

Rationale for the IDEA Oral Test in the
Intern. Teachers Alternative Certification Program

First developed by Ballard & Tighe nearly 30 years ago, the original IPT (IDEA Proficiency Test) is a series of standardized, nationally normed testing instruments for students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12. The tests are designed to accurately and quickly evaluate students' oral language, reading, and writing in English. A separate series is available to assess students' Spanish language proficiency (<http://www.nclb.ballard-tighe.com/system.html>).

All students in the IT/ACP program will be tested for oral proficiency (reading and writing if determined by directors) in both Spanish and English using the IPT (IDEA) oral language test at the 12th grade level for each language. Every English Language Learner (ELL) child in Texas public schools must take this in each grade level if the Home Language Survey (HLS) determines the student is a language minority student.

The purpose for testing in L1 and L2 is to determine the oral and linguistic abilities of candidates in each language. A bilingual teacher in Texas must truly be bilingual and having an early benchmark of oral abilities can give candidates plenty of time to work on language deficiencies if they are at a moderate level of need or for more pronounced deficiencies an individualized growth plan for program success.

The IPT (IDEA) test for the 12th grade was chosen because it is close to entry level college language ability for each language, Spanish and English. This instrument measures 12th grade students at NES (non-English speaking), LES (limited-English speaking), and FES (Fluent English speaking), these three levels are same for the Spanish version to determine non, limited, and fluent speakers.

Having this instrument to measure language abilities in both L1 and L2 will be an asset for helping candidates become successful bilingual teachers in Texas public schools. Having an intimate knowledge of IPT (IDEA) testing will also reward candidates with the ability to administer the same test in their future classrooms and be able to reflect on the importance of such a benchmark score. With data collected as a result of such administration, subsequent instructional language planning will closer match the needs of both candidates in the IT/ACP program and ELL students alike.

Sincerely,

IT/ACP Executive Directors
Carmen Cuprill-Young
William J. Kortz Jr.