SHOP TALK # 63: Tex-BEST: 
A Workforce Literacy Summit

The third annual Tex-BEST Workforce Literacy Summit was held at Alamo Colleges in San Antonio August 8-10, 2012. Hosted by Alamo Colleges, the Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education, and the Texas Education Agency / Texas LEARNS, the summit focused on addressing the training and employment needs of Texas’ limited English and under-skilled workforce. Highlights of the summit are described below, with contact information provided to request additional information.

So You Want to Start an I-BEST Program? The Whats, Whys, and Hows of Implementing an I-BEST Instructional Program. This full day pre-conference facilitated by Anson Green and Carrie Tupa addressed assessment and instructional design issues. For more information, contact agreen27@alamo.edu or ctupa@alamo.edu.

Better Together: Goodwill’s Good Career Academy – A Win-Win Partnership. By partnering with Alamo Colleges, Goodwill is able to offer career path training using the I-BEST model for medical assisting and warehouse logistics specialists. Goodwill provides case management support and employment assistance. agreen27@alamo.edu or mmilton@goodwillsa.org

Plotting a Career Course: Career Awareness for Every Adult Education Student. Texas LEARNS and San Antonio ISD discussed the implementation of Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE / ESOL Classrooms (ICA) across the state. ICA assists adult learners in exploring local career options and planning career paths. ethompson@hcde-texas.org

Practical Transitions: A Student-Centered Program for Transitions into College and Career Pathways. Adult educators Melissa Sadler-Nitu and Rene Coronado shared a portfolio approach for transitioning students into college and/or career pathways. The course of study was designed to help adult learners explore career goals while developing their writing and research skills. mnitu@seguin.k12.tx.us or rene.coronado@esc20.net

Project SWEET: A JET Launchpad Grant. Jennifer Hawkins of Tarrant County College discussed the process of bringing together multiple partners and collaborators in the development of a Computer Numeric Control (CNC) machinist program funded through the State Comptroller’s Office with a JET grant (Jobs and Education for Texans). The presentation addressed obstacles as well as successes in providing eligibility services, case management, assessment and a hybrid I-BEST model for training. jennifer.hawkins@tccd.edu

Comprehensive Assessment: Using Qualitative Assessment with Testing to Adequately Place, Address Learning Needs, and Speed Completion. Anson Green and Carrie Tupa discussed the development of a comprehensive assessment protocol that results in a quantitative and qualitative profile of knowledge, abilities, career goals, and support needs of students entering Alamo Colleges’ Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) initiative. agreen27@alamo.edu or ctupa@alamo.edu

Transitional Advising: Building an On-Campus Alliance for Student Success. Andrea DeLeon of Amarillo College and Dolores Zapata of Alamo Colleges discussed the impact effective advising strategies can have on at-risk students transitioning from Adult Basic Education Innovation Grants (ABE-IG) into traditional academic programs. amdeleon@actx.edu or dzapata@alamo.edu
Leveraged Partnerships and Braided Funding to Support Under Skilled Students in Career and Technical Programs. Kristi Hayman and Anson Green discussed ways to blend funding from multiple sources to meet the myriad needs of students. Participants were introduced to a tool to help identify and align funding to implement and sustain programs. khayman@esc6.net or agreen27@alamo.edu

Proven Bridge Program Models That Transition Adult Learners to College Credit Training and Education. Anita Springer (ESC 20 and Seguin ISD), Marilyn Smith and Tina Washco (Lone Star College System), and Carrie Tupa (Alamo Colleges) showcased three college transition to postsecondary enrollment models. a-t_springer@juno.com, marilyn.k.smith@lonestar.edu, tina.washco@lonestar.edu or ctupa@alamo.edu

What Works: Case Management and Advising Models that Deliver Completion Results. Gloria Mwase (Jobs for the Future), Stephanie Coats (Alamo Colleges), Kim Arispe (Family Services Association), and Elizabeth Gutierrez (Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement) discussed the critical roles of case management and intrusive advising in effective student success models in community colleges. The session also highlighted ways to leverage expertise and resources from community-based project partners. gmwase@jff.org, scoats2@alamo.edu or karispe@family-service.org

Immigrant Access to Postsecondary Education: State and Federal Policy Issues. Randy Capps with the Migration Institute Policy discussed key higher education and career training access issues affecting first and second generation immigrant students. rcapps@migrationpolicy.org

Workforce Board and ABE Partnerships. Kristi Hayman (ESC Region 6), Bonnie Gonzales (Workforce Solutions of the Lower Rio Grande Valley), and Juan Carlos Aguirre (South Texas College) discussed the critical nature of adult education and workforce partners’ relationships and their impact on under-skilled adults with employment goals. khayman@esc6.net, bonnie@wfsl solutions.org or jcaguirr@southtexascollege.edu

