



## SHOP TALK # 11: Adult Education Partners with SER Jobs for Progress National, Inc. to Pilot *Sed de Saber*

Recently, fourteen adult education programs participated in a conference call with Retention Education and SER-Jobs for Progress National to plan the piloting of *Sed de Saber* (Thirst for Knowledge), an innovative, self-paced, take home English language learning program designed specifically for adult Hispanic workers. SER, a Dallas-based non-profit Hispanic workforce development agency, was recently awarded a U.S. Department of Labor grant to pilot the use of *Sed de Saber* with food service and hospitality industries in eight Texas cities:

Brownsville  
Fort Worth

Corpus Christi  
Houston

Dallas  
Lubbock

El Paso  
San Antonio

The DOL grant enables SER to offer the *Sed de Saber* learning kits at a buy-one-get-one-free rate to employers and educational institutions. Texas LEARNS recently purchased 134 kits, receiving a total of 268. In order to qualify for this special offer, Texas LEARNS agrees to initially deploy the learning systems through adult education programs in the eight cities SER has identified for the pilot. After the pilot, the learning kits can be used by adult education programs anywhere in the state.

*“Sed de Saber has sparked me to enroll in English classes to advance my career and become more valuable to my company.”*

Employee of  
Romano's  
Macaroni Grill

Fourteen adult education programs in the eight cities have agreed to participate in SER's pilot initiative. Adult education programs are being asked to partner with local employers in the food service and hospitality industries. A number have already elected to partner with food service providers in their local school districts and community colleges. Local partnership agreements enable workers to use the system at their own pace, on their own time, and in the privacy of their own homes. The agreements with employers also help assure the safe return of the learning kits to adult education at the completion of the pilots. Adult education providers are also being encouraged to provide supplemental instruction for employees utilizing *Sed de Saber*, and to document learner progress with BEST and BEST Plus assessments.

The learning program is already being used successfully as part of a distance learning initiative in a partnership between Harris County Department of Education and Houston's Kolache Factory, a maker of baked goods. While *Sed de Saber* can be used alone, adult educators hope to use the learning systems as part of a hybrid model – as a first step in adult learning for those who cannot attend regular community classes, with some classroom instruction as an extension to *Sed de Saber*.

Employer benefits reported by former and current users include improvement in a number of areas:

## **SHOP TALK # 11 (continued)**

- ✓ Workplace communication
- ✓ Speed and accuracy of orders
- ✓ Worker and food safety
- ✓ Customer service
- ✓ Worker morale and loyalty
- ✓ Reduction in employee turnover

Benefits to the workers include improvements in

- ✓ Self esteem and passion for life long learning
- ✓ Job performance and advancement opportunities
- ✓ Greater income potential
- ✓ Participation in their children's education

“ I have three employees whose English has improved so much that they have all been promoted, trained on the Culinary Standards, and are now helping me run the store.”

Store Manager, Chili's

“Osiel has experienced a phenomenal increase in his English speaking confidence. *Sed de Saber* is helping him in his new position as shift leader in training”

District Manager, Carl's Jr.

*Sed de Saber* has been designed for use with workers with minimal English language proficiency. It introduces 500 vocabulary words and over 300 work-related phrases. Using the Leapfrog Quantum Pad technology, learners can record their own speech and play back for comparison, allowing maximum individual practice. A *novella* is written into the system's six books, with 70% of the English language work-related and 30% life skills-related.

SER National is responsible for providing orientation to adult education providers and partnering employers / employees participating in the pilot, launching the initiative at each site, and gathering assessment data and user feedback, which will be shared with adult educators. SER hopes to engage 2,400 workers in this eighteen month long initiative.

To view a 9-minute video about *Sed de Saber* or for more information, go to [www.retentioned.com/products](http://www.retentioned.com/products). Additional information about SER can be found at [www.ser-national.org](http://www.ser-national.org). Participating programs interested in learning more about extending instruction through distance education opportunities may contact John Stevenson at [jstevenson@hcde-texas.org](mailto:jstevenson@hcde-texas.org). For questions about workforce-related professional development and technical assistance, contact Barbara Tondre at [btondre@earthlink.net](mailto:btondre@earthlink.net).