Cambridge English
Transforming Language Education

National Programme for English, Mexico

Client: Ministry of Education
Country: Mexico

Cambridge English Language Assessment has been supporting the Mexican government with its National Programme for English in Basic Education (PNIEB).

The National Programme for English in Basic Education provides a syllabus for the teaching of English in the state sector in primary and secondary schools in Mexico. The programme is designed to ensure that by the time students complete their secondary education they will have developed the necessary English language skills to successfully face the communicative challenges of the globalised world.

The syllabus is based on national and international standards, and include criteria for teacher training, the establishment of guidelines for the design and evaluation of educational materials, and the certification of English language proficiency.

In order to ensure that the programme is delivering the required objectives – particularly in relation to the standards required by students at different levels of the programme – we were asked to design and construct tests of English language that would evaluate the implementation of the PNIEB. The tests covered primary and secondary grades, and included analysis of all four language skills (Reading, Listening, Speaking and Writing).

A sample of almost 80,000 students across all grades from primary to secondary was tested. The sample was selected from almost 4 million students across 20,000 schools who are participating in the programme.

In addition to providing all test materials we also undertook to provide criteria for the selection and training of examiners, markers and invigilators for the administration of the tests, and to provide centralised training for a group of trainers, designed to be cascaded down through the network to ensure successful implementation of the tests.

We provided a full report on the implementation of the tests, including a comparison of the standards in Mexico with the international standards of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

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