

SHOP TALK # 31: TISESL Myth Busters

As adult education programs prepare to implement the Texas Industry-Specific English as a Second Language (TISESL) curricula for the healthcare, sales/customer service, and manufacturing industry sectors, questions have surfaced. Programs are assessing local needs, scheduling the pre-requisite professional development, and addressing duplication costs.

TISESL Myth Busters is a response to some of the most common questions and issues.

Myth: TISESL curricula are designed to replace all existing ESL curricula.

Fact: TISESL is designed for use in one or more ESL sections or classes, depending upon the local need for industry-related instruction. Programs must consider local need, industry demands, program infrastructure, time, location, and employer and workforce partnerships.

Myth: Curriculum, modules, strands, lesson plans – the terms are confusing!

Fact: Each of the industry-related curricula for healthcare, manufacturing, and sales/customer service consists of four modules. Each module contains five lessons. Each lesson covers approximately 10 hours of instruction. Each lesson includes four components or strands: ESL, Math, Employability, and Technology.

Myth: The use of TISESL is mandatory.

Fact: The implementation of TISESL is based on local needs, but because of the link between literacy and employability, every program is strongly encouraged to explore applications. The curricula are modular in design and may be used in a number of applications.

Myth: TISESL is designed to be delivered at an employer's workplace.

Fact: TISESL may be delivered in a number of settings: at the workplace; in addition to already established ESL services; or as a component of already existing ESL classes.

Myth: 200 hours of instruction are required to implement any one of the three curricula.

Fact: While each curriculum is designed to provide up to 200 hours of instruction, the curricula are modular in nature so that integrated components/strands (ESL, math, employability, and technology) may be pulled out and used independently.

Myth: The stand alone employability module is for students to use *on their own*.

Fact: The employability module and associated website can be used independently of the three industry-related curricula but are not intended for independent student use. The module consists of six lessons, with lesson plans and student activities for each. It can be delivered in forty to sixty hours of instruction. The employability web site to support the learning activities is under final construction and will be released in July 2009.

Myth: The costs of printing are unreasonable.

Fact: Printing entire texts in black and white:

- One instructor's manual is approximately 75 pages. Cost: **\$7.50**.
- Teacher lesson plans for one entire curriculum is 597 pages. Cost: **\$59.70**.



- Student workbooks for one entire curriculum (four modules) is 476 pages per student. Cost is \$47.60 per student. For a class of 15 students, cost: **\$714.00**.
- Much of the student text was developed in color; the cost of color copies for student texts is additional. Some programs have reasonable printing services available to them, while others have purchased color printers.

Myth: There is no funding to cover duplication of TISESL materials.

Fact: There are a number of ways to address cost issues:

- Local programs may apply for de-obligated funds to cover printing costs when such funds are available.
- Some programs ask partners and employers to share the expense.
- Some programs print modules or lessons incrementally, since student persistence may waiver and attendance numbers fluctuate.
- Texas LEARNS encourages programs to budget for duplication in their grant applications.

Myth: No training is required to teach TISESL.

Fact: Teachers are expected to complete training available through the GREAT Centers before implementation. The training familiarizes practitioners with curricular components.

Myth: The TISESL materials are available to everyone.

Fact: Texas' state and federally funded adult education programs have access to the copyrighted materials. TEA is also currently extending licenses to local workforce development networks at no cost, with strict compliance to copyright law. Licenses may also be requested by non-profit, community-based, and faith-based organizations.

Myth: Students who complete TISESL studies are ready for employment.

Fact: TISESL was developed for use with low proficient English language learners (high beginning to low intermediate) and can serve as a spring board to occupational training but by no means replaces post secondary occupational training. An ideal next step would be the integration of additional English language study, GED preparation, and/or occupational training.

Myth: The TISESL curricula were developed for a bilingual English/Spanish classroom.

Fact: All of the TISESL materials were developed to be replicable across the state in a variety of classroom settings, with students of varying first language backgrounds. However, the developer does make use of Spanish cognates in the lessons. These may be helpful to Spanish speaking students.

Myth: TISESL curricula are appropriate only for ESL low beginning and high beginning levels.

Fact: The curricula were developed with ESL low and high beginning level students (National Reporting System NRS Levels 2 and 3) as target audiences, but there are many TISESL products, and the English language varies among and within those products. Most of the language can be adapted to match the needs of the learners. Programs and teachers are advised to evaluate the curricula and choose what best meets their students' needs.

Other questions, concerns, challenges? Email your thoughts to btondre@earthlink.net.