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## Introduction

Immigrant students have been linguistically and culturally disadvantaged by recent accountability systems (Jaffe-Walter, 2008). Recent school accountability systems often rely heavily on standardized test scores to make determinations about student learning, teacher effectiveness, and school success, yet neglect to consider other important variables (O'Neil, 2016). Those critical of these accountability systems argue that an unbalanced reliance on standardized tests has unintended consequences. For example, when teachers feel pressure to *[illegible]*, or adapt their teaching practices so their students can perform well on high-stakes assessments, they have less time to teach other content areas not explicitly tested (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Carnoy, Elmore, & Siskin, 2003; Darling-Hammond & Adamson, 2014; Darling-Hammond, Ancess, & Falk, 1995). This type of accountability system has a disproportionately negative impact on immigrant students and English learners (ELs) (Amrein & Berliner,

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2002; Dabach, 2014; Jaffe-Walter, 2016; Valenzuela, 1999).

Under the most recent policy of school accountability, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), schools can incorporate assessments other than standardized tests in their accountabil-

of earning a diploma because of an increased reliance on high-stakes exit exams nationwide

teacher and the student mentee. The logic behind this rigor is to help guide IHS students in their written language development and oral presentation skills. Each adult in the school mentors 3 to 6 students weekly. The relationship between mentor and mentee can last from 1 to 3 years, depending on when the student begins working on PBATs and when he or she graduates. The mentorship begins when a content teacher identifies a student's high-quality class project that can be refined and made *a a* Then, the mentor and mentee work through up to six additional drafts of the article to ensure it meets the rubric outcomes. Teachers norm and standardize the rubrics at the school level and then send a representative teacher to work with teachers from 15 other schools in the Internationals network to continue the process. To graduate, students must write essays of 6 to 15 pages in four content areas and orally defend each of them. They must also write personal statements of 1 to 3 pages, complete a semester-long internship, and create a native language project.

In contrast to the time and effort spent at IHS to prepare students for the PBAT, teachers spend much less time preparing students for an English language arts (ELA) exit exam. The exam includes a multiple-choice section based on readings and two essays: one that asks students to make an argument on an issue and one that asks them to identify and explain literary elements from readings. At IHS, the perception is that the PBAT preparation process more than prepares students for the exit exam.

Students often fail the test several times, but this does not concern teachers and administrators. One teacher explained that the it is not test preparation that is credited for higher pass rates later in the year, but that students are "

tion, and what we do in class.

You can'

speaking publically and defending arguments in English. One student explained: The is be In the you have to present what you learned in school, in class. With the exam, they going ask a question about something you never learned about. With the you got a chance. A well-designed proje set clear expect tions for stude IHS has develo rubrics for each proje to stande expect for both stude and teachers. Guided by these rubrics, teachers at IHS work with discipline teams to develop proje before sharing them with other teachers in the school or the stude This allows teachers to e peer feedback before beginning a project with students.

Students depict the exam as a guessing game and the as a rigorous but fair process. One fifth-year senio who did graduat on tim due to incomplete PBA sti de the PBATs as

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their teaching, unlike in other schools

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The teachers at IHS embr spendi more time on the PBAT and limit time dedica

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because Iid it all on th comte. They asked

> me, "Now do it on your own, without the computer." I got to the graphing part and got lost. So, I failed the presentation part. I had to present again to show that I knew how to do the calculations.

The oral presentation of a PBAT can result in a passing grade or a delineation of [illegible] on either the written or oral component of the assessment. When this occurs, the student and mentor go back to work to incorporate feedback from a panel of three teachers. This cycle of revision and feedback helps students develop both their content knowledge and written and oral language skills. Needing to make revisions on a PBAT does not feel punitive or confusing to students, like a failing grade on the exit exam might. Instead, it is an indicator of their mastery of a topic at a particular moment in time.

### Teaching Content and Language Simultaneously: "Trying to Find that Balance in My Teaching"

Given the PBAT assessment's content and language requirements, every teacher at IHS is both a language and content teacher. The approaches teachers take to teaching English include scaffolding strategies such as delivering short, simple instructions multiple times and projecting instructions on the classroom wall. Students with more advanced English skills are asked to translate instructions for other students. In the 9th- and 10th-grade, the process is like "watching paint dry," remarked one teacher, "but it works." The teacher went on to say that:

> I used to be like, how are they ever going to learn this stuff if we don't teach them English first. In my first few years, I really pushed to teach them more grammar, but after 6 years of watching the process, I am a believer. They actually do learn the content and the language at the same time. It seems slower, but it is actually faster in the end.

One teacher explained that it could take several years to develop projects that accomplish both content and language goals well. New teachers, many who reported feeling overwhelmed when first asked to teach content and language simultaneously, are often assigned mentor teachers who provide curriculum and project plans so they can "focus on being good teachers." When prompted to describe the process of adapting instruction to meet the PBAT requirements, one teacher stated:

> I have definitely cut back on content. I think my struggle as a history teacher is that they are going to college; they are not native to this country, and I worry that they are at a disadvantage not knowing what the Great Depression was about. But now with the PBAT are they going in more prepared? Knowing what a thesis is? What arguments are? How to cite their sources? How to write an MLA page? Yes. And do they need to

against an escalating cycle of peer victimization. *[illegible]*, *35*, 94–101. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.35.1.94

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**Additional Resources**

1. **Barlowe, A. & Cook, A. (2016) Putting the focus on student engagement. *American Ed ca or*, 4-12. Retrieved from https://www.aft.org/ae/spring2016/barlowe-and-cook**
   This article examines how parents in some schools are opting out of standardized tests and calling for more responsive assessments for their children. The authors provide evidence of how one network of schools has been developing performance assessments in response to this perceived need and provides examples of the types of rubrics used to grade performance assessments.
2. **Hauser, B. (2011). *The ne kids: Big dreams and bra e jo rne s a a high school for immigran eens*. New York, NY: Atria Books.**
   This book provides a rich description of a school very similar to the one described in this article. It provides insight into the lives of immigrant teenagers and the responsive nature of the school. This narrative demonstrates how a school can be responsive to both students' social emotional and academic needs. When these responsive components are in place, responsive assessment is a natural next step.
3. **Snow, C. (2004). The four spokes of the second language learning wheel. In O. Santa Anna (Ed.), *Tong e- ied: The li es of m l iling al children in p blic ed ca ion* (pp. 214-220). Landham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.**
   This chapter, written for educators, provides evidence and rational for usingal for

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