the nature of instruction. The focus of instruction is on the language and literacy skills needed to get a job, survive on the job, and thrive on the job. Of course, when an employer requests (and sometimes pays for) educational services on site, the requested instruction can be very focused.

**Activity:** The scenarios included here represent a variety of opportunities to incorporate work-related topics into your instruction. Many of these learners are already in your classrooms. Select one scenario and complete the activities that accompany it, focusing on application within your adult education classroom. Use the lesson-planning template following these scenarios.

1. You have a group of learners in your class who work in customer service. They are responsible for filling orders taken by the call center. They need to improve their reading and writing skills, since they need to interpret orders and also keep accurate records of orders filled. They need help with simple record-keeping duties, such as filling in accurate customer information and product ordering information. Create a lesson that could turn this into a valuable learning activity.
2. You have a group of beginning level learners who are employed as assembly workers, manufacturing small parts for electronic devices. Their listening and speaking skills are fairly good, but they have difficulty understanding written instructions for their jobs. As new products are introduced to the assembly line, signage on the line changes. This often results in significant increases in waste and slows production. Develop a learning activity that can help learners improve the skills needed for their work.
3. The learners in your class who are employed often complain about company correspondence and other documents written in jargon or obscure language at a level that even native speakers might not fully comprehend. This makes it especially difficult for the non-native speakers to comply with written instructions and company policy. What solutions can you offer in terms of a learning activity?
4. You are offering an employment-focused ESOL class at a plant that manufactures electronic parts. The assembly line workers in your class have fairly good reading skills (they must read schematics to perform their jobs), but their listening and speaking skills are relatively low. They seem to have particular difficulty understanding instructions in group settings / team meetings where new procedures are being introduced. Outline how you would address their needs.
5. You are working with a group of learners who are fairly advanced. They are, in fact, engineers and technicians working in a high tech environment. Their problem, they claim, is their accents, and they are very reluctant to participate in team meetings and presentations. The learners feel that the native speakers just do not understand them or will make fun of them. What are the identifiable needs? How do you design a learning activity to address some of their needs?
6. The learners in your class are having problems when it comes to oral communication at work. As a result, they keep to themselves in the lunchroom and at the company's social functions and miss out on opportunities to learn and practice English. They feel they don't fit

in because of their lack of social language skills. Develop a learning activity to begin addressing these issues.

7. You are teaching an intermediate ESOL class at a hospital, with learners who work directly with patients, doctors, and nurses (the learners are aides and nursing assistants). You have been working with them on critical communication skills in the classroom, including clarifying, confirming, and asking questions. Create a learning activity that provides for real-life application of these skills.
8. Create your own scenario:

## Texas Adult Education Standards Lesson Plan Template

**Title / Topic:**

**Setting:**

**NRS Level(s):**

**Open entry/exit: Y / N**

**Context:**

**Standard(s):**

**Benchmark(s):**

**Objective(s):**

**Materials:**

**Estimated time needed to prepare for this lesson plan: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Estimated instructional time needed to complete lesson: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Develop your lesson plan on the back side of this page ....**



## **The Lesson Plan**

**Introduce the lesson:** *What previously learned content should be reviewed to create an environment for learning? How can you build on learners' knowledge and experiences?*

**Teach the lesson:** *What is the new information or skill you will teach?*

**Practice the lesson:** *How will the students apply the information from the lesson? How will you have them practice the new skill(s). Remember that the best lessons have more practice than presentation, and practice is essential to second language learning.*

**Apply the lesson to the real world:** *Create an activity where the students have to apply the new information or skill to life outside the classroom.*

**Assess the learning:** *How will you assess learners' abilities to perform the skill they just practiced? Consider a variety of assessments, such as a checklist, a quiz, or a report-back session, an observable or documentable application – something that enables learners to demonstrate changes in behavior or performance.*

**Developed by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Program** \_\_\_\_\_

## Sample Learning Activity: Understands Process & Product or Service

This module will help develop basic knowledge that every organization produces a product or provides a service that is guided by a process, and one's role and importance in that process.



