

## Adult Ed Responses to Workforce Needs

**SHOP TALK # 1: Glossary**  
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*On August 30, 2005 adult education program directors and local workforce development staff participated in a joint work session preceding the quarterly forum hosted by the Texas Workforce Commission. Participants identified a number of tools that might help them and their partners collaborate more successfully in meeting the needs of Texas job seekers. One of the tools requested: a glossary of terms and acronyms related to both adult education and workforce development. This glossary is a work in progress and will be expanded as additional terms are identified.*

**Adult Education:** A term that technically describes a myriad of programs, including basic skills, adult secondary, postsecondary, graduate and post graduate studies, community and continuing education initiatives. Under the Workforce Investment Act, Title II, the legislation that authorizes Adult Education and Family Literacy services, adult education means services below the postsecondary level, which include those services for adults whose K-12 education may have been disrupted or not completed, or whose level of proficiency is below the postsecondary level. Under WIA Title II, adult education services are subdivided into English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) or English as a Second Language (ESL), adult basic education (ABE), and adult secondary education (ASE), which includes GED preparation.

**Adult Learner:** An adult who is engaged in formal education to advance his or her knowledge and skills. Learners may be engaged in activities that include basic skills, literacy, English as a Second Language, high school equivalency through postsecondary education and training, work-based training, proprietary school training, and certification programs.

**Basic Skills:** Basic skills are skills below the postsecondary level and include reading, writing, performance of listening and speaking; `workplace literacy services' i.e., literacy services that are offered for the purpose of improving the productivity of the workforce through the improvement of literacy skills; courses in this area include literacy, reading

comprehension, writing, math, English as a second language, and learning how to learn.

**BEST (Basic English Skills Test) and BEST Plus:** BEST is the state mandated assessment instrument for use in WIA Title II funded Adult Education and Family Literacy programs for Limited English Proficient adults. It was developed by language testing professionals at the Center for Applied Linguistics. The assessment provides baseline (placement) and progress information about the learners' English language proficiencies.

**Bilingual Vocational Training:** Programs that prepare learners for a specific occupation using the learners' native language as well as English. Although not an allowable activity under WIA Title II, it is thought to be most effective when the technical instructor and the language instructor function as a unit, so that language and technical learning are integrated while vocational and English language skills are emerging.

**Case Management:** The provision of a client-centered approach to the delivery of services, designed to coordinate services and provide job and career counseling during a client's participation in a program and after job placement. Case management services vary from program to program and are not available to all clients.

**Contextual Learning:** An approach in which learners develop skills through application in real world situations. This approach facilitates transfer of skills to new contexts.

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**Contextualized Instruction:** An instructional approach that connects learning to the demands of everyday life and real-life tasks rather than “learning to know information” that may or may not transfer to an actual task.

**Customized Training:** Training designed to meet the specific requirements of employers for their employees. Training may be fee based or may be provided with the Skills Development or Self Sufficiency Funds administered by the Texas Workforce Commission.

**Displaced or 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; or an individual who was self-employed but is now unemployed as a result of a turn in general economic conditions; or a homemaker 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). During 2001 to 2003, approximately 11.4 million workers were displaced.

**Employment Readiness Classes 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.

**Equipped for the Future (EFF):** A customer-driven, standards-based, collaborative initiative of the National Institute for Literacy. EFF’s goal is to align the components of the nation’s adult learning system with a range of skills and knowledge adults need to access information,

take independent action, express their own ideas and opinions, keep up with a changing world, and exercise their rights and responsibilities as workers, family members, and community members. EFF standards are used as a reference in the development of Texas’ adult education content standards. Details may be found at

<http://cls.coe.utk.edu/projects/eff.html>.

**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. Other common first languages of adult ESL/ESOL learners are French, Portuguese, Polish, Russian, Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese.

**ESOL Worker Competencies:** Language and work related competencies English language learners need to get, survive, and thrive on the job (Burt, Grognet, 2001).

**Industrial Terminology:** Terms related to a specific industry or occupation and having to do with operational excellence, productivity, and quality. Familiarity is best gained through interaction with the employer interested in workplace ESL instruction. Terminology may be extracted from worksite literature with which non-native speakers of English must be familiar. A valuable source of information about occupations and terminology is O\*NET: <http://www.workforcedevelopment-training.net/>.

