

CASE STUDY

Agape English Language Institute

Initial Course Placement Testing



ABOUT iTEP

The International Test of English Proficiency (iTEP) was introduced in 2008 to modernize English language assessment with on-demand scheduling, 24-hour grading, and accurate test data. iTEP provides a convenient and cost-effective testing option delivered in a highly secure test center environment or remotely at-home.

iTEP offers academic testing for secondary schools and universities for both admissions and on-campus ESL programs. iTEP also offers a range of career testing used by companies around the world to determine English proficiency needed for hiring and promotion decisions. For more information see www.itepexam.com.

CASE SUMMARY

In 2016, Agape English Language Institute needed to find an English proficiency exam to assess new students as part of the initial course placement. Agape had tried multiple exams; however, none fully met their needs. The institute was looking for a new English proficiency exam that would provide comprehensive testing to help staff make informed decisions about student placement. Full assessments using traditional pencil-and-paper testing were labor-intensive, requiring hours of additional work, and were open to subjective grading, so Agape wanted an online exam that could streamline testing for Grammar, Reading, and Listening, while allowing them to continue assessing Speaking and Writing in-house.

After a thorough search and analysis of the available testing options, Agape English Language Institute decided to implement the iTEP Academic-Core as their primary English proficiency exam. The iTEP online Academic-Core exam evaluated students in Grammar, Reading, and Listening.

The results, known as the iTEP Score Reports, were comprehensive and objectively graded. Additionally, the iTEP Score Reports provided CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) equivalencies that matched Agape's course levels and made placement highly efficient.



Agape
ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

THE PROBLEM

Agape English Language Institute is an accredited private English language learning institution with campus locations in Greenville and Columbia, South Carolina, USA. The institute's primary goal is to help students move on to and succeed in a degree program at an English-speaking university. At Agape, students looking to enter an American university can improve their English skills while learning about best practices within the American education system including how to avoid plagiarism and contribute to an interactive learning environment. The institute also welcomes students seeking to improve their English skills to pursue their professional goals.

Agape primarily uses English proficiency exams for new student course placement. The institute had utilized different exams previously, including online and traditional pencil-and-paper options, but none had been ideal. Though Agape wanted to

continue performing Speaking and Writing assessments in-house, they found that manual testing and grading for the Grammar, Reading, and Listening sections were too complicated and open to subjective grading.

Agape needed an online exam that would assess students in the required sections but still thoroughly appraise students' abilities so they could be accurately placed. The institute used CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) standards to define students' English language skill levels. A student in level one courses had an equivalent CEFR rank of A1, and a student in level six courses had a C2 equivalent. Without comprehensive results, the institute would not have all the information necessary to understand students' abilities.

THE APPROACH

Agape English Language Institute needed to find an exam that would meet all their requirements and could be used for many years. The institute conducted a general search for English language placement exams and found several options. Then, Agape analyzed the exams and compared their features. One assessment exam stood out from the others: the iTEP Academic-Core.

The iTEP Academic-Core met all of Agape's requirements. First, the iTEP Academic-Core assessed students online only in Reading, Grammar, and Listening; however, should Agape ever want to add Speaking and Writing sections in the future, another version of the iTEP Academic exam was available: the iTEP Academic-Plus. Secondly, all sections of the iTEP Academic-Core were computer-graded, making the placement process more efficient and removing any subjectivity from students' results. Campus Director Veronica Palmer emphasized the importance of this feature, stating that, "Even though we may not know the students personally, there can be some subjectiveness that goes into the grading part of it. With the iTEP, it's completely objective, and that's one of the reasons why we like iTEP." Lastly, the iTEP Score Reports provided comprehensive results detailing students' abilities in each section and offered CEFR equivalencies, directly matching Agape's course levels and streamlining the placement process.

THE iTEP SOLUTION

The iTEP Academic-Core proved to be the ideal English proficiency exam for Agape English Language Institute. Since 2016, Agape has continued to use the iTEP Academic-Core as part of the initial placement process for new students. Director Palmer noted how the online iTEP exam has helped streamline student placement: "Definitely the auto-grading is very nice: the fact that we don't have to get our little bubble sheets out, and mark the scores, and count them up and stuff. It's a lot faster and more accurate."

The institute has also used the iTEP Academic-Core within their sessions as a final exam that is included within the overall class grade. Director Palmer said, "As [students] go through the session, they get grades in the class for homework, tests, projects—that kind of thing. But what we found is that sometimes a student can be a really, really good student . . . [however] they aren't actually at that level. The iTEP helps with balancing the level so that their scores aren't too high, allowing them to pass through to the next level before they should." With a satisfying performance and beneficial features, the iTEP Academic-Core will continue to be used at Agape English Language Institute for many years to come.

For information about how iTEP testing can be the ideal solution for your school or organization, contact iTEP International at info@iTEPonline.com. To learn more about Agape English Language Institute, visit the website at www.aeliusa.com.



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