*"We get paid for bringing value to the market place."*

**~ Jim Rohn**

## KEY WORDS/CONCEPTS

- Organizational Mission/Vision
- Work tasks
- Continuous Improvement
- Understanding process controls
- Understanding work processes
- Doing a quality job
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)
- Products
- Services
- Protocols

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What does your company do? What is its mission?
- What are some examples of products? Of services? What are the differences and similarities? Do some businesses provide a combination of both?
- What do you do to help your company meet its mission?
- How is your job linked to your company's success?
- Describe good quality customer service at your workplace. What do your customers want from your company? From you?
- What does Continuous Improvement mean? Give some examples.
- What does it mean to do a quality job?
- How can you impact the quality of your organization?

# ACTIVITIES



## Mission Impossible

Have participants explore their (or local) companies' missions. Write the following on a flip chart or white board:

Organization	Main Mission---Why do they exist? What services/products do they offer others?

Student understands the organization's product or service.



## Product, Goods & Services

Each participant is asked in advance and encouraged to bring in an actual product (anything from pizza, doughnuts, electronic capacitors, books, etc.) or information about the products or services that the company they work for creates. Each person is asked to describe his/her company's goods or services and explains how the product is made and to whom it is sold. Each participant is given 5-10 minutes and questions are strongly encouraged by the other class members.

Student understands the organization's product or service.



## PA Factory Tours and Lesson Plans

Visit the Pennsylvania Cable Network (<http://www.pcntv.com/>) and go to the Lesson Plans Section for PCN Factory Tours. The lessons guide viewers to identify specific aspects of the process or product of the featured company and provide excellent teaching and learning activities. PCN Tours are broadcast on your local PCN cable station or may be purchased from the PCN website.

Student understands the organization's process or product.



## How About some R&R (Roles & Responsibilities)?

Ask participants to consider what their organization does—its main mission. Ask them to write down their main job duties (main Roles & Responsibilities). Ask them to try to make a link between what their organization does and what they do on a daily basis. Discuss also the most important aspects of their job and how they positively impact the organization.

Student understands one's role in production process or service provision.



## Training Others on Process

Explain that you are going to pair participants in a trainee/trainer pair. The trainer is going to train the trainee how to build a design from Legos®. In advance, the instructor creates a simple

Lego® design—but doesn't show anyone until the pairs are formed. The instructor is going to see how quickly the pairs can build the structure. Challenge: the trainee is going to be blindfolded. After the trainee is blindfolded, present the Lego® structure to the trainers. See which team completes the structure the quickest and most accurate. Give small prizes for the winning team. Discuss the process they used to achieve this activity.

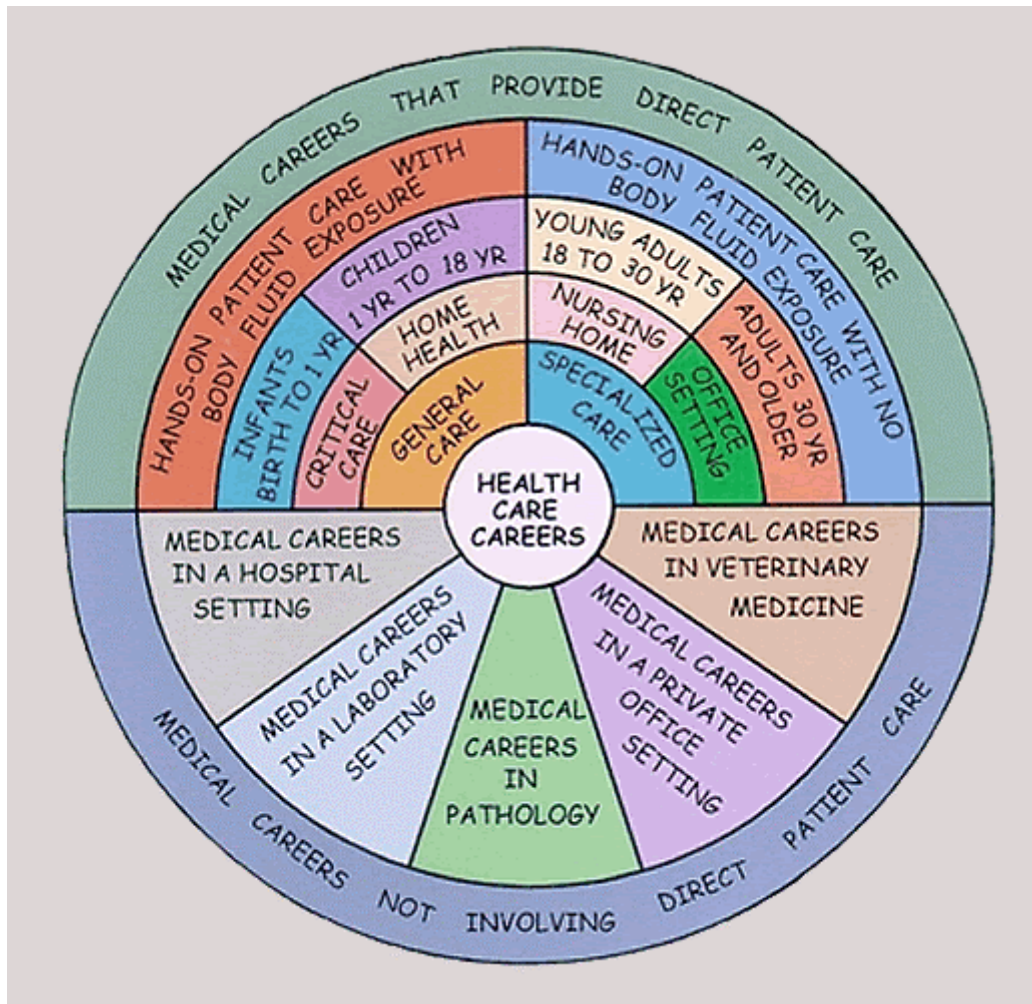
Student understands one's role in production process or service provision.

