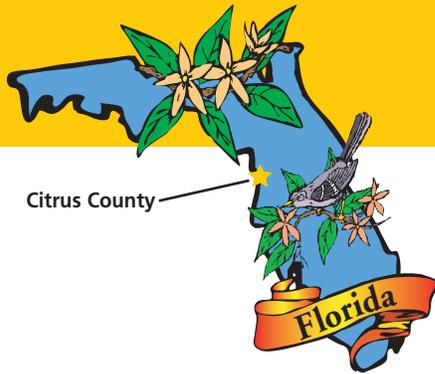


IPT Success Story

Citrus County School District



Citrus County

Florida



OVERVIEW
CHALLENGE

IPT Overcomes the Language Barrier to Help Understand Subject Knowledge

Citrus County School District in Florida does not have a large population of English language learners and consequently, cannot fund a sheltered English immersion program. Some new students have a dedicated aide to get them through the first few days of school, but the district relies primarily on individual classroom teachers to meet the needs of their English learners. Mainstreaming means that additional attention must be given to the individual needs of these students. The district relies on Ballard & Tighe's IPT® Testing System because it is quick to administer and can help inform instruction, something that former program specialist, Judy Johnson is passionate about.

Challenge

One of the challenges all teachers face is not knowing about a student's previous schooling. When there is a new student who speaks little or no English, then there is a substantial communication barrier that can make it impossible to know what the student already knows or can do. In keeping with the district's focus on individualized instruction, Citrus County School District wants to give its teachers as much information about its ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) students as possible. The district makes sure that its teachers are ESOL certified and well qualified to teach bilingual students in their mainstream classrooms. Without the right assessment tool, though, it can be very difficult to meet specific learner needs.

“The **IPT** is **perfect** for us because it can be administered in **10 or 15 minutes**, scored, and then evaluated in another **10 minutes.**”

– Judy Johnson



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SOLUTION

Solution

Citrus County School District uses IPT tests for oral proficiency, as well as reading and writing assessments for accurate ELL placement and progress evaluation. The IPT is also part of the district's three-pronged exit assessment, which includes the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and state-mandated Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment (CELLA). There are multiple measures for exit exams because the district wants to make sure students are ready to move beyond the ESOL program requirements.

Judy Johnson, who is now the assistant director at the Withlacoochee Technical Institute, still trains teachers how to use the IPT for its ability to inform instruction, something she champions around the district. "We test all our exiting students with the state-mandated CELLA, but we find that combining this measure with the IPT tests and FCAT results ensures that a student will succeed," says Mrs. Johnson. "If we find something with the IPT that suggests trouble ahead, we go back and look at that student's results more closely."

This same perspective is put to use mid-course and upon entry into the district. "The IPT is perfect for us because it can be administered in 10 or 15 minutes, scored, and then evaluated in another 10 minutes," Mrs. Johnson says. Because it is so easy to use, she encourages teachers to use the IPT to assess a student's knowledge level across all subjects, not just for English.

Mrs. Johnson advises teachers to look at the item analysis that is generated with the IPT. "The IPT report gives you an item-by-item analysis and tells you what learning level [Bloom's taxonomy] the student is at," she says. "It tells you the language and depth and cognitive skill that a student is drawing from." With that amount of information, a teacher can adjust their instruction to fill in knowledge gaps and give a new student a chance to shine. "I encourage teachers to think of positive ways to use this information too," says Mrs. Johnson.

Summary

Data is key. "With the IPT, now our teachers have a concrete profile of language ability and cognitive ability," says Mrs. Johnson. "From a test administrator's perspective, I could see that this test would give enough information to plan instruction for a month." Not only do the students get the best preparation they need to take the CELLA but they are also getting the best preparation possible to get them in sync with their peers and meet their best potential.

SUMMARY

