

# Preface to the TELL Program

Welcome to the Teaching English Language Learners (TELL) Program. This 16-credit endorsement is a series of six video-anchored courses: Foundations of Bilingual Education, Understanding Language Acquisition, Assessment for Linguistically Diverse Students, Developing Second Language Literacy, Integrating Content and Language Instruction, and Family, School, and Community Partnerships. Attached to each of these courses is a half credit of assignments culminating in a 4-credit practicum in which TELL teachers work directly with language minority students and their families. The program's overarching purpose is to advance the education of language minority students through teacher development. The program meets this purpose by developing teachers who know how to learn and grow as educators. As a result of this program, participants, particularly content-area teachers, will be able to work with linguistically and culturally diverse learners in the regular classroom in ways that reflect pedagogic practices that are inclusive of all learners. Completion of the entire TELL Program results in an ESL teaching endorsement.

## Inclusive Pedagogy Conceptual Framework

The Foundations of Bilingual Education course is pivotal in establishing the Inclusive Pedagogy Framework as a way of learning about language minority students. Inclusive Pedagogy is a conceptual framework for professional growth that enables educators to respond in educationally appropriate ways to the linguistic, cultural, and learning diversity of students in their classrooms. Although introduced in the first course, Inclusive Pedagogy continues to provide the conceptual framework for all courses in the TELL program. It serves as the lens through which we examine factors impacting the school experience of language minority students in the United States.

Inclusive Pedagogy consists of five characteristics: Collaboration, Guiding Principles, Essential Policy, Critical Learning Domains, and Classroom Strategies. Each of these characteristics is defined by a standard, goal questions that promote common understandings, and a reflection for change question that promotes united advocacy. While in the TELL Program our focus is on ESL students, the Inclusive Pedagogy Framework can be used to address the needs of all special population students: ESL, multicultural, learning disabled, and gifted/talented.

The five characteristics of Inclusive Pedagogy and their defining standards are as follows:

- **Collaboration:** Meeting the needs of today's language minority students demands collaboration across academic disciplines, institutions, and school-home cultures.
- **Guiding Principles:** Effective instruction for language minority students must be guided by theoretical and moral principles.
- **Essential Policy:** Essential policy, including standards, classification issues, and legalities, must be an integral part of advocacy for language minority students.
- **Critical Learning Domains:** Learning involves development in cognitive, social/affective, and linguistic domains.
- **Classroom Strategies:** Teachers must understand the what and the why of effective classroom strategies for language minority students.

At the end of each course, participants are asked to demonstrate their understanding of language minority students through a display of professional development framed by these characteristics of Inclusive Pedagogy.

## **ProfessorsPlus Delivery System**

A distance-learning format was selected for the endorsement over traditional university-centered courses to deliver professional development at multiple school sites that could be adjusted to the needs of rural, suburban, and urban populations and the work schedules of in-service educators. In addition, video-anchoring and the use of a certified, on-site facilitator ensure consistent, high quality content delivery.

The TELL Program uses the ProfessorsPlus™ distance-education delivery system. The Professors part of the course model includes the development of carefully crafted video segments, CD-ROMs, and an instructional guide. These video segments and CD-ROMS create, in essence, a multimedia textbook. The video segments capture audience attention and contextualize key teaching points. The perspectives of various university professors and researchers highlight content that is juxtaposed against the real-world voices and examples of students, educators, parents, and other community members. This makes the relationship between theory and practice immediately visible.

The Professors part also includes the development of an instructional guide that supports active learning; encourages thoughtful, analytical reflection; and models appropriate strategies teachers can use with language minority students. Each session of the course is divided into three sections: Get Into, Move Through, and Reach Beyond (see the Instructional Guide Format and Symbols described in the preface).

The Plus part of the delivery system is an on-site, masters-equivalent facilitator with extensive public school classroom experience. This facilitator is responsible for creating a sense of community among learners. Employing teacher immediacy to foster interaction, the facilitator shares objectives, uses active learning strategies to promote student engagement, provides opportunities for performance, assesses learning, and communicates with professors.

## **Sociocultural Theory**

A sociocultural theory of learning undergirds all of our TELL coursework. From the first session of the first course, participants are engaged in a learning community designed using the principles of sociocultural theory. We believe that learning occurs best in social activity in which both teachers and learners participate. In the ProfessorsPlus delivery system, each facilitator develops a community of learners who focus on learning about culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Although video segments provide interesting and provocative content, most of the learning occurs in course activities and discussions in which students try out and apply the things we teach. The videos and readings provide scientific conceptions for the ideas the activities cause participants to confront, helping participants' specific conceptions become both more general and more accessible for application in thinking and teaching. The facilitator's interactions and the design of the course materials support cognitive, social, and linguistic development, modeling what is needed in teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. We ask participants to work together because we respect their quality and depth of knowledge about teaching and know they can scaffold each others'

learning. Most importantly, we believe that the best opportunities to learn involve opportunities to integrate new learning with prior knowledge. The TELL courses consistently ask participants to take responsibility for learning in environments that provide access to new information and the tools to learn and apply it.

In this program, we emphasize the Standards for Effective Pedagogy (Dalton, 1998) for teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. These five standards have emerged from research on teaching and learning based in sociocultural theory. These standards are:

- **Joint Productive Activity:** Teacher and students producing together
- **Language and Literacy Development:** Developing language and literacy across the curriculum
- **Contextualization:** Making meaning: Connecting school to students' lives
- **Challenging Activities:** Teaching complex thinking
- **Instructional Conversation:** Teaching through conversation

By using these standards to create a model for teaching, we engage teachers in environments that orchestrate their productive participation in a variety of activities that produce meaningful learning.

## University/Public School Partnership

The TELL Program has been developed by the Brigham Young University–Public School Partnership, which is a collaborative partnership between Brigham Young University and five local public school districts: Alpine, Jordan, Nebo, Provo, and Wasatch. This BYU–Public School Partnership is part of the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER), a network of fifteen university–public school partnerships across the United States. These partnerships were created by John I. Goodlad to encourage the simultaneous renewal of teacher education and schooling. These partnerships are guided by four moral dimensions of education, which express the purposes of public education:

- **Enculturating the Young in a Democracy.** This dimension acknowledges the school's role, and by extension a teacher's role, in preparing a citizenry of students who experience, understand, and are capable of enacting principles of democracy.
- **Providing Access to Knowledge.** This dimension stands for the belief that regardless of a child's gender, race, ethnic identity, linguistic, or socioeconomic background that child deserves equal access to Equal access is an issue in school programs and teacher practices. Curriculum should be equally accessible to all learners.
- **Ensuring Nurturing Pedagogy.** This concept recognizes that children learn best in environments where they feel safe and valued. Students learn when teacher practices, the classroom environment, and the school context are nurturing, supportive, and encouraging.
- **Recognizing Stewardship of Schools in Educative Communities.** This dimension reveals that every school belongs to the students, teachers, state and local administrators, and members of the local The educational community shares responsibility—indeed the moral obligation—to be good stewards of that school in initiating and sustaining renewal.

The Brigham Young University/Public School Partnership initiatives are organized locally through the Center for the Improvement of Teacher Education and Schooling (CITES), located on the Provo campus of BYU. The TELL Program is one of many CITES initiatives. Faculty from the Departments of Teacher Education and Linguistics have worked cooperatively to develop the TELL Program.

## References

Dalton, S. S. (1998). *Pedagogy matters: Standards for effective teaching practice*. Santa Cruz, CA: Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence.



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