


# Transitioning English Language Learners (TELL)

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## Background Statistics

- **United States**
  - ◆ 5th highest percentage of foreign-born in its adult population (Wedgeworth, 2004)
  - ◆ "at least 40%, and perhaps as much as 52%, of the net growth in the U.S. resident population during the decade of the 1990's was due to new foreign-born immigration" (Sum, Kirsch, & Taggart, 2002, p.29).



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## ESL Student Population Data

- **Diverse Characteristics**
  - ◆ More than 40 percent of the over three million students in federally funded adult education program are English language learners (ELLs) (ED, 2004) representing immigrants and refugees from a wide range of nationalities and cultural backgrounds. (U.S. Department of Education, 2004)



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### ESL Student Population Data (cont'd)

- Literacy Levels
  - ◆ 40% of adult ESL students are in the lowest literacy functioning levels, yet they need these literacy skills to succeed in jobs and in further education. (National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS), 2006)

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### ESL Student Population Data (cont'd)

- Literacy Levels
  - ◆ In 2003, 61% of adults age 16 and older who spoke Spanish before starting school had Below Basic literacy;
  - ◆ 26% of adults who spoke a language other than English or Spanish had Below Basic literacy (compare this with 9% for English only speakers and 14% for English + Spanish speakers) (NAAL, 2003)

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### Implication

- Growing need for English
  - ◆ "Given immigrants' growing share of our nation's citizens, workers, and families, promoting their acquisition of English is arguably the most important integration challenge—and opportunity—facing our city, state, and federal governments" (McHugh, Gelatt, & Fix, 2007, p. 3).

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# Who are TELLs and How can they be best supported?

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## Who are TELLs?

- TELLs have diverse backgrounds
  - ◆ Diverse Education Level
    - ESL learners have wider range of educational backgrounds than ABE learners
    - One third lack high school education
    - Education needs are greater for immigrants from Mexico (Wrigley et al, 2008; Schmidley, 2001)

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## Who are TELLs? (cont'd)

- Types of TELLs
  - ◆ Students with higher education levels - students with higher levels of education who exit ESL with goals such as taking the GED test and moving to post secondary education.
  - ◆ Students who need to enter ABE from ESL to fill educational gaps and build their literacy skills before they are ready for higher learning.

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### Things to consider to Support TELLS

- Programmatic Matters
  - ◆ Small number of ELLs enrolling from adult ELL programs to post-sec is small
    - A large scale study showed only 12% of ESL students went on to enroll in college credit courses (Price & Jenkins, 2005)
    - Another study showed that only 5-10% of GEO students (both ELL and non-ELL) complete at least one year of post sec. (Tyler, 2003)

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### Things to consider to Support TELLS

- Programmatic Matters
  - ◆ Address non-academic factors
    - Transportation
    - Childcare
    - Provide orientation to students
      - Provide students with information about time management, stress management, study skills, etc (Alamprese, 2005)

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### Things to consider to Support TELLS

- Programmatic Matters
  - ◆ Address academic factors
    - Use content based ESL instruction to improve academic preparedness in adults (Brinton & Masters, 1997)
  - ◆ Promote strong collaboration between ESL program destination points
  - ◆ Help students tackle transition barriers
    - Societal, Systems, Institutional, Personal (see handout)

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**Things to consider to Support TELLS**  
*Proper TELL programming and instructional Support*

**Without proper supports, students will drop out (Johnson, Haas, Harrell, & Alameda, 2004)**

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**The TELL Project**

**What is it about?**

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**TELL Project – Goals**

- To examine and describe policies and instructional and programmatic strategies that support advanced adult English language learners (ELLs) continued development of English proficiency as well as cognitive academic language proficiency in order to successfully transfer into adult basic education (ABE) or adult secondary education (ASE), complete a high school equivalency program and become prepared for postsecondary education and the 21st century workplace.**
- To provide the field with knowledge about the policies and programmatic and instructional practices that support adult ELLS transitions from English as a Second language (ESL) services into high school equivalency preparation programs, including ABE/ASE.**

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### TELL Project – Study

Project Activities	Study Implementation	Reporting
1. Environmental Scan/Critical Literature Review	1. Year 1 - Four Programs	August, 2010 Final Report
2. Subject Matter Expert meeting	2. Documentation of promising instructional and programmatic practices	
3. Selection Criteria		
4. Program Selection	3. Year 2 – Six programs	

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### Research Literature on TELL

