SHOP TALK # 48: 
REGION 20 PARTNERS ACROSS URBAN AND RURAL AREAS IN IPAEC TEAM TEACHING INITIATIVE

Education Service Center Region 20 in San Antonio is providing services to adult learners in both Bexar and Guadalupe Counties through its Intensive Program for Adult Education Consortium (IPAEC). With a grant from the Texas Higher Education Board, Region 20 is partnering with the adult education program at Seguin ISD. The Seguin program serves small town communities and rural areas in three central Texas counties. The student population served by Region 20 is primarily urban. But with a community college partner that serves both of these areas, IPAEC is better able to reach across county lines to serve adult learners wishing to pursue a postsecondary education. IPAEC represents a paradigm shift in aggressive partnerships to recruit underrepresented adult learners for transition into postsecondary programs.

The chancellor of Alamo Community Colleges, which has five major campuses across the geographic area, has offered to provide IPAEC participants with the following:

- Classroom space on the campuses
- Access to the campus tutoring centers
- Access to the campus libraries
- Assistance in completing the college admissions process
- Assistance in the completion and submission of the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)
- Opportunities to visit college classes
- Assistance with college readiness skills

This unprecedented access to college services for students not formally enrolled at the college demonstrates a step forward in Alamo Colleges’ support of the IPAEC program. Some IPAEC classes will be held on college campuses which serve the geographic needs of the adult learners. The partnership enables Alamo Colleges to 1) recruit and enroll students representative of the communities’ diversity, 2) recruit and enroll students from traditionally low participating populations, 3) achieve higher completion rates, and 4) maximize P-16 (preschool through postsecondary) partnerships.

Another IPAEC partner is Project STAY, Inc., a San Antonio-based non-profit organization that assists individuals by providing a wide array of support services to potential college students. Project STAY employs college placement specialists who are trained to advise and counsel students.

Information obtained from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board indicates that the largest gap between high school and GED exit levels and college credit level is in the
math area. In addition, Lexile measures (of an individual’s reading ability or the difficulty of a text) indicate a significant gap between randomly analyzed reading passages from GED texts and college level books. The random sampling suggests that GED preparation does not cover material that takes adult learners to the level needed to succeed in reading weighted college courses.

The first accelerated IPAEC session was scheduled to begin in early September and continue for eight weeks. Four subsequent sessions are scheduled to begin later in Fall 2010 and Spring 2011. Each session focuses on reading, math, and college readiness for a total of fifteen hours per week. Career planning, academic/content mastery, technology, and presentation skills are also incorporated into the three main areas of instruction.

A unique characteristic of IPAEC is the team teaching effort of its instructors. While both math and English classes have separate instructors to ensure that students have instructors with in-depth knowledge of the core subjects, the IPAEC initiative pairs the instructors in the classroom. This approach (an adaptation of the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training or I-BEST model used so successfully in Washington State) allows instructors to plan and deliver instruction as a team, closely relating the subjects to one another and integrating common concepts across the curriculum. This also affords students access to two instructors for the entire time they are in class.

Another unique feature of IPAEC is its attention to professional development. Instructor pairs have already completed training in team teaching and portfolio development and will also participate in professional development focused on project-based instruction.

During the intensive eight week course of study, students will earn merit points based on the following:

- Attendance
- Weekly academic achievements in each subject area
- Successful completion of college culture activities
- Cooperative learning projects
- Pre-test and post-test score increases
- Enrollment in college

Students will receive incentive awards including graphing calculators, scholarships for college tuition and textbooks, and assistance with purchasing gas for transportation.

For additional information about Region 20’s IPAEC initiative, contact Rene Coronado at rene.coronado@esc20.net.