

# Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL): Reflections on Building the Base Austin, 2010



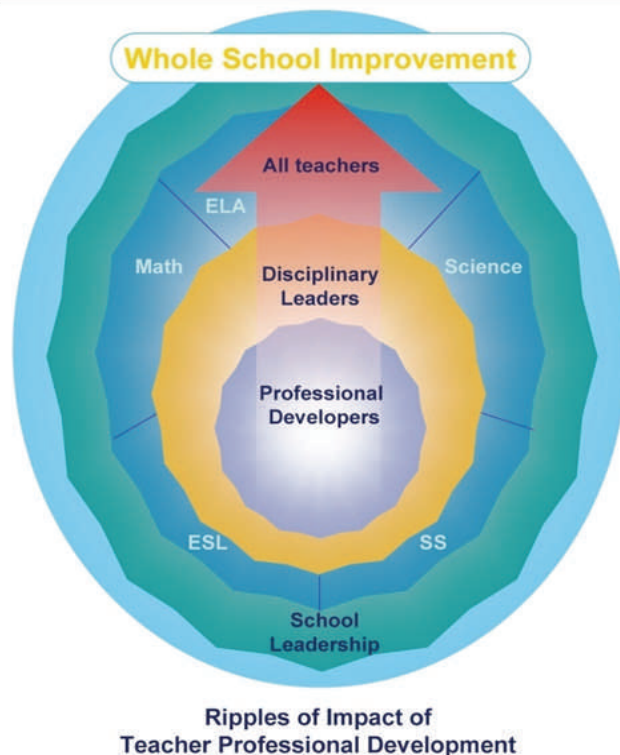
AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Department of Program Evaluation

## What is Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL)?

### QTEL in Austin Independent School District (AISD).

QTEL is a teacher professional development (PD) program based on an apprenticeship model of teaching and learning that mirrors teachers' work with students. Participants are immersed in pedagogy and best practices. As teachers develop their expertise, they take on increasing levels of responsibility, thereby building campus capacity to implement QTEL. The QTEL work began as a pilot in Austin in 2007 at Lanier and International High Schools. The goals of the pilot were to close gaps and increase high-quality instruction for English language learners (ELLs).

Work expanded to include Reagan High School in the 2009–2010 school year. In June 2010, direction and supervision of the QTEL program were moved to the director of secondary ELLs in an effort to begin integrating the conceptual framework of QTEL into language acquisition efforts district wide. For a detailed description of this program, visit the [QTEL website](#) or review [DPE Publication 09.08](#). This report summarizes feedback from teachers who attended a QTEL PD institute led by AISD teachers who became professional developers through the QTEL program.



## What is Building the Base (BTB)?

**BTB Professional Development.** A component of this apprenticeship model includes a select group of AISD teachers who are expected to progress toward certification to become QTEL professional developers. Capacity building is a key component of the WestEd QTEL model. Apprentice professional developers must accomplish several milestones in order to be certified. The first milestone is to pass a written exercise. The second milestone is to lead a PD institute while being coached by WestEd colleagues. The final milestone is for the apprentice professional developers to design, deliver, film, and critique their own PD session.

To facilitate the second milestone, the Office of Bilingual/English as a second language (ESL) coordinated a 3-day BTB institute at Reagan High School, August 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> 2010. BTB was an in-depth introduction to QTEL, similar in format to the QTEL BTB institute conducted annually by WestEd in San Francisco. The Austin BTB was led by two teachers from Lanier High School who were working to become certified professional developers. The two presenters worked intensively with WestEd's assistant director of the Teacher Professional Development Program to prepare for the institute and refine their presentations. While they were presenting, each teacher was provided individual support from a WestEd content area expert. Thus, the BTB had two purposes: it created an opportunity for the presenters to continue their growth as apprentice professional developers, and it provided quality PD for the teachers who attended the workshop.