Source	Purpose
Rance-Roney (1995)	Examines the differences between academic and ESL programs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊗ provides no clear methodology that researchers or practitioners can replicate to gauge the credibility of propositions made regarding approaches that support ESL student transition.</li> </ul>
Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy & Learning (TCALL, 2007)	Published a 12-article newsletter on learner transitions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊗ three articles focusing on ESL to ABE transition</li> <li>⊗ Approaches seem promising</li> <li>⊗ little descriptive or impact data on them, such as the type of students they serve, the TELL model they employ and their effectiveness.</li> </ul>

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### Research Literature on TELL

Researcher	Purpose
Flores and Chulp (2005)	Discuss student ESL transition into academic reading and writing based on a sample of practitioners in one program in one state
Benware (1989)	Describes a transitional ESL program at a community college

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## TELL Study - Program Selection

- Identifying Programs (Tremendous Interest)**
  - Self Nomination or State Director Nominations
  - Literature Review
  - Subject Matter Experts
- Request for Information (Limited Responses)**
  - Types of Information Requested
    - Current reports showing program Descriptions, Data on transitioning students, etc.
- Criteria for Evaluating Information and Selecting Sites**

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## TELL Program Selection Criteria

- Three Fundamental Principles**
  - Data – Systematic Collection of Information**
    - Learner entry & exit; Learner transition numbers; Learner outcomes & gains; Learner Characteristics; Learner persistence
  - Mechanisms – Coherent Systems**
    - Program Design, Administration and Policy; Professional development and training; Intake-Exit Coordination; Support systems/Collaborations
  - Strategies – Coherent Plans and Policies**
    - Instructional Strategies (Curriculum and Instruction); Assessment and program evaluation

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## TELL Program Selection - Information Screening Results

- What emerged from a review of information received from sites?**
  - Two prevailing types of transition processes**

Two Prevailing Transition Processes	
Distinct	Indistinct
Program has well defined transition class (or set of classes) that is physically situated and that is instructionally and programmatically designed for the purposes of preparing distinct ESL student cohorts for ABE, ASE, or GED classes.	Program does not have a well defined transition class or program, but has varied programmatic and instructional practices said to promote transitioning.

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## Pick your Program!

Program	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>SELECT YOUR PROGRAM!</b>								
<b>PROVIDE RATIONALE FOR SELECTION</b>								

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## The Future of TELL

- **If you have a TELL program(s) in your state:**
  - ◆ Describe the program(s). What lessons did you learn in the development of this program? What might you do differently?
- **If you do not have a TELL program in your state:**
  - ◆ What challenges/opportunities do you see in your system to start a TELL program? What would you need to start a TELL Program?

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## Next Steps: TELL Site Visits

Visits to ten programs around the country (Four programs in 2009; Six programs in 2010)  
 Final report in 2010.

- **What do you want to learn from these site visits?**
  - What results are most important to you?

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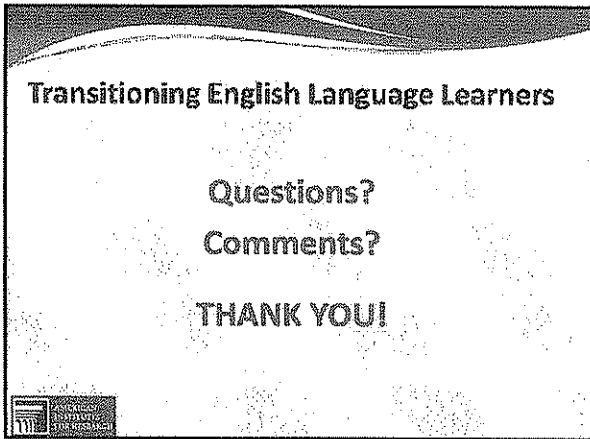
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# AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH

## TRANSITIONING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (TELL) STUDY

### POTENTIAL ADULT ESL TRANSITION BARRIERS

*Exhibit E-1. Potential Adult ESL Transition Barriers (Societal, Systems, Institutional)*

Societal	Systems	Institutional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poverty</li> <li>• Sexism</li> <li>• Classism</li> <li>• Poor housing</li> <li>• Weak schools</li> <li>• Social myths</li> <li>• Low-wage jobs</li> <li>• Racism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Silos (federal and program level)</li> <li>Fragmented and Incoherent Adult ESL Systems</li> <li>TESOL = black hole</li> <li>Language in testing and licensing unnecessarily complex</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curricular mismatch between ESOL and ABE</li> <li>GED stumbling block</li> <li>Lack of meaningful systems for advising transitioning students</li> </ul>

