

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE GLOBAL JOB MARKET

Challenge:

Giving students an edge in the highly competitive global marketplace

In today's highly competitive job market, where companies operate on a global level, English language skills can make the difference between getting a good job and getting no job at all.

Schools are beginning to recognize the importance of preparing students to meet the English language needs of employers. In countries where English is not the native language, schools are finding new ways to respond to the demands of the global marketplace.

Solution:

In France, the Commission des Titres des Ingenieurs, the governing body that guides and assesses the quality of education in French engineering schools, recommends that students attain a TOEIC score of 750 before graduating. This TOEIC score provides recruiters with an objective certification of a student's level of English and assures them that the student can function at a specified level of English. Scientific and technical schools, such as EPF, like the TOEIC test because it reflects the type of English used in the work world and helps students land good jobs.

In Malaysia, Kolej Damansara Utama (KDU), a renowned college, is a firm supporter of the TOEIC test for its students. In times of economic hardship employers are more selective in who they recruit because the market becomes saturated with job applicants. KDU uses the TOEIC test to clearly demonstrate the English language competence of its students, making these students more attractive to potential employers who must decide whether an applicant meets the minimum language requirements for the job.

Result:

By incorporating the TOEIC test into their curriculum, schools are able to better prepare their students to be competitive in the global job market. These students have an edge over others who may not have English language training or an internationally recognized certification of their language skills.

Using the TOEIC test also benefits employers because it saves them time, money and effort in their recruiting process and ensures that new hires will be able to participate effectively in a global environment.



INTENSIVE ENGLISH PROGRAMS

Challenge:

Meeting student demands for a "real world" test of English

Each academic term, the International English Language Institute (IELI) at Hunter College in New York City, trains approximately 850 students representing 75 countries. This Intensive English Program is organized into five, eight-week terms a year. There are eight different English language levels, from beginner through advanced, in the program.

By 1996, the IELI was struggling with a placement process that had become unnecessarily cumbersome and inaccurate. The existing placement test had also become extremely compromised. In addition, students were much more "business minded" and demanded tests that were relevant to the "real world" and provided an international credential.

Solution:

The IELI adopted the TOEIC test in 1996. The test is used at Hunter College to place incoming students into one of the eight class levels and is also used as an exit test. The TOEIC test provides the flexibility to set and re-set learning levels and placement parameters for students so that the program can easily make any changes necessary to remain relevant in the "real world".

Result:

The TOEIC test allowed the IELI to create more homogeneous classes, reduce the number of inter-level transfers, strengthen the lower levels, and improve new student morale by providing them with a rationale for placement which they could readily understand and accept.

Use of the TOEIC test in Intensive English Programs, such as the IELI, meets a wide range of needs by providing: management of placement and/or admission into multiple-level language programs, assessment of advancement through pre- and post- testing sessions, quantitative measurement of curricular changes, foundations for certification and accreditation initiatives, enhancement of revenue, and a basis for strategic planning.



STUDENT PLACEMENT

Challenge:

Placing incoming students quickly and accurately

The University of Toronto is the largest university in Canada and a leading higher-learning institution. As part of its School of Continuing Studies, the university offers an Intensive English Program for international students. About 150 students enroll in each eight-week session, with five levels from beginner through advanced.

With so many students enrolling in each session, the Intensive English Program found that its in-house, hand-scored placement test was difficult to administer and score in a timely manner. Students complained that they were had been placed in the wrong class, so the accuracy of the in-house test was also in question.

Solution:

The University of Toronto now uses the TOEIC test because it is:

- A reliable placement test for varying levels
- Suitable for all of its programs
- Rapidly scored
- Appropriate as an exit test to measure student progress for entrance into the next level
- Internationally recognized

All incoming students are given the TOEIC test so that they can be placed into one of the school's five language levels. At the end of the session, students take the TOEIC test again, allowing them to measure their progress and provide them with a Certificate of Achievement.

Result:

Due do the accuracy of TOEIC test results, the number of student requests for class transfers has dropped dramatically compared with the in-house placement test. Students are happy to take the TOEIC test because they feel that there is less chance of being placed in the wrong class level.

The school has been able to save time, money, and resources by testing all incoming students at the same time and placing them in classes within 48 hours.

