



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Mark Slitt, Harcourt Assessment
210.339.5399

Leslie Eicher, APR, at 314.965.1776 or
Leslie@EicherCommunications.com

HARCOURT ASSESSMENT AND CO-NECT TEAM UP IN ARIZONA WITH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SOLUTION FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Education Department-Approved Program Will Help Arizona School Districts Meet New State Requirements for Professional Development

SAN ANTONIO, Texas and CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – Leading test publisher Harcourt Assessment Inc., and Co-nect, the leading provider of professional development solutions, have teamed up to create a 15-hour professional development program for Arizona educators of English language learners in grades K – 12. The program, known as ELL PD Plus™ for Arizona, has been approved by Arizona's Department of Education as professional development for Arizona's Structured English Immersion (SEI) Endorsement.

Combining the power of Harcourt's Stanford English Language Proficiency Test (Stanford ELP) with Co-nect's proven data-driven approach to improving instruction, ELL PD Plus for Arizona will help districts comply with a new state requirement that ELL teachers complete 15 hours of professional development by August 2006.

English language learners are expected to represent 25 percent of all students in grades K – 12 nationwide in the next five years, and while the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires schools to disaggregate results for this rapidly growing population, ten percent of educators responsible for teaching these students have no formal training.

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ELL PD Plus will guide educators as they administer the Stanford ELP, analyze data and make differentiated instructional choices that lead to improved student outcomes. The state requires that Arizona school districts use Stanford ELP to assess the language proficiency of English language learners.

“Harcourt’s Stanford ELP is a proven assessment that educators can use to measure how well their English language learners comprehend and express themselves in English,” said Don Barfield, vice president of educational products for Harcourt Assessment. “And now, with ELL PD Plus, developed in collaboration with Co-nect, we can help ELL teachers acquire the skills they need to administer the test appropriately and help their students succeed.”

“It’s one thing to employ a research-based assessment for English language learners. It’s another to have the professional development and support so that teachers can make good decisions, differentiate instruction, and employ best practice strategies for this very important student population,” said Andrew Skoler, president and CEO of Co-nect. “The collaboration between Co-nect and Harcourt will provide school districts with a first-of-its-kind solution that addresses the specific needs of this critical sub-group and its teachers.”

ELL PD Plus starts with Harcourt’s Stanford ELP, already the leading standards-based assessment for students learning English, and marries it with Co-nect’s proven approach to delivering professional development. The program is managed and delivered through Co-nect’s professional development Web portal.

Customized for Arizona ELL educators and students, ELL PD Plus includes online courses in best practices, such as language acquisition theory, multicultural awareness and sensitivity, integrating Arizona ELL proficiency standards into classroom instruction, qualitative and quantitative ongoing language assessment, as well as ELL and content area instruction.

The end solution will offer districts an integrated set of research-based assessment, diagnostics and reporting, professional development, and management tools that support administrators and teachers in their efforts to define, measure, and continuously improve the quality of ELL instruction districtwide.

About the Stanford ELP

Launched in 2003, Stanford ELP enables educators to measure how well English language learners comprehend and express themselves in English, and is used to determine student placement and track student progress. Stanford ELP was the first assessment of its kind to fully meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act by testing all of the necessary language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing – and comprehension. Stanford ELP also measures proficiency in both academic and social language usage. The state of Arizona requires its school districts to use Stanford ELP to assess the language proficiency of English language learners.

About Harcourt Assessment, Inc.

Harcourt Assessment (www.harcourtassessment.com) is a leading provider of high-quality assessment instruments and testing programs. Its educational products include the English-language Stanford Achievement Test Series and the new, third edition of its Spanish-language Aprenda[®] achievement test. The company is a unit of Harcourt Education, which is the global education brand of Reed Elsevier Group plc (NYSE: RUK and ENL). Reed Elsevier is a world-leading publisher and information provider operating in the science and medical, legal, education and business-to-business industry sectors.

About Co-nect

Co-nect (www.co-nect.net) is a leading provider of data-driven, K–12 professional development solutions focused on improving the quality of classroom instruction district-wide. Co-nect delivers training, tools, and resources to solve critical issues such as whole school improvement, data-informed decision-making, technology integration, and early reading failure. Since 1992, Co-nect has been a leader in improving instructional quality – implementing data-informed solutions in over 33 states. Research-based programs are delivered through a national network of educational consultants who provide face-to-face training supported by an integrated suite of online professional development, assessment tools, and curricular resources.