The Challenge
Assess and Monitor the Progress of Mississippi Students in Core Academic Areas
The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) wanted to develop an online statewide program that would allow teachers to assess student performance in math, reading/language arts, science, social studies and writing and receive immediate results that could be used to drive instruction. The MDE envisioned a system that would provide online reports at multiple levels to track student performance, allow administrators to create their own tests and/or content, permit both paper and pencil and online test delivery modes, and allow districts to create benchmark assessments.

The MDE also wanted the ability to import external scores from high-stakes statewide assessments so administrators would have a comprehensive overview of student ability level at the individual, class, building, district and state levels.

The Solution
The Mississippi Student Progress Monitoring System™
The MDE engaged Vantage Learning to provide a customized version of the Student Progress Monitoring System™ (SPMS) that is aligned to the Mississippi Curriculum Framework Competencies and Objectives for grades 1-12.

Mississippi school administrators can use either the extensive item bank within SPMS that contains more than 40,000 test questions aligned to Mississippi state standards or create their own items to develop customized benchmark assessments for their district in order to gain valuable information on student achievement in key academic areas, while teachers can construct either online or paper homework assignments, quizzes or tests to measure student progress. Audio items in math and reading/language arts are available for younger students to assist in skill assessment.

Flexible test delivery options allow districts to use the method that best matches their technological infrastructure; assessments can be delivered over the Internet or via paper tests with answer sheets that can be scanned and the data uploaded into the SPMS database for scoring that is almost as fast as online testing.

Powerful reporting tools help educators track, monitor, and disaggregate data by various demographic categories at the class, school, and district levels, allowing...
teachers and administrators to learn at a glance whether their students are mastering key objectives. In addition, educators can compare student performance to high-stakes test scores and use this data to better prepare their students for upcoming statewide assessment.

To enhance educators’ use of SPMS, Vantage Learning offers a comprehensive professional development program designed to effectively implement this powerful tool and integrate its use into the curriculum. The program ranges from workshops that introduce teachers and administrators to the basics of getting started to a series of comprehensive sessions that build connections between curriculum, assessment, instruction and SPMS. For assistance with instructional planning, educators can also search for, create, and share teaching resources such as lesson plans, learning activities, templates and forms within the Resources/Tools module of the program.

The Result
The Ability to Measure Student Progress over Time and Conduct Targeted Intervention Strategies
Since the Mississippi SPMS became operational in 2004, over two-thirds of the districts throughout the state have used the program. This translates to more than 270,000 students using SPMS.

The immediate feedback on student performance supplies educators with the data they need to proactively identify student skill levels and provide timely instructional intervention, as well as valuable information on student performance over time. Teachers can use the immediate feedback on student ability to tailor instruction to students’ needs, whether class-wide, for small groups or for individuals. As one instructor has noted, “I go in and choose the objectives I have taught and the kids take a test on it. It lets me know if the kids have mastered these skills, if I need to re-teach or if they are ready to move on.”

Getting Started
• Visit www.ms-spms.com for more information
• Attend a regularly scheduled training academy about the Mississippi SPMS: for more information about professional development offerings for the Mississippi SPMS, please visit www.vantagelearning.com/professionalServices/spms.html

About Vantage Learning
Delivering more than 146 million online test transactions last year, Vantage Learning is recognized as the leader in cost-effective, high volume, secure, scalable online assessment and instructional programs for K-12 and higher education. Leveraging technology such as artificial intelligence, natural language understanding, and web-based learning objects, Vantage provides educators with high-quality tools and resources that motivate students to learn and that create meaningful interactions between students, parents and teachers.

Acknowledged by industry leaders as the gold standard for scoring quality, consistency, reliability, and scalability of automated essay scoring using the patented IntelliMetric™ engine, Vantage Learning has received accolades ranging from the prestigious CODIE Award for best instructional technology to recognition by Eduventures as one of the eight most innovative educational technology companies.