iTEP vs. In-House English Testing

A Case Study by American Language Academy President Yuni Nguyen

After about a year of using iTEP to evaluate the English skills of the roughly 140 students at our Greensboro, NC, intensive English program, we decided to try developing our own proprietary test. We thought if it were based specifically on our curriculum, it might be more accurate for placement. We also hoped to cut costs.

Developing our own test was more time consuming and costly than we originally anticipated because we had to make different versions of the test so that students could retake the test without repeating questions, and so that students wouldn't share answers. Once the test was put into use, we discovered that it was expensive for us to administer. The test that we created was paper-based, lasted four hours, and had to be administered by one of our instructors who have master's degrees, are paid hourly, and are difficult to schedule.

iTEP was more affordable than paying our teachers to administer and grade the test we had created. We also did not find our test to be any more accurate than iTEP for placing students in our program.

> **iTEP immediately saved us money.**

We returned to iTEP after trying out several other tests. **iTEP immediately saved us money.** We found that iTEP had improved their technology and become more well-known and widely-accepted by US colleges and universities. Behind TOEFL and IELTS, I regard iTEP as the strongest brand in English testing. **Most of our incoming students are already familiar with iTEP.** Unlike the two leading English tests, iTEP is quick and flexible to administer, which again, keeps costs low. iTEP also offers superior customer service. Plus, the test results were available more quickly than ever.

Presently, we are conducting a pilot program to calibrate iTEP results to our curriculum to optimize accuracy. We plan to begin using iTEP for placement at our three other American Language Academy locations as well as our online program soon.

iTEP is solving many placement testing problems for ALA and is very cost effective. ALA will continue using iTEP in the future for all locations in the US and internationally.