SHOP TALK # 61: ICA Goes Statewide:
Plotting a Career Course for Every Adult Ed Student

The path to career awareness in all adult education classrooms is beginning to take shape with
the statewide introduction of Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE/ESOL Classroom (ICA). The ICA curriculum was developed by the Massachusetts System for Adult Basic
Education Support (SABES) and the National College Transition Network (NCTN), with funding
from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Nellie
Mae Education Foundation.

Thirty-four adult education instructors have already participated in the online ICA training
facilitated by World Education and have begun integrating ICA into their adult education
programs. Instructors with the C-4 pilot are working to integrate ICA with accelerated GED
instruction in seven programs in San Antonio, the Houston area, and Central Texas. These
three regions were chosen for the pilot because of their active partnerships with their workforce
partners. The use of ICA will be further expanded in year # 2 of the C-4 pilot, which is a
performance measure in the Advancing Texas Action Plan for the Texas Workforce System. It
calls for intensive, fast track GED® preparation coupled with career awareness/career
readiness.

Statewide implementation of the ICA is being funded through a WIA Incentive Grant awarded to
the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Workforce Commission. The goal is to intentionally
bring career awareness and activities into every adult education program in Texas so that every
student has a clear plan for transition to college or training that leads to jobs earning sustainable
wages. Adult learners with no intention to work themselves will also be attracted to the activities
that can help them better prepare their children for further education and the world of work.

The ICA curriculum consists of four modules:
1. The Cultural Context for Career Awareness
2. The Self-Exploration Process
3. Occupational Exploration
4. Career Planning Skills

The multi-step process of preparing for statewide implementation of ICA has already begun. A
cadre of master ICA trainers (MICATS) is being developed to train key teachers in every local
program. Key teachers and MICATS will then train remaining local staff over a two year period.
Face-to-face training will be provided through the eight GREAT Centers responsible for
professional development efforts across the state. Face-to-face training will be followed up by
two distance learning activities (conference calls or webinars) for each group of trainees.

Implementation of the ICA will be coordinated by an Integrated Career Awareness
consultant/contractor to be appointed in the fall of 2012, and local program efforts will be
observed by grants managers during technical assistance visits. Curriculum guide and all
handouts are available on CD and can also be downloaded from