SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

A transcription activator-like effector induction system mediated by proteolysis

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SUPPLEMENTARY RESULTS

Supplementary Tables

SI Figure 1 Truncation of TALE repeat domain reduces repression. (**a**) Truncated repeat domain variants of a TALE targeted to the lac operator (*i.e.* A0). (**b**) Truncated A0 constructs were constitutively expressed from either a weak ($P²$) or strong ($P⁵$) promoter. Expression vectors were transformed into *E. coli* MG1655 *ΔlacI* cells along with the p5Cherry reporter plasmid. (**c**) Mean mCherry protein production rates for the aforementioned strains (n=3). Error bars represent the standard error.

SI Fig. 1

a

SI Figure 2 Nomenclature and primary amino acid sequence of the TALE cut site constructs. (**a**) Legend for the vector nomenclature system used throughout the manuscript. The first number (*i.e.* 1-5) denotes the constitutive promoter used to drive expression of the TALEs targeted to either the *lac* operator (*i.e.* TlacO or A), the *lysA* gene promoter proximal region (*i.e.* TlysA or B), or the *sucA* σ^s promoter-proximal region (*i.e.* TsucA or C). The second number (*i.e.* 0-7) describes the type and location of the TEV protease cut sites, if any, in the TALE construct. T, Ti, and TiKm are used to describe the TEV protease variant present in the vector. All *tev* mutants are regulated by the P^{tet} promoter. (**b**) The amino acid sequence of the different 17.5-mer TlacO constructs sectioned into the three major TALE domains (i.e. N-terminus, repeat domain, and Cterminus). The location, sequence, and name of the different TEV cut sites in each domain are in bold black text. Dashes denote the absence of an amino acid. In the repeat domain, the 12th and 13th amino acids of each 34-amino acid repeat, known as the repeat variable diresidues (*i.e.* RVDs), are spaced apart from the preceding 11 and proceeding 20 amino acids. The color scheme corresponds to the homology models presented in **SI Fig. 3**.

SI Figure 3 Homology models of TlacO with various TEV cut site arrangements. The cartoon model at the top is a homology model of a TlacO mutant to illustrate the location of the various TEV cut sites examined in this study. The homology model was generated using ModWeb (https://modbase.compbio.ucsf.edu/modweb/) based on PDB file 3UGM¹ . The panes below the global TlacO model more closely depict the hypothetical conformation of TEV cut sites with and without linkers in the repeat domain (*e.g.* A1), N-terminus (*e.g.* A2 and A3), and C-terminus (*e.g.* A4 and A5), relative to the unmodified A0 construct. The color scheme and displayed amino acid sequences correspond to **SI Fig. 2b**. The interrepeat loop that connects each 34 amino acid repeat was selected as a location to insert the seven amino acid TEV sequence. These loops are located on the outside of the TALE structure, making the insertion of a TEV site in these regions likely accessible to the protease and unlikely to disturb interactions between the RVDs and their cognate DNA base.

SI Figure 4 Time course (**a**) growth and (**b**) fluorescence data (n=3) associated with **Fig. 2** as well as a semi-quantitative full-length TALE Western blot. The pE strain (**○**, ●) contains a null reporter vector. Induction of *tev* protease with aTc (20 ng/ml) 2.5 hours after inoculation, denoted by (**↓**), results in de-repression of the *mCherry* reporter gene in strain p2A1-T (●) expressing the A1 TALE and an active protease. Error bars represent the standard deviation. (**c**) Repetition of the Western blot from **Fig. 2e** using the same samples but a reduced number of cells loaded per lane in order to achieve a linear correlation between full-length TALE integrated band intensity (as determined in ImageJ) and abundance. Surprisingly, this revealed that our TALE without TEV cut sites appears to be degraded in the presence of TEV protease $(p2A0-T + aTc vs. p2A0-T - aTc)$, though to a lesser extent than when TEV cut sites are incorporated (p2A1-T + aTc vs. p2A1-T – aTc). Note that active TEV protease is required to observe this phenomenon in both cases, and that no full-length TALE band was detected in the p2A1-T + aTc lane as well as in the negative control p2 lane. A dilution series of the sample with the most TALE was included on this blot. (**d**) A plot of integrated band intensities from the p2A0-Ti dilution series versus the dilution factors confirmed that signal (integrated band density) was proportional to the amount of protein loaded. All data shown is from cultures grown at 30°C. (**e**) Full Western blot from which **Fig. 2e** was derived. (**f**) Full Western blot from which **SI Fig. 4c** was derived. Dilution factors are indicated next to p2A0-Ti + aTc lanes.

SI Figure 5 Titration of *tev* protease expression. (**a**) Mean mCherry fluorescence values of *E. coli* MG1655 *ΔlacI* cells containing the p2A1-T expression and p5Cherry reporter vectors at 8, 10, and 24 hours after inoculation (n=3). Cultures were induced 1.5 hours after inoculation with 0.2, 2, 20, or 200 ng/ml aTc. (**b**) Fold induction values derived from the ratio of the induced to uninduced state for each of the aTc concentrations examined at 8, 10, and 24 hours (n=3). All error bars represent the standard deviation. (**c**) Photograph of the p2 control sample and p2A1- T cells from the 24 hour time point following centrifugation and resuspension in 300 ul of media.