Beyond Reading, Writing, and ‘Rithmetic: Developing Critical Skills for the Successful College Student. Anita Springer (ESC Region 20 and Seguin ISD) explored the additional skills needed to be successful in today’s college environment and how a San Antonio area adult education college prep program develops these proficiencies while simultaneously raising college entrance exam scores. a-t_springer@juno.com

The Community Action College Prep Academy: A Community-Based Approach to Career Pathways Development. Jon Engel (Community Action, Inc. of Central Texas), Mary Helen Martinez (Central Texas GREAT Center), and Francesca Ramirez (Community Action, Inc. of Central Texas) described a grass roots approach to creating a postsecondary transition and career pathways program that can be used as a blueprint for establishing similar programs. The session addressed the tools needed to perform environmental scans, identify needs, and assess resources. Key topics included the role of a career counselor and helping teachers address the “knowledge gap”. jengel@communityaction.com, mm42@txstate.edu or framirez@communityaction.com

The Workforce Education Readiness Continuum (WERC). Meg Poag (Literacy Coalition of Central Texas) and Jasmine Folan (Workforce Solutions Capital Area) described the challenges, inner workings, and lessons learned in forming WERC, administered by Workforce Solutions with 13 participating agencies that offer an array of education and workforce development initiatives. mpoag@willread.org or jasmine.folan@wfscapitalarea.com

Stepping Up to Employment: Lessons and Challenges from Year # 1 of the C-4 Pilot. Terry Shearer and Linda Burke (ESC Region 4), Jon Engel (Community Action, Inc.), and Joshua Hayes (College of the Mainland) shared background information and first year experiences of the C-4 pilot project, an initiative funded by the Texas Education Agency / Texas LEARNS to integrate accelerated, fast-track GED® preparation with career awareness. Topics included student selection, content planning, course duration,
local resources, and needs assessment. tshearer@esc4.net, lindaburke52@yahoo.com, jengel@communityaction.com or jhayes1@com.edu

**Step-by-Step Intensive Job Placement Strategies for Hard-to-Place Adult Education Students.** Rick Yanez, Gloria Rodriguez, and Anson Green – all of Alamo Colleges – described efforts and procedures for ensuring adult learners receive high quality and intensive job placement and retention through partnerships with community-based employment organizations and job developers. agreen27@alamo.edu, ryanez9@alamo.edu or grrodriguez122@alamo.edu

**Leveraging Critical Support from State and Local Agencies.** Anson Green and Rick Yanez of Alamo Colleges along with Naomi Gunderson (Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services) discussed Alamo Colleges' win-win partnerships for services to students with mental, cognitive, and physical disabilities. agreen27@alamo.edu, ryanez9@alamo.edu or naomi.gunderson@dars.state.tx.us

**I-BEST and TISESL: Making Sense of the Acronyms and Selecting the Appropriate Model for Your Students.** Carrie Tupa (Alamo Colleges) and Sofia Zamarripa and Aida Morossini Martinez (both with Fort Worth ISD Adult Education) described two prominent instructional models being used in Texas to assist lower-skilled learners in preparing for, entering, and completing college level technical training. Both I-BEST and TISESL (Texas Industry-Specific English as a Second Language) integrate basic education and English with technical content. ctupa@alamo.edu, sofia.zamarripa@fwisd.org or aida.martinez@fwisd.org

**Finding the Missing Pieces: Career Information for the Internationally Trained ESL Student.** Sonia Aguirre (Welcome Back Center for Internationally Trained Healthcare Professionals, Alamo Colleges) examined the growing trend of internationally trained and educated individuals who are enrolling in ESL classes and seeking reentry into healthcare career pathways. saguirre10@alamo.edu

**TISESL: A Pathway to Collaboration and the World of Work.** In this session, Sofia Zamarripa and Aida Martinez (Fort Worth ISD Adult Education) and their community partner Nikki Pollard (Stone Academy), focused on accessing, marketing and implementing the Texas Industry-Specific ESL (TISESL) curricular components, getting students prepared for work, gathering data, and collaborating with partners. The curricula focus on adults with limited English proficiency and on industry sectors in which many seek entry level employment. sofia.zamarripa@fwisd.org, aida.martinez@fwisd.org or stoneacademy1@gmail.com

**Building College Ready Skills and Computer Literacy for Lower Skilled Adults: A Curriculum for Building Rigor in One Week.** Alamo Colleges shared the challenges of preparing adult students for the rigor and harsh realities of the college classroom with a special one week program. CarrieTupa at ctupa@alamo.edu or esthersfuntravel@yahoo.com

**Employer-Based Programs and Services to Support the Career Growth of Underskilled Workers.** Jacque Burandt (University Health System), John Dewey (Instruments, Technology, Machinery - ITM), and Kara Hill (Hill Bros. Construction) spoke on both the pressures and responses to hiring, training, and retaining underskilled workers in healthcare, construction, and manufacturing. agreen27@alamo.edu