The Foundation Skills Wheel included in this handbook, this sample lesson and the foundation skills student self-appraisal (also included) were developed by project staff at the Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy at Penn State University as a Work-Based Foundation Skills Project. Additional learning activities can be accessed at <http://www.able.state.pa.us>. Click on Resource Center and then on Lesson Activities.

## More Sample Learning Activities

As important as it is to help learners understand that entry level jobs may be just that – entry level jobs - it is critical to make them aware of the education and training requirements that go hand-in-hand with most career advancement opportunities. Following is a healthcare careers wheel, courtesy of the [East Texas Area Health Education Center](#). Not only can the wheel be used to explore a variety of employment and career options in the healthcare professions, the website offers a [Career Decision Guide](#) that can be used to generate interest and discussion among adult learners interested in exploring employment opportunities across a number of industry clusters. It is a vocabulary goldmine that lends itself to simplification for use with English language learners.

### Texas Health Careers



*Texas Health Careers is a central source of information about educational opportunities and careers in health care. It highlights many skilled and professional career opportunities that contribute to the entire spectrum of health care. It includes info about educational and financial resources, a career decision guide, and internet-link access to community and other resources. The central core of the Career Wheel provides a complete listing of all the careers within the wheel, plus detailed descriptions of each specific career along with links to educational institutions, job outlooks, and potential salary ranges. Simply click on (<http://www.texashealthcareers.org>) to begin using the wheel.*

## Turning Experiences into Learning Opportunities

Oftentimes, ideas for learning activities are so obvious, we miss them. For example, in developing curricular responses to Rider 82 for the sales and service industry, El Paso Community College sent one of its staff members out to visit a number of retail establishments (she was going shopping anyway!). Within a few hours, she had gathered several stories to use in the classroom – stories that spoke volumes in terms of meaningful, real life application. Two of the stories follow. These can be used as opportunities to draw on learners’ own experiences and to introduce new material.

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**Yesterday, I stopped at a discount store on my way home.** I needed some rubbing alcohol. I looked carefully in the medical/first aid supplies aisle of the store. I didn’t find rubbing alcohol, so I headed toward the door empty-handed. The young woman at the cash register noticed me and asked, “Did you have trouble finding something?” I explained that I had been looking for rubbing alcohol. She immediately asked a co-worker to help me find the alcohol (I think the cashier was a new employee). The second woman took me to the correct aisle, and we found the alcohol. On the way to the checkout counter, I picked up several more items to purchase. I was uncertain about the price of one item, so I asked the cashier to check the price before ringing the item up. She asked her co-worker for assistance with this task. Then, she thanked me for asking for a price check. She said, “I needed to learn how to do that!” She smiled pleasantly and finished ringing me up.