SI Figure 6 Induction by proteolytic TALE degradation is reversible. MG1655 ΔlacI was transformed with the reporter plasmid p5sfGFP and either p2A1-T or p2A3-T. An empty vector control strain was created by transforming MG1655 Δ lacI with pE and PLtetO1 (growth data not shown). Each of these strains was outgrown in LB medium with kanamycin and ampicillin in duplicate from an initial OD₆₀₀ of \sim .03 for 1.5 hours. Following this initial outgrowth, each culture received a final concentration of 20 ng/mL aTc or a corresponding amount of 50% v/v ethanol. Three 100 μL portions of each culture were then transferred to a 96 well plate which was incubated at 37°C with shaking and periodic OD₆₀₀/sfGFP fluorescence measurements in a Tecan m200 plate reader. After ~11 hours of growth, each replicate in this 96 well plate was subcultured by serially diluting 1000-fold in fresh LB medium with appropriate antibiotics but without aTc (*i.e.* no further TEV induction) in a second 96 well plate. This second plate was then returned to the plate reader for another ~11 hour incubation with the same conditions as previously described. (**a**) Growth curves for both the initial cultures and their subcultures. Growth data for the subcultures was appended to the initial growth curve. (**b**) Mean fluorescence of each culture normalized to optical density after subtracting away the average fluorescence of the empty-vector control at the end of both incubation periods (n=3). Growth in medium without aTc restored repression of the sfGFP reporter. All error bars represent the standard deviation.

SI Figure 7 Comparison of induction by TALE degradation to induction by dilution of TALE through growth. (**a**) MG1655 ΔlacI was transformed with the reporter plasmid p5sfGFP and either p2A3-T, a vector harboring an aTc inducible copy of TlacO (PLtetO1-TlacO), or an emptyvector control (PLtetO1). Each of these strains was outgrown in LB medium with kanamycin and ampicillin from an initial OD₆₀₀ of ~.03 for 1.5 hours. The strain harboring $P^{LtefO1}-TlacO$ was outgrown either with or without 20 ng/mL aTc. Following this initial outgrowth, the cultures were split into two equal volumes, harvested by centrifugation, and washed twice in LB medium with (grey bars) or without (white bars) 20 ng/mL aTc and appropriate antibiotics. After normalizing the OD₆₀₀ of each culture to \sim 0.2 by dilution with the correct medium, the resuspensions were aliquoted in triplicate into a 96 well plate and fluorescence and optical density measurements were taken over a period of 24 hours as described in the Methods section. Protein production rates were then calculated from the resulting data (n=3), with error bars representing the standard error. As can be seen below, diluting the intracellular concentration of TALE by washing away its inducer ($P^{Lte1O1}-TlacO$ Outgrown with aTc, white bar) resulted in a protein production rate about one-third that of the samples where induction was mediated by proteolytic cleavage (p2A3-T, grey bar). This indicates that proteolytic cleavage and subsequent degradation of the TALE significantly enhances the strength of induction relative to simple dilution of the repressor despite an increase of cell density by an order of magnitude while growing in the plate reader (data not shown). (**b**) Time course fluorescence data for the experiment described in (**a**) (n=3). Error bars represent the standard deviation.

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SI Figure 8 Induction by proteolytic TALE degradation during stationary phase. MG1655 ΔlacI was transformed with the reporter plasmid p5sfGFP and either p2A3-T or PLtetO1-TlacO1 (see **SI Fig. 7**). An empty vector control strain was created by transforming MG1655 ΔlacI with pE and PLtetO1. Each of these strains was outgrown in triplicate in LB medium with kanamycin and ampicillin from an initial OD₆₀₀ of ~0.03 for 6 hours. The strain harboring PLtetO1-TlacO1 was outgrown either with or without 20 ng/mL aTc. Following this initial outgrowth, the cultures were split into two equal volumes, harvested by centrifugation, and washed twice in LB medium with (+) or without (-) 20 ng/mL aTc and appropriate antibiotics. These cultures were then grown at 37°C for an additional 24 hours in shake tubes, and samples were periodically withdrawn from each culture and diluted ten-fold to take OD₆₀₀ and sfGFP fluorescence measurements in a Tecan m200 plate reader. (**a**) Growth curves following washes and resuspension (n=3). All cultures doubled approximately twice over the course of this experiment. (**b**) Fluorescence of each culture normalized to optical density after subtracting away the average fluorescence of the empty-vector control (n=3). The cultures where induction was mediated by proteolytic cleavage (p2A3-T -/+) recovered more than 30% of the positive control's fluorescence (PLtetO1-TlacO1 -/-) after 8 hours, while the system mediated by dilution (PLtetO1-TlacO1 +/-) only recovered 8% after the same period of time. All error bars represent the standard deviation.

