



### SHOP TALK # 18: SAVE THE DATE!

Mark your calendars! On April 21-23, 2008, the Alamo Community College District is planning to host its first VESL Summit in San Antonio, and it's Fiesta time at well! The summit will focus on integrating workforce literacy/training and access to career path opportunities for adult learners. Dr. Federico Zaragoza, Vice Chancellor for Professional, Technical, and Workforce Education for the Alamo Community College District, hopes the summit will serve as an important step in providing resources to adult education, post secondary, and workforce literacy providers and in improving services to English language learners. While the planning committee is working diligently to finalize keynote speakers, panel presentation members, and a showcase of models that lend themselves to replication, the following information provides an overview of the summit's focus:

**Goal:** to heighten awareness and understanding of the need for integrating workforce-related ESL instruction and post secondary education/occupational training in the state of Texas, and to identify innovative and effective approaches/practices that can be adapted, replicated, and implemented in response to the needs of limited English proficient adults.

**Objectives:**

- To bring together groups serving the limited English population for candid dialogue and sharing: *What have we learned from past experiences? What is working, what is not working, why the gaps in services, and what needs to happen?*
- To fully engage employers and industry-affiliated associations in the process: *What are their needs, what are the needs of the local workforce, and how can industry sectors be mobilized in making statewide efforts successful?*
- To gain insight into successful VESL designs, the advantages and disadvantages of each, and the essential elements for successful local implementation: *How can English language learning, work readiness, and post secondary education and training be successfully integrated to provide career path opportunities? What support systems are needed to implement and sustain efforts to effectively prepare English language learners to get jobs, survive, and thrive in the workplace?*

While growing numbers of employers recognize the value of workers with limited English language proficiency, linkages between English language instruction, occupational training, and job sourcing to meet business partners' needs and adult English language learners' employment goals remain elusive. The summit hopes to help communities examine these challenges and find viable solutions to serving this population at the local level.

The Alamo Community College District hopes to attract local "teams" of educators, trainers, employers, workforce development networks, and funding sources from across the state to the summit, so that the implementation of local and state action plans will have a strong nucleus of support when teams return to their respective communities.

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**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. For additional information or to request that a particular topic be addressed, contact Barbara Tondre at [btondre@earthlink.net](mailto:btondre@earthlink.net)