

PR Award #	U350A110009
Name of Organization	Illinois State University
Name of Project	Transitioning Paraprofessionals into Teachers of English Learners (TPTEL)
City, State	Normal, Illinois

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Project Description: The Transitioning Paraprofessionals into Teachers of English Learners Project is designed to provide assistance to paraprofessionals to complete a four year degree in Elementary K-9 with Illinois Certification and Bilingual/ESL Approval. The project will create an alternative to teacher certification to 51 paraprofessionals who work as teachers' aides in classrooms of English Learners. The participating candidates will be provided with a course of study that will enable them to earn a certificate to teach English Learners. The general purpose of the project is to respond to the increasing demand from local school boards and the State for qualified teachers of English Learners as well as the need for all teachers to know the process of teaching English Learners. The project will provide training to 51 qualified paraprofessionals who are working as teacher assistants in the participating school districts.

The Transitioning Paraprofessionals into Teachers of English Learners (TPTEL) is the result of a partnership between the College of Education at Illinois State University and four high needs school districts. The cooperation of an institution of Higher Education and school districts in the training of teachers reinforces the commitment of both entities to produce teachers trained in real settings and exposed to the everyday processes of being a teacher. The partnership offers the candidates a balanced training program that includes both theory and practice. It also provides a unique process of addressing the needs of candidates to be exposed to subject areas and pedagogical skills essential to teaching English Learners. The partnership serves as a platform for providing working paraprofessionals with hands-on experiences for the development of skills related to curriculum theory, student learning styles, assessment as well as first-hand experiences in teaching linguistically and culturally diverse students.

Project Goals Are:

1. Recruit train and mentor 51 paraprofessionals (Teachers' Assistants) from the partner school districts.
2. Prepare potential participants in the program to and meet application requirements.
3. Provide an ISU teacher education program for teachers of English Learners.
4. Provide mentoring and continuous professional development for graduates of the program.
5. Implement a process where the project will continue to be assessed, evaluated and refined.
6. The project expects to serve 51 paraprofessionals during the five year funding period and expects no less than 90% or 90 participating candidates to complete the course of study and meet all state requirements for certification as teachers of English Learners.