SI Figure 8

SI Figure 9 Characterization of the p2A7-T system. (**a**) Mean sfGFP fluorescence values of *E. coli* MG1655 *ΔlacI* cells containing the p2, p2A1-T, or p2A7-T expression vectors and the p5sfGFP reporter vector. The pE strain (**○**, ●) contains a null reporter vector. Cells were grown in 250 ml shake flasks at 37°C and sampled at each time point to determine OD₆₀₀ and fluorescence values in a plate reader (n=3). Induction of *tev* with aTc (25 ng/ml) occurred 1.5 hours after inoculation, denoted as (**↓**), and results in de-repression of the *sfGFP* reporter gene in strains carrying both p2A1-T (●) and p2A7-T (●). (**b**) Observed average growth of strains in shake flasks over time monitored by turbidity measurements (n=3). (**c**) Fold change (*i.e.* the ratio of the induced to the uninduced mRNA levels) for the A7 TALE, TEV protease, and sfGFP mRNAs prior to induction (*i.e.* 1.5 hours) and at three time points (*i.e.* 2, 2.5, and 4 hours) after induction of *tev* with aTc (n=3). See Methods for a description of RNA isolation and quantitative PCR methodology. (**d**) Western blot probed with an anti-FLAG primary antibody to observe full length A1 and A7 TALEs in both induced and uninduced cultures at 1.5, 2.5, and 24 hours after inoculation. The arrow denotes the band corresponding to the respective full length TALE. Error bars throughout the figure represent the standard deviation.

 $20 -$

 $15 10 -$

SI Figure 10 Tuning the repression and induction of A7-T system. (**a**) Schematic of the system used to examine the different constitutive promoters driving the A7 TALE. (**b**) Mean sfGFP protein production rates for each of the constitutive promoters (P^{1-5}) used to express A7 (n=3). Promoter strengths relative to the strongest promoter P⁵ are shown in the far left column and are derived from the iGEM distrubtion (http://parts.igem.org/Promoters/Catalog/Anderson). Bracketed values indicate the fold induction. Error bars represent standard error.

Mean sfGFP protein production rate (RFU OD600⁻¹ h⁻¹)

SI Figure 11 Design and verification of the TlysA and TsucA constructs with TEV cut sites. (**a**) The *lysA* and *sucA* gene promoter proximal DNA sequences and the corresponding RVD identities. (**b**) Schematic of the TALE-TEV system used to verify that the B3, B7, and C3 TALE constructs are capable of both repression and de-repression of a plasmid-based reporter gene. The B3 and B7 TALEs were expressed from either a weak (i.e. P^2) or strong (i.e. P^5) constitutive promoter, while TALE C3 was only expressed from P⁵. The *lysA* DNA target sequence was substituted for the *lac* operator originally present in the p5sfGFP reporter to make the reporter p5lysAsfGFP. Likewise, the sucA DNA target sequence was substituted into p5mCherry to make p5sucAmCherry. (**c**) Mean protein production rates from the reporter vectors for B3-T, B7- T, and C3-T constructs. Additionally, the p5B3-T vector was co-transformed with the p5sfGFP reporter plasmid to demonstrate the fidelity of TALE binding to its cognate DNA target sequence (n=3). Note that the empty vector control cultures (*i.e.* no TALE) harboring p5sucAmCherry exhibited a significant lag phase during growth (data not shown). Fold induction values ± standard deviation are bracketed. Error bars represent the standard error.

SI Fig. 11

Mean sfGFP protein production rate (RFU OD600⁻¹ h⁻¹)

SI Figure 12 Induction of TEV protease upon inoculation causes a growth defect due to the burden of protein expression. Growth data for MG1655 ΔlacI transformed with a plasmid harboring either wild-type TEV protease or the catalytically inactive C151A mutant demonstrates that induction with 20 ng/mL aTc immediately following inoculation causes a lag in growth (n=3). This growth phenotype is independent of whether the TEV protease is catalytically active. These plasmids have the same origin of replication, kanamycin resistance marker, and aTc inducible TEV protease cassette as used throughout the paper, though these plasmids do not contain a TALE. Error bars represent the standard deviation.

Supplemental Table 1: Strains used in this study

STRAINS

Supplemental Table 2: Plasmids used in this study

EXPRESSION PLASMIDS

Cloning vectors for building expression vectors

Empty expression vectors

Vectors for constitutive expression of TALE variants and LacI

Vectors for expression of TlacO and TEV protease variants

Vectors for expression of TlysA and TsucA with and without expression of TEV protease

REPORTER PLASMIDS

PLASMIDS FOR CHROMOSOMAL ENGINEERING

Supplemental Table 3: Select list of primers used in this study

OLIGONUCLEOTIDES

qPCR primers and primers for making standard curve templates

Primers for engineering MG1655 Ptrc-*sfGFP***::***lacIZYA*

References from Supplemental Information

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- 3. Guzman, L.M., Belin, D., Carson, M.J. & Beckwith, J. Tight regulation, modulation, and high-level expression by vectors containing the arabinose PBAD promoter. *Journal of Bacteriology* **177**, 4121-4130 (1995).