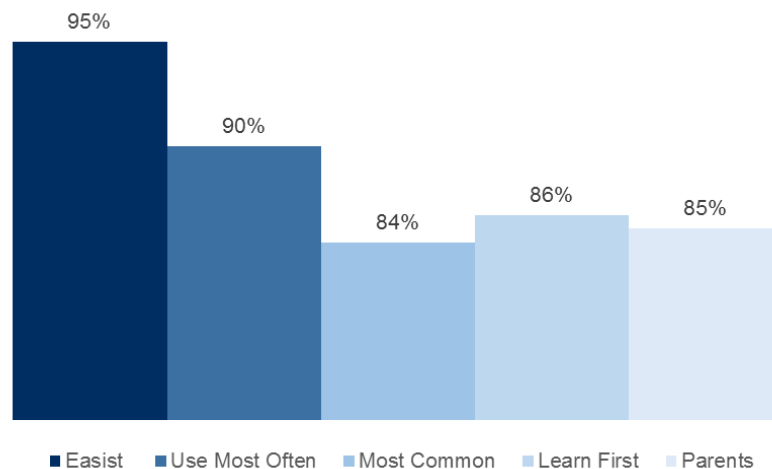


Understanding How to Measure ELL: Evaluating Different Indicators of ELL

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Students' Self-Reported English Language Usage, by ELL Survey Item



A random sample of students who took the ACT® test in April 2016 was invited to participate in an online survey about their English Language Learner (ELL) status (N = 52,500). A total of 10,336 students responded. Students were asked to answer five ELL items from national sources,¹ each listed in the figure above.

Other recent ACT Research on ELL students includes:

- Moore, R. and Wilkinson, T. (2017). *Gaining a Better Understanding of ELL Students: The Number of Languages Spoken in the Home*. Iowa City, IA: ACT.
- Moore, R. and Wilkinson, T. (2017). *Gaining a Better Understanding of ELL Students: How Well Do Parents Speak English*. Iowa City, IA: ACT.

¹ Not all nationally developed items were used verbatim in the ACT survey. National sources included: ACS (source: <http://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/about/qbyqfact/2016/Language.pdf>), USED (source: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/eltoolkit.pdf>), and SAT (source: <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/pdf/sat-registration-booklet-students.pdf>).

Key Takeaways

- The percentage of students who self-reported as English speakers varied depending on how the concept was measured. For example, 95% of survey respondents indicated English was the language easiest for them to speak, but fewer students (90%) indicated English was the language they used most often at home.
- The language most commonly spoken in the home may be different than the language easiest to use when speaking. While 95% of the students reported English as their easiest language, fewer students (84%) reported that English was the language most commonly spoken at home.
- Similar percentages of students reported that English was the language first learned (86%) and that English was the language their parents used most frequently when speaking to them (85%). This is not surprising, since the first language learned is often used by the parents. ■

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