The QTEL BTB institute provided high school and middle school teachers with a deeper understanding of quality instruction for ELLs, and with corresponding strategies for effectively teaching academic language to ELLs within a discipline-specific context, including the following:

- How to provide high-challenge activities and a high level of support to provide rigorous instruction to ELLs
- How to teach content with a focus on academic language development
- How to structure classroom activities to promote student engagement with content and language
- Sufficient examples so teachers can transfer learning to classroom practice

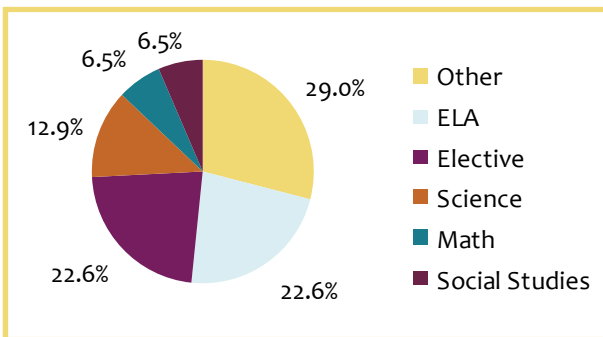
Participants in BTB were alphabetically assigned to the two presenters to encourage heterogeneity in the groups. Groups stayed with their presenters for all 3 days, except for the keynote presentation at the beginning of day 1.



## Who attended BTB?

**BTB Attendees.** Teachers from six high schools and three middle schools attended BTB. Most of the elective teachers taught a foreign language. Respondents categorized as “other” discipline included an administrator, counselors, a curriculum specialist, ESL teachers, and special education teachers.

Attendance was managed by the Office of Bilingual/ESL. Principals from several high schools and middle schools across the district identified teachers for participation. Teachers from schools participating in QTEL comprised 48% of the attendees. Lanier, International and Reagan sent teachers who were new to the school. Almost all of the 31 participants (94%) attended all 3 days.

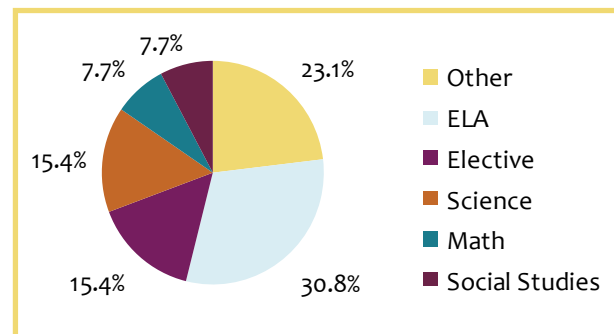


Campus	Number	Percentage
International	6	19.4
Reagan	5	16.1
Anderson	4	12.9
Dobie MS	4	12.9
Lanier	4	12.9
Webb MS	3	9.7
Austin	2	6.5
McCallum	2	6.5
Murchison MS	1	3.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Who completed a reflection form about BTB?

**BTB Respondents.** Most of the teachers (83.9%) who attended BTB completed a Reflection Form (n= 26). All of the attendees from Reagan, Dobie Middle School, and McCallum completed a reflection form. More teachers from English language arts than any other discipline completed the form.

Campus	Number	Percentage
Reagan	5	19.2
Dobie MS	4	15.4
International	4	15.4
Anderson	3	11.5
Lanier	3	11.5
Austin	2	7.7
McCallum	2	7.7
Webb MS	2	7.7
Murchison MS	1	3.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100.0</b>