- What did the salesperson do correctly?
  - What impression did it make on the customer?
  - What was the immediate positive effect on the store’s sales?
  - What is the long-term effect in terms of customer loyalty?
- 

**On my way home last week, I noticed that a new grocery store had opened up.** I pulled into the parking lot. I wanted to look around and check the prices and selection. I didn’t take a basket on the way in. There was a man standing at the entrance holding a clipboard. He nodded to me and said hello as I entered. The layout of the store was similar to other supermarkets, and the prices were comparable to those at my regular market. The store, however, also had a coffee shop and deli. I decided to grab a cup of coffee and donut. But first I went into the bathroom. The condition of the bathroom was deplorable. Apparently, there were plumbing problems. A sign instructed shoppers not to put toilet paper in the toilet but in the wastepaper basket next to the sink. The trash can was full. The stench was overwhelming. I was amazed, since this was a brand-new store. My appetite was gone, and I left the store immediately. The man at the front door was still standing there with his clipboard. He said nothing to me as I left.

- How can conditions in and near the retail space affect customer behavior—even if the conditions have no direct relationship to the merchandise on sale?
- What impression did the bathroom give the customer?
- What do you think the man with the clipboard was doing?
- Was his presence positive or negative?
- Is the customer likely to return?

We can take these activities to another level by asking students to write letters to store managers—either to complain about something or to pay a compliment. You can use explicit

instruction in business letter format and the writing process to help students compose simple letters. It's a good idea for instructors to model before asking students to write. For instance:

March 23, 2007

Store Manager  
L-Mart  
772 West Elm St.  
El Paso, TX 79999

To Whom It May Concern:

I visited your store yesterday afternoon to purchase some towels and wash cloths. They were on sale. I found the towels I needed, but not the wash cloths. The salesperson who came to help didn't know very much about the merchandise. He didn't even know about the sale. He kept trying to sell me other wash cloths that were not on sale and were a different color. After a long time, he asked, "Well if you want me to, I guess I could go check and see if there are any more in the back, but I doubt it." I could tell he really didn't want to check. It was very frustrating.

I left your store without buying anything. This is very poor customer service. I will not return to your store.

Sincerely,

Graciela Tovar

Help learners develop questions about this letter and discuss the possible answers.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

*Source: Sales and Service modules developed in response to Rider 82 requiring Adult Basic Education in Texas to respond to the industry-related instructional needs of adult learners. Publication upon completion of pilot initiatives in summer and fall 2007.*

**Charlene  
Brown  
Kentucky**

**Project:**

### **#3: Interpreting workplace memos and notices**

*The participants will read company memos and write summary sentences while working as part of a group.*

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**Subjects:**

Critical thinking,  
General education  
development (GED),  
Job skills, Life skills,  
Literacy, Reading  
instruction,  
Vocabulary  
development, Work  
environment

**Learning Objective:**

The participants will be able to read memos and summarize the content.

**Primary Skill:**

Read with understanding

**Secondary Skills:**

Convey ideas in writing

**Learner Level:**

This activity was developed for participants who read from a 3.0 to a 9.0 grade level. Participants reading at higher levels could use similar strategies with company manuals or other texts.

**Learner Needs & Goals:**

Participants must understand the instructions communicated to them by their supervisors and other company officials. Participants make many costly errors when they fail to understand changes and procedures communicated in memos.

**Learning Activity Description:**

1. Prior to class, collect several memos and other notices that are either posted by the company on bulletin boards or sent by the human resources department.
2. Show the video, PBS LiteracyLink Workplace Essential Skills Series-- Reading for a Purpose. If you don't have the video, be sure to discuss the importance of knowing the purposes, structures, features and strategies for workplace reading.
3. Explain that one of the most important ways a company communicates with its employees is through the use of memos and notices. Ask the participants to name the ways that the company distributes these important communications. The participants may mention the following: placing them in envelopes with paychecks; posting them in a prominent place such as the break room or near the time clock; having the supervisors hand them to each employee; or by mailing them to employees at home. Have participants relate the possible importance of a memo to the manner in which it was delivered.
4. Break the class into teams of three and distribute one copy of a memo to each team. Instruct the teams to summarize, in no more than three sentences, what their memo says. They will have 10 minutes. Each team must appoint a recorder, a reporter, a timekeeper, and a facilitator. Ask

**Time Frame:**

1 hour

**Learner Grouping:**

Individual, Small group, Whole class

the participants to list any words that might be confusing to a new employee. These words might include industry specific vocabulary, jargon, or acronyms.

5. The teams report to the large group by reading the memo and reporting the teams' comments. As the teams note the unclear vocabulary, the instructor writes it on the board. Have the teams develop a plan for defining these terms and providing examples for the participants. Ask the teams to present their definitions and examples.

