

# Professional development is key to supporting districtwide initiatives

Istation customizes a program for teachers to ensure educational effectiveness for the whole child

**J**oshua Perdomo, director of English learner services and world languages for a K12 district in Illinois, shares one important goal with his team. “We want to address the whole child,” says Perdomo, who also provides professional development at Community Unit District 300, about 45 miles northwest of Chicago.

With that in mind, Perdomo includes all K5 dual-language teachers, support staff, building administrators and academic coaches in professional development for Istation Español. The district uses the computer-adaptive program for assessments, instruction and intervention of about 1,100 students.

## Customized PD

“We believe in building the capacity of our entire staff by providing them with knowledge to use the program effectively,” Perdomo says. “Istation has enabled the district to look at the whole child, and consider all of their academic abilities in both languages to fully understand how to best support them in all areas.”

Istation trainers customize professional development sessions according to District 300 goals and needs. Perdomo, whose training motto is “go slow to go fast,” spreads out professional development and leaves time for practicing new skills, so teachers are comfortable and confident before using new skills in the classroom, he says.

## Slow and steady

“We started with how to give the assessment,” Perdomo says, noting that teachers actually completed assessments to better understand what their students



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would experience each month. “Then we showed them how to interpret the data, then how to use Istation as an instructional resource within our curriculum, and then how to maximize the supports we have in our differentiated block, which we call WIN, for ‘What I Need’ time.”

Perdomo and academic coaches enhance Istation-led trainings by exploring the program on their own and sharing even more capabilities during the professional development sessions they lead.

“We strengthen professional development by providing it continuously and making sure the program is implemented correctly,” he says. “Providing teachers professional development on the various ways Istation can support the academic success of students allows teachers to best provide the support students need to be successful.”

## Team approach

It is also important, he says, to extend training to school psychologists, inter-

ventionists, principals and vice principals, and to coaches for English learning, English language arts, math and digital literacy.

“Since District 300 believes it is important for everyone to be part of the training, our entire staff sees the value in using Istation as an instructional resource,” Perdomo says. “We make it a priority, so the teachers do as well.”

This priority allows him and his team to meet their main goal, again and again. “Istation is allowing us to look at the whole child,” Perdomo says. “We see students differently and make a bigger instructional impact on them.”



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