

**BEST-PLUS Training**  
**Thursday May 27, 2004**  
**Office of Public Instruction Training Room**  
**Helena, Montana**

Who: EL/CIVICS Providers  
ESL Providers  
Others interested in computer based ESL assessment

Montana EL/CIVICS providers and other ABLE programs that regularly serve ESL populations will transition to use of the BEST-PLUS to assess ESL students. This is an important transition, as it allows for more complete and accurate assessment of the ESL population, and increases the level and gain measurement capabilities, particularly for high functioning ESL participants. This is an important and necessary transition for Montana, as it will allow us to actually show performance for High Advanced ESL, which we have not been able to do up to now.

Lynda Terrill from the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) will conduct this training. Training will take place in the OPI Training Room, 1227 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Helena. Training times are 9:00 to 3:00. Costs to attend the training will be the responsibility of the local program. You cannot transition to BEST-PLUS without training. There is no charge to attend.

To register contact Carol Flynn at 406-444-1691, or at [cflynn@state.mt.us](mailto:cflynn@state.mt.us) no later than Friday, May 21, 2004. Space is limited.

The following information was prepared by Terry Kelley, Missoula ABLE ESL Instructor and co-coordinator of the MT EL/CIVICS Network:

The BEST -- Plus debuted in March 2003. The Test Administrator Guide was published in July 2003. The assessment is still an individually administered face-to-face oral scripted interview. The BEST- Plus is available in two versions. The computer-adaptive version is based on Item Response Theory (IRT) and is administered using a computer. The IRT programming selects the subsequent test question for a student based on the student's previous response and the corresponding test administrator score for that item. Questions, then, are assigned different levels of difficulty within a given underlying language competence area. The BEST - Plus also includes community and community involvement as a new thematic component which relates to E/L Civics curricula. The total test item pool consists of approximately 1000 items. The scoring rubric is different from the old paper

BEST. The new rubric includes Listening Comprehension, Communication and Language Complexity. The latter is the new assessment theme and is scored on a range of 0 to 4.

In the print version of the test, a locator determines the level of test items (Level 1, 2 or 3) that will be appropriate for a given student. The items are arranged in fixed-form levels. The administrator asks the student each item of the appropriate level test and hand-scores the student's responses using the same rubric as with the computer-adaptive version of the test. The raw test scores are entered into a companion computer software program that generates a scale score along with an individual report. No, you can't escape using a computer, so there would be no reason to use the paper version. The Test Administrator Guide, which you receive and use at a BEST – Plus training, includes all the software you will need.

The BEST – Plus system has the following capabilities – multiple-site student rosters, student data management, report generation and data transfer. One of the advantages of the BEST – Plus is that scoring now corresponds to SPLs 1 through 10.