### **Materials and Resources:**

- Sample memos from company bulletin boards
- Dictionary
- Blackboard/chalk or Dry-erase Board/markers
- PBS LiteracyLink Workplace Essential Skills Series titled *Reading for a Purpose* available through KET, The Kentucky Network - Enterprise Division, 560 Cooper Drive, Lexington, KY 40502-2200, phone (800) 354-9067.

### **Attachments:**

### **Assessment:**

Using a different memo and a bulletin board notice, have participants answer the following questions:

- Who is the audience for the memo?
- Who sent the memo?
- When was the memo sent?
- What is the purpose of the memo?
- What is the tone of the memo?
- Summarize the memo.
- Why would the sender use a memo rather than a letter?
- Why would the sender use a memo rather than telling the employee in person?

### **Reflection:**

I would have the participants write a memo to communicate a particular problem or need.

Source: <http://slincs.coe.utk.edu/gtelab/>. *The Workforce Education Lab collects and distributes high quality learning activities that focus on the basic skills and knowledge adults need to be effective in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace.*

## VESL: Linking ESL and Occupational Training

Because adult education programs differ in their capacity to deliver workforce-related instruction to English language learners, each must consider its capacity to integrate vocational training with English language instruction. Certainly, choices are influenced by local partnerships, employers' needs, and collaboration with the local workforce development network. Curriculum development and delivery may incorporate one or more of the following configurations (Hanson, 2005):

1. **The coordinated approach** – two separate classes are offered but they are jointly planned and coordinated. Example: An ESL teacher provides English language instruction related to workforce issues, topics, and terminology; a vocational or occupational training instructor provides technical instruction. Each teacher provides support to the other by reinforcing the use of work-related concepts and terminology to ensure as much integration as possible. In some instances, one class is offered mornings and one afternoon, or on alternate days, and the number of hours of ESL instruction and vocational/occupational instruction fluctuate in response to the needs of the learners.
2. **The integrated approach** – two instructors (one ESL and one vocational) team-teach one class. This is a challenging approach in that the instructors must be totally committed to and capable of implementing a team approach to instruction. But having two instructors in a classroom provides opportunities to do small group learning activities, focusing on learners' specific language and vocational needs.
3. **The bookend model** – vocational content is preceded and followed by ESL instruction. Basic English language skills are addressed in the first phase of instruction, occupational training follows, and additional work-related ESL instruction is the final phase of instruction. This configuration is sometimes necessary when partnering providers are unable to coordinate or integrate instruction to the extent described in the first two models. However, some joint planning and coordination are necessary if learners are to benefit from this model.
4. **The stand-alone model** – either the vocational teacher or an ESL teacher delivers all of the instruction. Either way, it requires cross training, which can be costly.

Hanson makes a number of suggestions to ensure success in programs designed to help learners bridge the gap between adult and post secondary programs:

- An orientation should always precede student enrollment into industry-specific ESL training. An introduction to health occupations, for example, gives learners a sneak preview of the work and commitment required.
- Student cohorts should be formed for tutorial purposes. There is strength in numbers.
- Mentoring by employer partners promotes buy-in and commitment.
- Each of the four options requires commitment and close coordination between adult education and vocational/occupational training providers or programs.
- A study skills module is an absolute must (can include cultural issues; these can be particularly critical when dealing with health matters).
- It is important that each approach continues to develop language proficiencies and study skills during the course of training.

Activity: Select one of the four configurations described above to discuss with a partner. Then quickly brainstorm the steps that would need to be taken to prepare for the delivery of VESL in this configuration.

1. What would your program administrator need to do to set this up?
2. What about partners – who would they be and what would they provide?
3. What would you as the instructor need to do in preparing to deliver instruction?
4. What would be required of the learner participants in such an initiative?

#### What about using learners' native language in workplace instruction?

Use of the native language in workplace instruction, particularly in situations where workers share the same native language, can minimize miscommunication and can accelerate learner comprehension of difficult concepts (Katz, 2000; Moore, 1999; Taggart & Martinez, 2003).

