SHOP TALK # 59:
The Employability Standalone Curriculum

Looking for a way to address basic employability topics with your ESL and ABE students? A number of adult education programs in Texas have discovered the broad applicability of the Employability Standalone component, which is part of the Texas Industry-Specific English as a Second Language (TISESL) curricula and is not industry-specific. Rather, it addresses general employability and workforce-related topics of interest to a large percentage of adult learners enrolled in both ESL and ABE classes.

The Employability Standalone component includes six lessons:
- What’s Your Bottom Line?
- Taking Inventory
- Word Power
- Explore Your Options
- Dress Your Best
- Apply Yourself

What’s Your Bottom Line describes the fundamental working conditions and minimum pay individuals can expect to pay their bills, achieve their objectives, and gain personal satisfaction. This unit also helps learners address short and long term goals and the related costs of pursuing these goals.

Taking Inventory assists learners in taking inventory of valuable knowledge and abilities gained through life experiences. Recognizing these assets helps learners determine their qualifications for specific jobs and plan for job training. Many skills and abilities valued in the workplace are common across different jobs and are “portable” across different fields of work.

Word Power addresses learners’ ability to speak, read, and write clearly and how language affects life and work. Language competence influences how individuals look for jobs, the way they work, and ways to access future opportunities. Attitudes about language and language learning affect the directions learners take in pursuing employment.

Explore Your Options guides learners as they examine job descriptions and determine how their goals, knowledge, experience, and language abilities coincide with available work. Learners also reflect on the future and determine how available work options can help them move to more responsible and better-paying positions.

Dress Your Best helps learners to consider their appearance when preparing for job interviews and work itself. Students learn that adjusting their individual style choices may be necessary in the world of work. This unit discusses company image and dress codes,
making compromises, and affording clothing. It includes a checklist to help learners to dress for an interview.

*Apply Yourself* enables learners to take a systematic and careful approach to applying for a job. Tips on completing job applications and participating in interviews, plus practice activities, are included. Students learn to track their job applications, interviews, and follow up activities. An interview checklist and typical interview questions are included as well as tips on asking questions during the interview process.

An added advantage to using the **Employability Standalone** component is the accompanying website. Teachers and students gain access to this site and a wide selection of online activities for the duration of their studies.

An excellent companion to the **Employability Standalone** component is the industry-related **Communication Scenarios**. Work-related vignettes are introduced with pictures and accompanying audio. Learners engage in comprehension checks, story map discussion, retelling of the story, shared reading, and discussion of options/solutions to the work-related problems. There is opportunity for dialogue and role play, language and vocabulary practice, and discussion of cultural notes.

Workplace Scenarios to build communication and problem solving skills include the following:

- The Friendly Security Guard
- Dealing with Multiple Demands
- The Frustrated Supervisor
- The Sick Baby
- Stop the Line
- The Missing Utility Knife

Both the **Employability Stand Alone** component and **Communication Scenarios** are available for use by state and federally funded adult education programs in Texas. Professional development to prepare programs for implementation is available through the regional GREAT Centers. Programs completing the training have access to all the materials via a Cloud Content Management (CCM) system called Box.net. This system provides one location for storing the most current versions of the **TISESL** curricula, including edits made over the past year. The link is password protected.

Programs interested in receiving training for **TISESL’s Employability Standalone** component or **Communication Scenarios** should contact their regional GREAT Center. For additional information about the TISESL curricula, programs may contact Barbara Tondre at btondre@earthlink.net.