

Blended learning for Spanish literacy intervention and instruction

Istation Español provides authentic Spanish literacy assessments, interactive lessons and more for pre-K through fifth grade

Margaret Petkiewicz says the adoption of Common Core State Standards in California created a need for a support program for teachers in kindergarten through second grade who instruct in Spanish for the San José Unified School District.

Petkiewicz, the manager for Bilingual Programs and EL Services, pre-K through 5 for San José USD, says there were resources available in English that aligned with Common Core, but the district did not have comparable Spanish-language support for its 14 schools and close to 65 bilingual classrooms, which impact 1,800 students in Two-Way Bilingual Immersion and Transitional Bilingual classrooms.

“We tried one program, which didn’t work, so then we moved into a second program,” Petkiewicz says.

The second program was Istation Español, which the district began using for the 2013-14 school year.

Istation Español provides digital lessons and face-to-face teaching strategies and tools in Spanish to support diverse instructional approaches, including small- and whole-group instruction. Istation Español features differentiated instruction and personalized learning with Istation’s seven essentials for blended learning: formative assessments, adaptive curriculum, personalized data profiles, teacher-directed lessons, school-to-home connection, professional development and proven results.

“The scope and sequence align to the curriculum augmentation in Spanish,” Petkiewicz says. “Istation Español also has a richness in diversity of the Spanish language, and it focuses on phonics and phonemic awareness.”

Explicitly designed for pre-K through 5 Spanish literacy by Spanish language educators, Istation’s Indicators of Progress (ISIP™) measure student growth with engaging, computer-adaptive diagnostic and screening programs.

“Students are seamlessly assessed once per month so we can track their progress,” Petkiewicz says. “That’s one of the features that are important to us.”

Training and implementation

Training included webinars with Q&A for teachers that focused on the available resources for Istation Español, which contains hundreds of lesson plans and automated tools that help customize instruction and support diverse teaching approaches, including small- and whole-group learning.

There is also a professional development component through the district that offers customized guidance and insight into best practices, in addition to specialists with



real-world instructional experience and technical support to optimize usage.

Results and feedback

Zoila Esquivel Moreno, an EL instructional coach for San José USD, says teachers are excited to use Istation.

“Lessons are specifically targeted for phonological awareness in Spanish, and teachers can see the comprehension of vocabulary because of the way Istation writes the lessons,” Esquivel Moreno says. “It’s easy for teachers to focus on the words that the students practice, and what teachers should be hearing.”

Bottom-line benefit

What Petkiewicz and Esquivel Moreno both say is that Istation Español is an essential component in bilingual students making significant gains in overall reading ability.

“The bottom line is that students have access to authentic Spanish and they’re applying their foundational skills in literature and informational reading, which is critical,” Petkiewicz says. “The fact that Istation has authentic Spanish, and not just translation is huge for our bilingual program.”



Istation

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