This requires a judicious choice of which language to use for which purposes, and bilingual teachers may need explicit criteria as to when to use the native language and when to use English (Taggart & Martinez, 2003). Taggart and Martinez suggest that the learners' native language be used to teach the difficult content that they need to know in order to do a task. Then the English vocabulary and structures they need to listen, read, write, and talk about the tasks should be taught. Ana Huerta-Macías (2003) offers a model for using the two languages:

- The topic is introduced in the native language
- Key English vocabulary items are taught
- Hands-on activities (such as those involving workplace machines) are carried out in English and assessed in English
- Technology activities follow, with discussion in the native language as needed
- Final discussion and question/answer activities are carried out in whichever language each individual student prefers
- If a class has speakers of several different languages, Huerta-Macías suggests dividing the group into same-language small groups for discussion of the workplace issues in the native language
- Each group then, in English, frames questions about the workplace issues for the teacher

## Understanding the Basics of Bridge Programs....

Increasingly, jobs that pay more than subsistence wages and offer opportunities for career advancement require at least some training beyond high school, even at the entry level. Many already in the workforce or joining the workforce lack the basic skills to succeed in post secondary education and training without a safety net of support.

Bridge training programs prepare adults who lack adequate basic skills to enter and succeed in post secondary education and training, which in turn lead to employment and career path opportunities. Designed to enable learners to advance both to better jobs and to further education and training, bridge programs are suited for adults who have reading and math skills below the ninth grade level and for individuals with limited English proficiency. These individuals often lack a high school diploma or GED as well.

Bridge training programs can be designed for individuals/groups who have generally not been successful in traditional education settings or have been out of school for some time. These include:

- Prospective college students with a high school diploma or GED who are unable to meet college entrance or placement requirements
- Those enrolled in adult education programs (adult basic education, English as a Second Language, and GED preparation)
- Students enrolled in developmental college courses
- Displaced workers
- Unemployed adults with poor basic skills
- Low-skilled workers who are employed but stuck in low-wage jobs

### Key Features of Successful Bridge Programs

- “Road maps” illustrating the connection between education, training, and jobs are jointly developed by education and training providers, employers, and local workforce development networks.
- Curriculum is defined in terms of competencies needed to succeed in jobs and post secondary training that, with work experience and further training, can lead to career advancement.
- The focus is on communication, problem-solving, applied mathematics, technology applications, critical thinking, and technical fundamentals taught in the context of problems and situations drawn from the contemporary workplace and/or the post secondary classroom.
- Instruction emphasizes learning by doing through projects, simulations, and labs, and uses instructional methods and technologies appropriate for adult learners.
- Learners learn of employment and education requirements of local economies through field trips, job shadowing, internships, and career exploration.
- Programs are compressed to allow adults to complete quickly and move on to better jobs and further education.
- “Wrap around” support services are offered, including assessment and counseling, case management, childcare, and financial support.
- Programs offer job and college placement assistance and follow up.

Successful bridge programs are offered through partnerships that can involve both credit and non-credit divisions within colleges, adult education providers, employers, one-stop career centers, and social service and community agencies - all actively cooperating to recruit and

provide the support students need to advance to post secondary education, training and career path employment.

Unfortunately, few existing education and workforce development initiatives ensure a continuum of services leading to both job advancement and further education. Incongruent public policies regarding eligibility and funding often inadvertently result in gaps in services, creating additional barriers for adults in low wage jobs as well as first generation college students. But existing programs can often be reconfigured to ensure the critical connections, provided partners are committed to helping these individuals realize their economic, career, and education potential. Current, healthy dialogue among partners could result in one of several scenarios. For example:

- Adult basic education (ABE/ASE) programs take learners beyond literacy skills improvement and GED preparation through successful transition components and into college, job preparation, or advancement in the workplace.
- Programs for English language learners help learners develop academic and work-related skills in addition to helping them improve practical language skills.
- Short-term occupational skills training programs are made accessible to adults with no high school diploma or GED and support is made available to help students acquire the learning and specific skills needed for particular jobs and further education/training.
- College developmental courses focus on preparing students to place in college-level English and math courses while introducing occupational skills and concepts.
- Workforce development networks provide greater access to certificate and credential programs at a post secondary level while learners continue to upgrade their language, academic, and occupational skills and proficiencies.
- Local workforce development networks find ways to leverage resources, in spite of restrictive eligibility criteria, and work with state and federal decision makers to remove obstacles to a continuum of services.

Workforce-related bridge programs are unique in that each is developed for a specific target population and invested employers, and generally involve adapting already existing program elements. Bridge programs fall into two categories:

1. Lower level bridge programs are designed to serve those who have relatively low literacy levels but are seeking to move up from low level semi-skilled jobs into higher level semi-skilled jobs and to higher levels of training, including access to more advanced bridge programs.

