



Region 16 Educational Service Center

It's All Smiles at Region 16 ESC

Region 16 Educational Service Center in Amarillo, Texas supports the largest school district in the state, covering the entire panhandle area. Region 16 has 10 sites that offer free GED and ESL classes to over 1300 students a year, with over three-fourths of them receiving education at the Amarillo center.

The majority of students utilizing Region 16's services are in their early twenties, working towards their GED to improve their career choices. The program provides three levels of GED instruction in 11 week classes, with as many as 40 students in each class.

When students first enter the program, they are given a baseline test that places them in the class level they need. During the learning process, they are periodically tested with the Wonderlic General Assessment of Instructional Needs (GAIN)® basic skills test to evaluate their progress. The GAIN report allows the school to group students with similar learning needs to accelerate their education.

Ruth Richburg, ABE Specialist for Region 16 ESC, loves what the GAIN report does for the students. "The report is very specific and very well laid out. It's so easy for the students to understand."

The two-page GAIN report graphically displays the learner's current NRS Educational Functioning Level (EFL), comparisons between pre and post test results, and scale score comparisons. It also provides detailed instructional needs that pinpoint the exact areas each student needs to focus on.

An unexpected benefit GAIN is bringing to the students is providing them with computer experience. Region 16 administers

the test via Wonderlic Online, which launches and scores the tests for each student with a few mouse clicks, and stores the results in an easy to use database.

"Today, a person can't even apply for a job without having to do an online application," Ruth says. "Many of the students have computer phobia. They don't have soft skills. To be able to get comfortable taking a test on a computer and do well is a skill that will change their life."

No More 16 Hour Days

GAIN is also providing benefits to the Region 16 teachers and staff. Testing day was usually a 16 hour marathon, where teachers administered and graded the locator tests, assigned levels, and then administered the actual test.

Now, the staff at Region 16 ESD is able to test the students and receive immediate results, allowing them to work with more students, and get them into their classes much faster.

Not only does GAIN save time on testing day, it saves time throughout the course of a student's learning cycle. Compiling data and tracking progress for 1000 students was a very manual, laborious process. Now that the test results are stored in Wonderlic Online, it's a simple process for teachers to pull up a student's reports as they move through the GED program. They are also more confident in the scores, since GAIN removes the possibility of human error.

"GAIN gives our students the tools they need to get their GED much faster," states Ruth. "We never hesitate to tell others about the positive impact it's had on our program and our students. GAIN makes me smile."

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