

## Adult Ed Solutions to Workforce Challenges

### SHOP TALK # 2: Glossary (continued)

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Adult Education's response to Rider 82 raises additional questions regarding terminology used to describe workforce related English language instruction. SHOP TALK # 2 is part of a continuing effort to promote a common understanding of the basic concepts and principles of adult learning and second language learning being utilized in Adult Education and Workforce Development. Because terminology is often amorphous and subject to interpretation and change, the definitions come from state and nationally recognized sources in both fields. Field practitioners are encouraged to suggest other glossary entries or to elaborate on the entries already included via email to Lori Ruiz – Wamble at [lruiz@hcde-texas.org](mailto:lruiz@hcde-texas.org).

**Bridge Programs:** designed to prepare individuals without the requisite basic skills for post secondary education and training to advance to career path employment and further learning in a specific high demand industry or occupational sector. The programs target those with the desire to advance but who lack basic skills and knowledge for a career path job. They serve employers that need employees with the skills needed to meet customer demands and to grow and flourish on the job. The programs are often designed to provide opportunities for certification, licensure, and further education (Women Employed, 2004).

**Career Pathway:** a series of occupations within an industry that build from the relatively minimal skills and education requirements needed for entry-level employment to increasing levels of skills, experience, and/or formal education (*Building Career Ladder for Low-Wage Workers*, Boston Workforce Development Coalition).

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

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

**Entry Level Occupation:** 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.

**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, customer service.

**Industry Certification:** a credential based on standards set by employers in a particular industry or by skilled workers in a given occupation.

**Occupational (Vocational) Certificate:** a credential earned by completing a training program for a specific industry or career; programs vary in length from one to more than four "semesters" of study. They are generally state-recognized and thus can carry college credit, although this credit does not necessarily transfer to a college degree program.

**SCANS:** The know-how identified as necessary to succeed in today's workplace consists of five competencies and three foundation skills. See <http://www.minot.k12.nd.us/votech/File/resources/scan.htm>.

**Sector:** a group of closely interrelated industries that use common technologies or draw on similar resources, such as particular occupations or raw materials (e.g., healthcare, manufacturing, transportation).

**Soft Skills:** non-technical skills that build an individual's ability to succeed in any workplace. Often used interchangeably with life skills, work

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readiness skills, examples include teamwork, interpersonal communication, working well with supervisors and co-workers, time management, and conflict resolution.

**Support Services:** services that enable an individual to participate successfully in work and/or education and training. Examples include: career counseling, academic guidance, personal guidance, and supplemental resources.

**Technology Skills Development:** Involves the development of basic computer literacy; access to appropriate instructional courseware and learning laboratories that extend learning beyond formal instruction; and when possible, opportunities to become familiar with machinery and equipment associated with prospective job opportunities.

**Vocational Adult Basic Education (VABE):** programs that teach basic literacy skills to native English speaking students in the context of preparing them to work in a specific occupation.

**Vocational ESL** (additional amplification): also referred to as VESOL or VESL, these programs are designed to prepare learners for job training classes or employment in specific occupational areas. VESL classes use job-related language and tasks as the vehicle for teaching English (TESOL).

**Workforce Business/Employer Services:** a division of each local workforce development board to provide business resources and employment solutions in response to the needs of local businesses and employers. Services include but are not limited to recruitment and retention of employees, assistance with interviewing, testing, pre-screening of job applicants, subsidized training for qualified applicants, targeting the unemployed for quick reentry into the workforce, mini job fairs, assistance with employment law questions, and labor market information. For adult education providers, this division may be the best means of connecting with local employers.

**Workforce or Workplace ESL / ESOL** (additional amplification of term): these programs focus on language and communication skills needed for success in the workplace. Sometimes also referred to as **work-based**, these programs combine English language and literacy instruction with employment related training. They are often supported by an employer or employers and may be offered at a work site. They generally provide a curriculum adapted to the needs of the workers and the employer. The focus of instruction may be the skills needed for a particular job or workplace or more general skills. The primary objective of work-related ESL / ESOL is to improve learners' abilities to function in an employment or vocational training context (*TESOL Standards for Adult Education ESL Programs*, 2003).

**Work Readiness Profile:** a matrix illustrating what new workers in entry level jobs need to be able to do well enough to successfully carry out critical entry level job tasks. Although based on Equipped for the Future Skills for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning, the tasks are organized according to SCANS categories. The profile is linked to the Work Readiness Credential, a transportable certification of work readiness based on computer-delivered and legally defensible assessment. State and national supporters of the Work Readiness Profile, Assessments, and Credential include the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Center for Workforce Success of the National Association of Manufacturers, the National Governors' Association, the National Retail Federation Foundation, and a growing number of states.

**Valuable Websites:** <http://www.cjc.net/pubs-news/documents/BridgeGuideFinal.pdf> . *Bridges to Careers for Low-Skilled Adults: A Program Development Guide* (Women Employed with Chicago Jobs Council and UIC Great Cities Institute, 2003).

<http://209.121.217.200/main.html> . *Steps to Employment* series developed for ESL programs in Canada, this site offers free, downloadable occupation-related workbooks, instructors'



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guides, and implementation guides for 18 industry clusters (construction, call centers, food services, logistics, industrial trades, etc.).