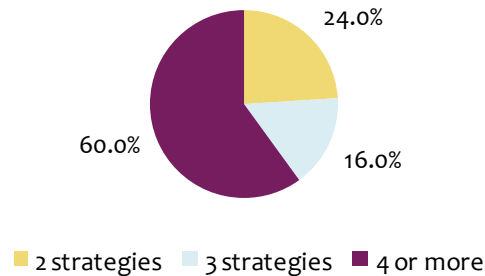


## Reflections on Building the Base.

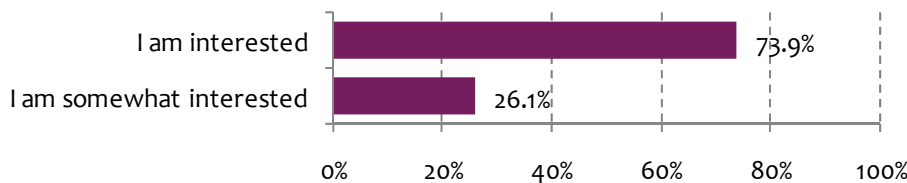
**Use and Value of BTB.** Most of the teachers who completed a reflection form either agreed or strongly agreed BTB was worthwhile and valuable PD ( $n = 26$ ). All of the respondents agreed the presenters were effective. All of the respondents were confident they would use QTEL strategies in their classes.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements...	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
The BTB was a high quality, valuable use of my professional development time.	0.0%	0.0%	3.9%	19.2%	76.9%
The BTB training was engaging and communicated clearly.	0.0%	0.0%	3.9%	23.1%	73.1%
The content and material of the BTB was useful and informative.	0.0%	3.9%	0.0%	26.9%	69.2%
The presenter used effective presentation skills.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	30.8%	69.2%
I will use strategies I learned at the BTB in my classroom.	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	23.1%	76.9%

**Using QTEL Strategies.** Teachers were asked to complete the following sentence: "I learned \_\_ strategies I am confident I will use in my practice." Most teachers (60%) responded they would use four or more strategies learned at BTB ( $n = 25$ ).



**Additional QTEL PD.** Teachers were also asked, "How interested are you in continuing your participation in QTEL training this academic year?" Seventy-four percent responded they were interested in additional training in QTEL ( $n = 26$ ).





## Additional Information About this Report

**About the Department of Program Evaluation.** The Department of Program Evaluation (DPE) was established in 1972 to support program decision and strategic planning in the district. The department is housed in the Office of Accountability and is charged with evaluating federal, state, and locally funded programs in AISD. DPE staff integrate best and innovative evaluation practices with educational and institutional knowledge. DPE staff work with program staff throughout the district to design and conduct formative and summative program evaluations. DPE’s methods for evaluating programs vary depending on the research question, program design, and reporting requirements. The evaluations report objectively about program implementation and outcomes, and serve to inform program staff, decision makers, and planners in the district. [DPE reports can be accessed online.](#)

**About the Author.** Ginger Gossman completed a Ph.D. in demography at the University of Texas at Austin in 2006. Her academic interests include maternal and child health, secondary education, infectious disease, and obesity research. She has presented her research findings at regional and national conferences and has been a member of the American Evaluation Association since 2007. Ginger joined the DPE team in September 2008.

**Funding Source.** Funding for this report was provided by a no-cost extension to a 3-year Bill and Melinda Gates grant, # 44175, administered by the Communities Foundation of Texas.

**Fiscal Considerations.** The cost of BTB was \$10,821.00, including costs for the two faculty leading the workshop and the daily (stipend and benefits) costs for teachers who attended the workshop. The per unit cost was \$349.06 (the total cost divided by the number of participants, 31). It was not possible to conduct a cost-effectiveness study of BTB using student outcomes as a measure of success because no student data were available at the time this report was prepared. However, a scaled satisfaction score was computed for those who completed a reflection form. The mean of this scale score was very close to the highest possible value (less than 1 standard deviation), suggesting participants rated the workshop highly. Specific responses on satisfaction items are reported on p.3.

**District Strategic Plan.** Programs that focus on ELLs address all four of the goals in the strategic plan. Thus, this report speaks to all four of those goals, as well.

**Technical Notes.** The QTEL program manager, Melissa Hutchins, an administrative supervisor in the Office of Bilingual/ESL Education, invited all participants present at the conclusion of BTB to complete a reflection form and provide feedback about their experience during the PD program. The reflection form was developed through collaboration between the Office of Bilingual/ESL Education and DPE. The form measured participants’ views about the quality, effectiveness, and utility of the BTB presentations and content.

There were 31 unduplicated responses to the reflection survey, yielding a response rate of 83.9% among all 31 attendees. Raw data from the reflection forms were entered in SurveyMonkey® for analysis. The percentages shown are based on valid data (i.e., do not include missing data). Percentages are sorted to place the highest percentage in the first row.

This report does not provide teacher identification numbers and is therefore compliant with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

**SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

Meria J. Carstarphen Ed.D.

**OFFICE OF ACCOUNTABILITY**

William H. Caritj, M.Ed.

**DEPARTMENT OF PROGRAM EVALUATION**

Holly Williams, Ph.D.  
Karen Looby, Ph.D.

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