*Exhibit E-2. Potential Adult ESL Transition Barriers (Personal)*

Personal (Psychological; Educational; Socio-Cultural; Linguistic)
<p><b>Emotions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear of failure</li> <li>• Anger—"I used to be somebody"</li> <li>• Hopelessness—"I'll never finish. It's too hard"</li> <li>• Discouraged—"My ____ doesn't want me to"</li> <li>• Defeatism—"I didn't do well, I'd better quit"</li> <li>• Shame—"I didn't do well; I can't talk with anyone"</li> </ul> <p><b>Educational</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of experience with the system</li> <li>• Lack of "strategic competence" (navigating the system and maneuvering to make it work for you)</li> <li>• Lack of preparation for college level work</li> <li>• Little experience with self-efficacy in transition</li> </ul> <p><b>Socio-Cultural</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No "community of support" for academic life</li> <li>• Little experience with building necessary social networks</li> <li>• Little experience accessing "help functions"</li> <li>• Little experience with diversity</li> </ul> <p><b>Linguistic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited opportunity to develop "academic English"</li> <li>• Individual gaps in grammar, academic writing, and "careful language use"</li> <li>• Little experience with academic and "sub-technical" vocabulary</li> <li>• Little experience with more academic structures</li> </ul>

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**Worksheet: PICK YOUR PROGRAM!**

Program →	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Learner Entry & Exit (where from/transition to)	No info on exit	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No info on exit	Yes
Learner Transition Numbers (% transitioned)	Yes	Info not available	No	Some info available	Yes	Yes	Some info available	No
Learner Outcomes & Gains (assessment or personal goals)	No assessment data	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No goals tracking	No
Learner Characteristics (who transitions)	Some data available	Yes	No	No	Yes	Some data available	Some data available	Some data available
Learner Longitudinal Persistence (continue to achieve after transition)	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Reliable Attendance Data to Show Retention	Yes	Yes	No	No data available	No data available	Not documented	Yes	No
Program Design Outcome-Based & Transition is Goal	Yes	Data not disaggregated	Yes	Yes	No documentation of data	No documentation of data	Data not disaggregated	No documentation of data
Program Enrollment (managed)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Program Orientation & Intake Process	Yes, not clearly for transition	Yes, not clearly for transition	Yes	Yes, not clearly for transition	Yes, not clearly for transition	No	Yes, not clearly for transition	Yes, not clearly for transition
"Meaningful" Program Collaboration	Yes	No documentation of collaboration	Yes	N/A - internal transition	N/A - internal transition	N/A - internal transition	No	N/A - internal transition
Program Systematically Evaluates Outcome Measures	Yes	No clear documentation	Yes	No clear documentation	Yes	No documentation, but claims data exists	No documentation, but claims data exists	No
Professional Development	Yes	Some	Yes	Yes	Yes, but not clearly for transition	Yes, but not clearly for transition	No	Some
Intake-Exit System is Collaborative	Not clear from info provided	No documentation available	Yes	No documentation available	Not clear from info provided	Not clear from info provided	No documentation available	No documentation available
Intake-Exit System Supports Coordination of Process (programmatic and instructional)	Not clear from info provided	Not clear from info provided	Yes	Not clear from info provided	Not clear from info provided	Not clear from info provided	Not clear from info provided	Yes
Collaboration System Promotes Transitional Efficiency	Yes	No documentation available	Yes	Yes, mainly internal collaboration	Yes, mainly internal collaboration	Some	Some	Some
Program Has System to Support Retention (counseling, child care, etc.)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No
Program Has System to Support Academic Mobility	Yes	Yes	Yes	Some supports	Some supports	Some supports	Limited supports	Yes
Promotes Promising Instructional Strategies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Some instructional strategies	Some instructional strategies	Some instructional strategies	Some instructional strategies
Assessments Inform Instruction/Transition	Yes	Yes	Yes	Somewhat	Somewhat	Somewhat	No	Somewhat
SELECT YOUR PROGRAM!	1							
PROVIDE RATIONALE FOR SELECTION	<p align="center">Thanks to goal.                      longit data.                      System for eval. outcome + support.</p>							

# 2009 National Meeting of Adult Education State Directors

## Transitioning English Language Learners Study

### Worksheet: The Future of TELL

■ **If you have a TELL program(s) in your state:**

- ◆ Describe the program(s). What lessons did you learn in the development of this program? What might you do differently?

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■ **If you do not have a TELL program in your state:**

- ◆ What challenges/opportunities do you see in your system to start a TELL program? What would you need to start a TELL Program?

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