

Accelerating Spanish literacy while connecting parents to schools

Istation Español's home access allows parents and teachers to collaborate for greater student success

After more than 25 years in Chicago Public Schools, Stacy Stewart understands one thing very well: Teachers need to know where their students are, before they can help students get where they need to go.

At Belmont-Cragin Elementary School, where Stewart is principal, that critical knowledge is provided by Istation Español, which has already had an impact after being implemented last year in grades K-2.

"The biggest thing for teachers is understanding who is in the room," Stewart says. "Teachers are now much more prescriptive because they have real-time data. Because of this technology and how we've leveraged it, teachers can accelerate every student's achievement better and faster than before."

Adaptive ELL interventions

Istation provides digital and in-person adaptive interventions, lessons and strategies, as well as tools to support diverse teaching practices such as small- and whole-group instruction.

Differentiated instruction and personal learning are supported by 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.

Accelerated biliteracy

At Belmont-Cragin, where 68 percent of students are English language learners, Istation Español builds on studies that show students must first master literacy in their native language be-



fore doing so in English. Therefore, the program is not a translation tool but is designed by Spanish-language educators, with all materials—including assessments—in Spanish. It also includes Spanish culture and literature.

"Once we understood key priorities and the resources available, it was very simple to leverage the technology to accelerate biliteracy in the school," Stewart says. "If it's used with fidelity, you see progress every day with students moving across tiers."

The 575-student school currently uses Istation Español in dual-language classes, where both Spanish-speaking students and non-Spanish-speaking students use it to achieve biliteracy, Stewart says.

"We have one first-grader—whose home language is not Spanish—outpacing his Spanish-speaking peers in literacy," Stewart says. "This demonstrates the opportunities that Istation Español can provide our students, whether they are native speakers or not."

Community engagement

The program has also enhanced Stewart's connection with parents, who used to recoil from technology and say, "I'm not college-educated! It's too technical!" she says.

That changed last year on Take Your Parent to School Day, one of many opportunities Stewart gives parents to be involved at Belmont-Cragin.

"We taught them how to log in to parent reports, check their student's progress and find resources to help their child at home," Stewart says. "It demystified the technology, which is important because our parents want to be part of the educational process. Istation Español helps make that possible."