**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, and work with diversity – all critical skills for native and non-native speakers of English.

**ISO:** A series of standards agreed upon by the International Organization of Standardization

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(ISO) and a prerequisite for global competition. U.S. companies must meet ISO standards in order to compete in the international marketplace.

<http://www.techstreet.com/info/iso.tmp>

**JUST IN TIME (JIT):** Manufacturing what is needed, when it is needed, in the quantity it is needed. Term is also used to refer to training. Go to: <http://worklink.coe.utk.edu/>

**Labor Market Information (LMI):** Information about targeted industries in local workforce development regions. Available from SOCRATES / TRACER links to the Texas Workforce Commission website. The [Texas Labor Market Review](#) is a monthly publication that provides current information and statistics about the Texas economy. Each issue contains a brief overview of the Texas labor market, an in-depth feature article, and employment figures important to the Texas economy.

<http://www.tracer2.com/>

**Language / Literacy Task Analysis:** A series of activities that help identify the literacy and language related needs of workers and inform curricular responses. 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.

### **Local Workforce Development Board**

**(LWDB):** In 1995, state law decentralized most of Texas' workforce services to local "workforce development boards" to allow each region to create customized solutions to its unique workforce needs. Workforce development boards are responsible for managing career development centers and contracting for workforce services in their area. The federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 also promised local boards a high level of flexibility and control in overseeing workforce programs. The New Board Member Orientation Guide provides valuable information about the Texas Workforce System, workforce boards' roles and responsibilities, and board members'

appointment process.

<http://www.twc.state.tx.us/boards/training/boardorientation.html>

**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. <http://www.lep.gov/>.

**Literacy:** From WIA Title II definitions: "The term "literacy" means an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems, at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society." This includes the ability to read and understand written material presented in different ways, such as in a chart, sign, newspaper article, etc. Literacy also includes individuals' ability to effectively participate in their communities as workers, parents, and citizens. Learners functioning at the literacy level may have no knowledge of English and may have limited literacy skills in their native language(s), or may be literate in a language which uses a non-Roman alphabet. <http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/faqs.html>

**Lean Manufacturing:** Using the minimum amount of total resources (worker, materials, money, machines, etc.) to produce a product and deliver it on time.

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

### **NAFTA Trade Adjustment Assistance**

**(NAFTA-TAA):** The North American Free Trade Agreement Transitional Adjustment Assistance Program (NAFTA/TAA Program) covers workers who are laid off or whose hours of work have been reduced as a direct result of increased imports from Mexico or Canada, or because of a shift of U.S. production to those countries. NAFTA/TAA provides affected workers with a variety of services and programs designed to

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meet individual needs and promote a smooth transition back into the workforce.

**National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL):** A nationally representative and continuing assessment of English language literacy skills of American adults. Results reveal that more than 40% of American adults have literacy levels of 1 and 2 on a scale of 1 to 5, below the level required to secure jobs with good wages. <http://nces.ed.gov/naal/>

**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. O\*NET Resource Center <http://www.onetcenter.org/> or What is the O\*NET System? <http://www.doleta.gov/programs/ONET/>

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

**Performance-based / Competency-based Learning and Assessment:** Instructional approaches and assessment tools for measuring student learning in terms of the learner's ability to construct or produce a response to a task or item. Examples include problem-solving scenarios, journals, projects, performance, computer simulation tasks, and portfolios.

**Rapid Response Activity:** A team effort of emergency assistance, usually provided by the state or by an entity designated by the state, to assist dislocated workers in obtaining reemployment as soon as possible. It provides support, information and access to available employment, education, and training opportunities. <http://www.doleta.gov/layoff/employers.cfm>

**Return on Investment (ROI):** Direct and indirect benefits to the company offering work-related education to its employees. <http://www.work-basedlearning.org/> is a free site containing workplace basic skills information, tools and advice for employers who

want to raise their employees' skill levels as well as tools for adult educators working with business and industry. Includes links to promising practices, a toolkit, tip sheets, discussion areas, and public policy updates.

**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*. These two reports provide an outline of 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/>).

