

SHOP TALK # 25: How do Rider 82 Curricula Respond to Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks for ESL Learners?

Now that the Texas Industry Specific English Literacy (TISEL) curricula are complete and have been made available to Adult Education Programs across the state, programs are gearing up for voluntary implementation during FY 2009. Programs engaged in this initial round of implementation include the following:

South Central Region	Seguin ISD (healthcare & manufacturing)
West Region	Abilene ISD (sales and service)
Far West Region	El Paso ISD, Socorro ISD and Ysleta ISD (healthcare)
South Region	Laredo Community College (manufacturing) ESC Region One (healthcare)
Central Region	Austin Community College (healthcare), Austin Learning Academy (employability), Navarro College (manufacturing/oil and gas)
Coastal Region	Beaumont ISD (TBD)
North Region	Dallas ISD, Fort Worth ISD (TBD)
East Region	Sam Houston State, Panola College (TBD)

The TISEL curriculum products correlate to the Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks for ESL Learners and with the NRS Standards for Low Beginning and High Beginning ESL. Adults whose English language proficiencies fall between Levels 2 (High Beginning) and 4 (Low Intermediate) are the targeted audiences for the curricula in three industry sectors: healthcare, manufacturing, and sales and service. The curricula “bundle” skills in meaningful, thematic contexts that include English language learning, related math, technology, and employability, consistently reinforcing the content standards, strands, and benchmarks.

A missing piece in the accountability system for Adult Education had been defining what should be taught and assessed. Content standards fill that gap by describing what learners should know and be able to do. Instructors use content standards to plan instruction, and learners use standards to set learning goals. Standards keep both instructors and learners focused and engaged. They ensure consistency and link assessments to curriculum and instruction.

In a review of the scope and sequence for each curriculum, practitioners found that the learning activities consistently respond to the content standards. Strands addressed by the curricula include vocabulary for oral and written communication; grammar usage and language structure; pronunciation; comprehension strategies; cultural conventions;



locating, organizing and presenting information; monitoring language use and determining purpose; revising; and editing.

An integrated approach to language and industry-related materials provides learners with opportunities to practice using high-interest vocabulary related to the industry sectors so that they might eventually navigate employee handbooks, for example; address health and safety issues related to the workplace; extract information from tables, charts, and graphs; use writing strategies such as outlines and graphic organizers; report on-the-job situations to a supervisor; demonstrate ability to read and understand job duties; and understand brief instructions from supervisors and exchanges with co-workers.

What advantages are there to implementing these curricula as part of an adult education and workforce partnership?

- The curricula have been developed in response to the demand-driven, industry-related needs of the Texas workforce.
- Employers are looking for workforce-related and employability skills instruction for their incumbent workers and new employees.
- The curricular products are designed to be replicable in a variety of instructional settings.
- All materials are provided and ready for duplication – from the instructor’s manuals to lesson plans to student workbooks and supplementary materials.
- Materials are based on principles of adult learning and employ a five-step model for language development.
- Materials are thematic and modular in format, allowing instruction to be delivered in manageable increments.
- They exemplify what learners are expected to know and be able to do as members of a 21st century workforce.

The use of the TISEL curricula by no means replaces occupational training; rather, it may serve as an excellent spring board or bridge to occupational training for a population that might otherwise be denied access to career opportunities in growing industry sectors.

For questions about professional development for adult education programs interested in implementing one of the curricula, contact your regional GREAT Center. Contact information can be found on the TCALL website (<http://www-tcall.tamu.edu>)

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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



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