

# COMPUTERIZING THE PLACEMENT TEST FOR REMOTE STUDENT PLACEMENT

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# ENGLISH PROFICIENCY TEST

- Administered to all incoming International Students at Kansas State
- Scores place students into one of three options:
  - Full Time University
  - Part Time University / Part Time English Language Program
  - Full Time English Language Program
- The test has four parts or skills
  - Reading
  - Writing (essay)
  - Structure (grammar)
  - Listening



# ENGLISH PROFICIENCY TEST

- Is a paper and pencil test
  - Essay is written and evaluated by two raters
  - Reading and structure are multiple choice tests with prompts on page
  - Listening is a multiple choice test with an oral prompt
    - Reading, Structure, and Listening are completed on Scantron sheets and computer scored
- Each skills raw score is converted to a T-score
- Based on their total and part scores they are placed into their levels
  - Levels 136-150 are based on a total number
  - Levels 152 and 154 require all skills have a minimum score

# GO TEACHER

- Partnership with Ecuador to teach English Teachers both English and Teaching skills
- KSU is the lead institution working with four partner programs
  - All programs are required to have the same pre-/post- test
- The pre-test is used for placement decisions
- The post-test is used to evaluate student growth and program effectiveness
- The EPT was selected due to its availability and use at KSU
- The students are here for a 7 month program
  - 1 Spring and Summer semester
  - Around 300 students come with each cohort



# WHY COMPUTERIZE

- We were looking for a secure and efficient way to test at all the schools
- According to Dolan and Burling in the Handbook on Measurement, Assessment, and Evaluation in Higher Education one of the key features of a Computer Based Test (CBT) is, “increasing the efficiency of the assessment process”.
- By using a Learning Management System (LMS) we could enhance the security and have a convenient delivery mechanism
- We decided to use Kansas State Online (KSOL) to build and deliver the test
- We were able to use the original EPT questions from an existing test form
- We were then able to move to the new testing software

# BENEFITS OF A CBT

- The biggest benefits to a CBT for our uses are:
  - Security-
    - Easier to control than paper and pencil
    - Allowed KSU to maintain control of access to the test at the partners
  - Efficiency-
    - Easier than paper copies
    - Allows for remote testing with only equipment requirements
  - Scoring-
    - Faster and more efficient because computer scored
    - Exported in a usable and convertible file
  - Information Control-
    - Again allowed KSU to maintain control of the materials



# HOW WE COMPUTERIZED

- The first step was to decide what we wanted and why
  - A computerized test to make remote testing efficient and secure
  - For the Go Teacher program primarily but once we have it...
    - Late testing, special testing, special programs, etc.
- We then discussed logistics with Mediated Education
  - How we would import the questions
  - Formatting for the questions and background
  - How to design the Listening section (integrate audio or not)
  - How to design the Reading section (multiple questions on same passage)
  - Computerize the Essay portion or not?
  - Could we do the score conversion on KSOL?

# HOW WE COMPUTERIZED

- Once the logistics questions were worked out...
- We created a simple three question sample test for each skill
  - We used this to test how it worked
  - We could manipulate the scores to see if we could do a conversion
  - Trouble shoot what we might not have thought of
- We decided not to computerize the Essay at this point
- We learned we would need to export the scores for conversion in Excel
  - We did it once to make sure it would work to export a CSV to Excel
- Then the test design was ready and construction began
  - The process of importing questions, formatting, checking, and testing



# BEYOND THE LMS

- The LMS worked but...
  - Our school decided to change to a new LMS
  - The new system was not going to work...
    - Discussed with IT and Mediated Education
- We started researching testing software
  - Had to go to bid, the process took a while
- We finally got testing software
- Thus starting the whole process again...

# NEW SOFTWARE

- The Good
  - Many different question types are supported
  - New opportunities for questions types
  - Able to allow individual progress through the test
  - Allowed us to do the T-Score conversion online
  - Can develop an item bank
  - Computer Adaptive Testing could potentially happen
- The Bad
  - Not capable of all we wanted (some had to be developed)
  - Steep learning curve

# HOW TO MANAGE

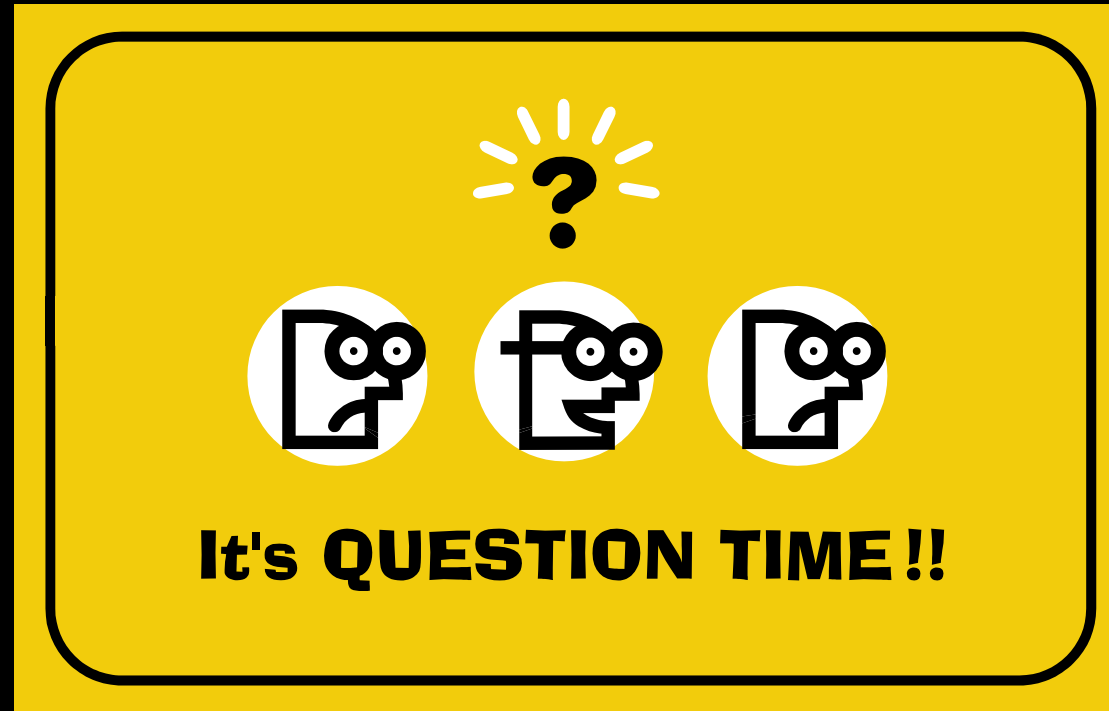
- Know why you want to make a CBT- What need does it serve?
  - Think about how you will deliver it
  - Think about how you will construct it
- Have a point person- ONE person running the project
- BE FLEXIBLE
- Have a plan
  - Make a detailed calendar of steps and plan a timeline
    - It can be changed
    - Always allow about twice the time you think you need
- Know who you can work with to get where you want to go
  - Keep a list of all people involved in the process (with contact information)



# FUTURE PLANS

- Having a CBT for Placement testing is an advantage
  - We can use it on campus for late testing
  - We can use it for special programs (like the Go Teacher program)
  - We can use it in other remote testing situations
    - This could involve testing in other countries
- The Future
  - Move to an Item Bank rather than a test Form
  - Eventually allow adaptive testing
  - Creating an online Essay and Speaking component

# QUESTIONS



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