SHOP TALK #58:
Responding to the Workforce Literacy Needs of Adult Learners

In January 2012, a short survey of adult education/family literacy programs requested information about work-related/career readiness components offered in local programs. 60 programs responded and reported the following:

Fifty-five percent (55%) reported having some kind of work-related/career readiness component in their program.

Fifty-five percent (55%) of those responding reported offering a Texas Industry Specific ESL (TISESL) component:
  - 95% of the respondents reported offering the TISESL Employability Stand Alone component.
  - 27% reported offering the TISESL Communication Scenarios.
  - 27% reported offering TISESL Healthcare.
  - 32% reported offering TISESL Sales and Service.
  - 9% reported offering TISESL Manufacturing

Thirty-eight percent (38%) reported offering the Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE/ESOL Classroom (ICA).

Twenty (20) of the sixty (33%) respondents indicated that they offer a component other than TISESL or ICA.

A number of programs acknowledged that they do not currently offer a work-related/career readiness component. These programs are encouraged to make 2012 the year to explore options for better preparing adult learners for entry into education/training and gainful employment.

Adult Education in Texas is fortunate to have several options when it comes to addressing work-related instruction. Some programs use distance learning to address work-related topics. Several computer-based instructional programs also do a good job of incorporating work-related issues into instruction. The Texas Industry Specific ESL (TISESL) curricula offer programs a number of options for addressing the work-related needs of both ESL and ABE students. Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE/ESOL Classroom also includes many activities that can be incorporated into both ESL and ABE instruction.

For additional information about the options mentioned here, please contact Barbara Tondre at btondre@earthlink.net.