Lower level programs are generally designed for English language learners at the low intermediate ESL level (as defined by the National Reporting System) or for native English speakers functioning at fifth to sixth grade reading levels. Although participants may be far from qualifying for career path employment or post secondary education and training, the bridge experience encourages them to begin exploring post secondary and career opportunities. Programs emphasize basic skills reading, communication, and applied math in contexts such as customer service, computer operations, and job-specific skills that will improve learners' job prospects. Like VESL (vocational ESL) or VABE (vocational adult basic education), bridge programs focus on skills needed for specific jobs, aim to improve learners' job prospects, increase career awareness, and provide a foundation for continued education and training. Some lower level bridge programs target a specific career in a particular industry sector. The variations enable local providers to match the needs of the groups being served.

2. Higher-level bridge initiatives prepare adults for advancement into entry-level skilled positions and into occupational certificate or associate degree programs. Most require a

minimum of seventh grade reading for native speakers of English or a high intermediate ESL level for English language learners. These programs can be industry or occupation specific, integrating instruction in language development, reading, communication, critically thinking, test taking skills, and applied math with basic occupation-specific technical skills.

Higher-level programs can be offered by post secondary education/training providers in the workplace when occupational training and workplace literacy funds are linked to develop programs for advancing employees within a company.

Higher-level bridge programs most often prepare participants for community college occupational certificates and degree programs. In most cases, they are developed to connect students to post secondary credit programs as quickly as possible, enabling them to draw on student financial aid and to access career path employment.

Lower and higher level bridge programs can be linked to enable individuals to complete one level and advance to the next. Some lower level bridge programs are designed as “feeder programs” for high tech manufacturing and skilled trades education and training.

#### Additional Information about Bridge Programs...

*Bridges to Careers for Low Skilled Adults: A Program Development Guide (2005) from Women Employed* describes models for lower and higher level bridge programs, offers suggestions for designing programs, building bridge partnerships, building and sustaining employer relationships, developing curricula, and identifying costs and funding options for core components of bridge programs. Also included is a profile of career pathways vocational training for non-native English speakers. A CD-ROM of the program curricula (healthcare, institutional food services, direct care, office skills, high tech manufacturing, and welding) can be requested for a shipping and handling fee. The website <http://www.womenemployed.org> links the reader to this valuable resource.

Another promising effort is that of Washington State’s adult and post secondary education providers. The I-BEST (Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training) brings adult basic education and post secondary technical skills training together. “Integrated” here means that the curriculum addresses both skills sets, and at least 50% of class time involves both teachers in the room working with students.

Texas LEARNS continues to review bridge program initiatives launched successfully by other states. In addition, the Texas Education Agency and Texas LEARNS are actively engaged in the statewide P-16 dialogue being lead by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, which focuses on fostering a culture that supports learners’ successful transition into post secondary education and training.

## Did You Know That...

**Access to occupational training** does not always require a GED or high school diploma? This by no means lessens the importance of these credentials, but it is important to familiarize ourselves with other options for those who may be a long way from obtaining the GED but who have marketable skills and a strong work ethic as well as a critical need for employment.

Many community colleges offer non-credit, short term occupational training that provides access to certificates and licensure. The offerings vary from college to college, but the opportunities should be explored by both instructors and adult learners. SHOP TALK #14 includes a link to Austin Community College's Quick Careers page which describes both credit and non-credit entry level training opportunities, some of which can be completed in a year or less (<http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/texaslearns/st/st14.htm>).

...

**Another important initiative to watch:** the development of work readiness credentials and certificates. Earlier this year, Jobs for the Future completed a survey of several work readiness certificates and credentials that have emerged throughout the United States. Today, many states find themselves challenged by a paradox - employers who are demanding "work-ready" job candidates versus significant numbers of residents who have trouble getting a job due to lack of educational and professional credentials.