**Skills Development and Self Sufficiency Funds:** Administered by the Texas Workforce Commission, these funds assist businesses by designing, financing and implementing local customized job training programs in partnership with public community and technical colleges and community-based organizations for the creation of new or existing jobs and/or the retraining of the current workforce. Skills Development Funds: <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/svcs/funds/sdfintro.html> Self Sufficiency Fund: <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/svcs/funds/ssfintro.html>

**Stakeholders:** Those with a vested interest in the integration of literacy services and workforce development, including education and training providers; federal, state, and local human service agencies; federal, state, and local officials, businesses, unions, correctional institutions; institutions of higher learning; elementary and secondary school systems; libraries; community-based, faith-based, and volunteer organizations; and business and professional organizations.

**TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education):** Assessment instrument widely used by adult

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and workforce education practitioners. It is designed to assess the skills of learners with English language skills and is the state mandated assessment instrument for use in WIA Title II funded Adult Basic and Adult Secondary Education.

### **Trade Adjustment Assistance Program**

**(TAA):** A federal program established in 1962, amended in 1993, and since known as NAFTA Trade Adjustment Assistance, is designed to assist workers whose job loss can be in part attributed to global competition. The program provides financial support and training as well as job search and job relocation assistance.

<http://www.doleta.gov/tradeact/>

### **U.S. DOL/ETA: United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training**

**Administration:** Excellent source of information regarding services and information on workplace literacy programs through the Hispanic Worker Initiative, ensuring that persons with limited English language proficiency have meaningful access to all types of federally funded programs. It maintains websites useful to adult education providers: <http://www.lep.gov/> and <http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/>

**VESL (Vocational ESL):** The study of English words, sentences, text and oral language related specifically to one job or career field. VESL includes terms and communication skills that students will actually use on the job.

### **Work-centered vs. Worker-centered**

**Educational Programs:** The first of these two tends to be more focused on the language structure, functions and vocabulary of the workplace; the latter is more holistic in nature and includes what workers want to know for their personal lives.

**Workforce Centers:** Responsible for the one-stop service delivery network in the local workforce development area, under contract with the local workforce development board as per the Texas Administrative Code, Rule 801.27.

**Workforce ESL:** An effort to integrate employment preparation into the adult ESL curriculum. It attempts to incorporate employment skills training into ESL instruction, combining communicative and behavioral objectives with linguistic objectives that can improve learners' abilities to function in an employment or vocational training context.

**Workforce Investment Act of 1998:** Signed into law in 1998, the Act consolidates and streamlines U.S. employment and training programs. This federal law is intended to provide the framework for a national workforce preparation and employment system, designed to meet the needs of the nation's businesses as well as job seekers and workers wanting to further their careers. Title II of this act authorizes Adult Education and Family Literacy services and addresses the broad purposes of adult education, including the goals to assist adults in becoming literate and able to obtain the knowledge and skills needed for employment and self-sufficiency; to become full partners in their children's education and in the community; and to complete high school or the equivalent. <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/boards/wia/txwia.html>

### **Workplace Literacy and Education Programs:**

Also referred to as workforce-related and workforce development programs, since the nature of the program has more to do with goals and objectives than with actual location. It is designed to focus on the literacy, language, and basic skills needs of emerging, incumbent, and displaced workers.

### **Work-Related Websites Useful to Adult**

**Educators:** <http://www-tcall.tamu.edu/>. Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning, Texas A&M University. TCALL provides adult educators access to a lending library, free materials, *Literacy Links* newsletter, listserv and discussion groups. Three workforce-related publications available from TCALL: *Planning Literacy and Language Services for Texas' Limited English Proficient Workers: The Devil is in the Details* (Tondre, 2001; downloadable); *Workplace ESL: A Simple Guide to Program Planning and Implementation* (Friedenberg 2002; can be checked out); and

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*Teaching Basic Skills in the Workplace*  
(Employment Training Institute, 1999; workbook  
and CD-ROM can be checked out).

- <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/> Home page for the Texas Workforce Commission with links to information about boards, network partners, service providers, labor market information, etc.
- [http://www.tea.state.tx.us/opge/disc/adulted\\_05/fag.pdf](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/opge/disc/adulted_05/fag.pdf) for information regarding adult education, access to TANF funds, and Frequently Asked Questions

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Note: If you have additional terms you would like to have clarified, please send your requests to Lori Ruiz-Wamble at [lruiz@hcde-texas.org](mailto:lruiz@hcde-texas.org).