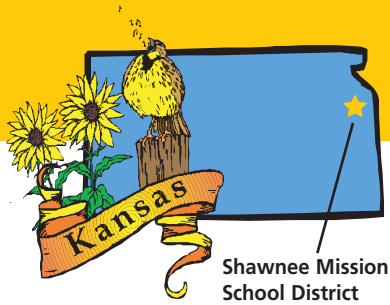


IPT Success Story

Shawnee Mission School District



OVERVIEW

Effective Assessment Helps English Learners be Successful

Keeping up with the progress of English learners when you have a large district is often a challenge and the Shawnee Mission School District in Kansas—with over 2,000 English Language Learners (ELLs) in a large 28,000 student district—knows this all too well. To keep the district running smoothly, they use the IPT® Testing System from Ballard & Tighe, Publishers for their ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) program. The district relies on the IPT to not only place students, but to give teachers a process for mid-year assessment when incongruities arise between classroom performance and English proficiency.

One instructional model does not fit all and that is especially true when dealing with students who speak different languages *and* who have varying exposure to English. Carol Barney, a resource specialist for English Language Learners and World Languages, and her colleagues in the district work diligently to make sure the students in their ESOL program have the individual attention they need to successfully learn academic English and quickly move into mainstream classes. “We offer a mix of instructional programs for our English learners but placing them properly and keeping up with their learning challenges are what help them do their best,” says Ms. Barney.

“We find that the **IPT** is a **very strong indicator** of a **student’s** actual **grasp of English**, so when we need to, we use it as a **critical part of evidence.**”

– Carol Barney



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The district uses the IPT as a placement exam and believes the test does a good job of quickly assessing its English learners, so that they can be assigned to the appropriate service level. The IPT has also become important in mid-year evaluation when a teacher realizes that a student is advancing faster than expected or conversely, finds one who is struggling. “We use the IPT when we notice there isn’t a match between how well a student is doing in his/her ESOL class and mainstream class,” says Ms. Barney. “It could be that this student reads better than he/she can write or his/her math skills are well ahead of language skills. The IPT gives us a way to reevaluate and make instructional adjustments.”

The IPT, combined with other measures, can also be used to provide a more complete picture of a student’s English proficiency when a discrepancy arises. While the Kansas English Language Proficiency Assessment (KELPA) is required for Kansas English learners, there are times when, for whatever reason, a student cannot attain exit scores on the KELPA. “Our goal is to mainstream students as quickly as possible; however, we never want to jeopardize a student’s academic progress,” says Ms. Barney. “We feel that multiple indicators can provide a better measure of a student’s grasp of academic English.” When placement of English learners is not clear, multiple measures are used including using the IPT results, other standard measures, state assessment scores, district data, and the KELPA. “We find that the IPT is a very strong indicator of a student’s actual grasp of English, so when we need to, we use it as a critical part of evidence.”

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