*A Survey of Selected Work Readiness Credentials* (Rey-Alicea and Scott, 2007) summarizes five of the nation's many work readiness certificates, which are representative of the diverse range of such initiatives in terms of target population, certification requirements, geography, and other factors. The report highlights the benefits and costs associated with each, as well as issues that stakeholders should consider in determining which approaches would most benefit their state's unique demographics, economy, and political landscape. In addition, a number of states are developing their own certificates and credentials. The full report is available online at [http://www.jff.org/JFF\\_KC\\_Pages.php?WhichLevel=1&lv1\\_id=4&lv2\\_id=0&lv3\\_id=0&KC\\_M\\_ID=315](http://www.jff.org/JFF_KC_Pages.php?WhichLevel=1&lv1_id=4&lv2_id=0&lv3_id=0&KC_M_ID=315)

While Texas has not adopted or endorsed any of the products included in the report, Texas LEARNS continues to conduct its own review of certificates/credentials. The *National Work Readiness Credential* in particular, which was originally developed in response to the *Equipped for the Future Content Standards* (EFF) and the *EFF Worker Role Map*, has been utilized to inform the Texas Content Standards and Benchmarks and their applicability to adult learners' workforce-related needs. Adult educators involved in the development of the state's content standards found its language easy to navigate because of its EFF origins. Adult education directors may find the same language a useful basis for dialogue with workforce partners and post secondary institutions.

The credentials/certificates are intended to help learners quantify their work readiness and eligibility to join a pool of qualified individuals who are ready for job-specific technical training. For many learners, a work readiness credential or certificate could provide a "mid-level" certification linked to the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in the workplace. For out-of-school youth and adults who are a long way from earning their GED diploma, it may represent an explicit picture of work-related skills and knowledge already attained.

### Other facts you might find helpful...

- According to the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS), approximately 40 million adults have limited literacy skills, making tasks such as filling out an application or reading a food label difficult.
- Eighty percent of manufacturers report a moderate to severe shortage of qualified job candidates (National Association of Manufacturers, 2001).
- Approximately 40% of manufacturers are spending at least 2% of payroll on training for shop-floor and hourly workers, up from less than 1 percent in the early 1990s (NAM, 1998).
- OSHA estimates that 25% of job site accidents are attributable to the language barrier.
- Of the 7 million construction workers in the United States, roughly 25% are of Hispanic origin (NAHB Economics Group, *Data on Hispanic Population, Homeowners, and Construction Workers*, January 2006).
- Accidents sidelined injured workers for an average of 33 days per year (Builder Magazine, July 2006).
- Formal employer-provided training increases productivity anywhere from 10% to 16% (National Bureau of Economic Research).
- The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that by 2008 there will be a 9% increase in jobs that require apprenticeship or work-based training of a year or more.
- Only 25% of the nation's workforce can read a description of two kinds of employee benefits and explain the differences (US Chamber of Commerce, Center for Workforce Preparation, 2006).
- The U.S. Department of Labor indicates that the three factors having the greatest impact on the labor market status of immigrant workers are education, length of time in the U.S., and English proficiency.
- Among non-immigrant language minority populations in the U.S., educational attainment and English language proficiency are considered significant factors affecting their labor market status.
- 27 million adults in the U.S. do not have a high school diploma.
- Over 3 million Texas residents are limited English proficient.
- More than half of U.S. adults with high school diplomas read at such low levels that they are unable to find information in a text needed to perform a task.

# Charting A Course:



**RESPONDING TO THE  
INDUSTRY-RELATED  
ADULT BASIC EDUCATION  
NEEDS OF THE TEXAS  
WORKFORCE**

## References And Resources



## References and Resources

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Aztec Software. *Occupational Foundations Learning Series* addresses the requirements for O\*NET job clusters, including specific entry-level and academic skills vital to many of today's occupations. <http://www.aztecsoftware.com/aztec/Workforce>

Burt, M. (1995). *Selling Workplace ESL Instructional Programs*. *ERIC Digest*. Washington, D.C. National Center for ESL Literacy Education, Center for Applied Linguistics. (ED)-LE-96-01)

*CareerOneStop* connects users to relevant links, resources, and community services offered over the internet; everything from a job bank to employment training info, and access to O\*NET – the occupational information network and its comprehensive descriptions and skills sets for specific occupations. Source of graphic competency model included in this handbook.

[www.CareerOneStop.org](http://www.CareerOneStop.org)

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*English for All Video Series* <http://www.myefa.org> Sets of videos available for loan from TCALL at [tcall@coe.tamu.edu](mailto:tcall@coe.tamu.edu) ; a free multi-media resource for adult ESOL; can be freely copied for use in educational programs; over 400 pages of print materials downloadable from website.

ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) is now a collection of online resources by noted authors and experts in adult education that includes valuable foundation materials for ABE, ESL and Workforce Education. <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal>

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