Glossary of Terms

**Basic skills**
Basic skills include reading, writing, performance of listening and speaking; development or training fundamental to the workplace; such courses as literacy, reading comprehension, writing, math, English as a second language, and learning how to learn (Van Buren & Erskine, 2002).

**Constructivism**
Interprets learning as an active process of acquiring knowledge by using prior knowledge and experience to shape meaning and to construct new knowledge in real contextual applications.

**Contextualized instruction**
An instructional approach that connects learning to the demands of everyday life, learning to do real-life tasks rather than learning to know information that may or may not transfer to an actual task.

**Displaced or dislocated worker**
An individual who has been terminated or laid off—or who has received notice of termination or layoff from employment—as a result of plant closure or plant relocation; or an individual who was self-employed but is now unemployed as a result of a turn in general economic conditions; or a homemaker who has been providing unpaid services to family members in the home, has been dependent on the income of another family member, and who is unemployed or underemployed and experiencing difficulty obtaining or upgrading employment.

**ESL/ESOL**
English as a second language or English for speakers of other languages are terms used interchangeably to describe English language instruction for nonnative speakers. Nearly 32 million people in the U.S. speak languages other than English; more than 50% of the adults enrolled in ESL/ESOL are Spanish speaking; other common first languages of adult ESL/ESOL learners are French, Portuguese, Polish, Russian, Chinese, and Vietnamese.

**Equipped for the Future (EFF)**
A National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) project that has studied ways adults can become more effective workers, citizens, and parents and family members. EFF standards are divided into four categories: communication skills, decision-making skills, lifelong learning skills, and interpersonal skills. www.nifl.gov

**Industrial terminology**
Terms related to a specific industry or occupation and having to do with operational excellence, productivity, and quality. Familiarity with specific terminology is best gained through interaction with the employer interested in workplace ESOL instruction. Terminology may be extracted from environmental print (worksite literature) with which nonnative speakers of English must be familiar. Online searches and/or O*NET are also sources of information.

**Interpersonal skills**
Include the ability to participate as a member of a team, teach others new skills, serve clients/customers, exercise leadership, negotiate, and work with diversity—all critical skills for nonnative speakers of English.

**ISO**
A series of standards agreed upon by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and a prerequisite for global competition. U.S. companies must meet ISO standards in order to compete in the international marketplace.

**National Skill Standards Board (NSSB)**
A coalition from business, labor, education, and community and civil rights organizations founded in 1994 to establish a voluntary national system of skill stan-
standards, assessment, and certification systems to help the U.S. workforce compete in a global economy.

**Performance-based/competency-based learning and assessment**
An instructional approach and tool for measuring learning in terms of the learner’s ability to construct or apply learning to a task.

**Personal qualities**
Personal qualities include the following traits—self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity, and honesty.

**Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS)**
The commission was formed to advise the Secretary of Labor on the level of skills necessary to enter the workforce. The commission published two reports, *What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for America 2000* and *Learning a Living: A Blueprint for High Performance*. These two reports provide an outline of skills and competencies needed in today’s workplace.

**Stakeholders**
Those with a vested interest in the integration of literacy services and workforce development, including education and training providers; federal, state, and local human service agencies; federal, state, and local officials, businesses, unions, correctional institutions; institutions of higher learning; elementary and secondary school systems; libraries; community-based, faith-based, and volunteer organizations; and business and professional organizations.

**Support services**
Transportation, childcare, dependent care, housing, and needs-related financial assistance to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized by WIA.

**TESOL program standards**
The international association for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages defines the quality of adult ESOL programs with quality indicators in eight areas—program structure, planning, and administration; curriculum; instruction; recruitment, intake and orientation; retention and transition; assessment and learner gains; staffing, professional development, and staff evaluation; and support services. [www.tesol.org](http://www.tesol.org)

**Thinking skills**
Include the ability to think creatively, make decisions, solve problems, visualize, and reason.

**Work-centered versus worker-centered educational programs**
The first of these two tends to be more focused on the language structure, functions, and vocabulary of the workplace; the latter is more holistic in nature and includes what workers want to know for their personal lives.

**Workforce Investment Act of 1998**
Signed into law in 1998, the WIA consolidates and streamlines U.S. employment and training programs. This federal law is intended to provide the framework for a national workforce preparation and employment system designed to meet the needs of the nation’s businesses, as well as job seekers and workers wanting to further their careers. Title II of this act addresses the broad purposes of adult education, including the goals to assist adults in becoming literate and able to obtain the knowledge and skills needed for employment and self-sufficiency; to become full partners in their children’s education and in the community; and to complete high school or the equivalent.

**Workplace literacy and education programs**
Also referred to as workforce-related and workforce development programs, since the nature of the program has more to do with goals and objectives than with actual location; designed to focus on the literacy, language, and basic skills training needed by emerging, incumbent, and displaced workers.