
3B

Action

Educator Preparation Committee

Proposed Addition to the Alternative World Language Assessment Process

Executive Summary: This agenda item proposes an addition to the Alternative World Language Assessment Process to address the situation of the lowest incidence world languages.

Policy Question: Does the Commission wish to amend the current Alternative World Language Assessment Process to address the situation of the lowest incidence world languages?

Recommended Action: That the Commission approve amending the Alternative World Language Assessment Process as described in this agenda item.

Presenter: Phyllis Jacobson, Administrator, Professional Services Division

Strategic Plan Goal

II. Program Quality and Accountability

- a) Develop and maintain rigorous, meaningful, and relevant standards that drive program quality and effectiveness for the preparation of the education workforce and are responsive to the needs of California's diverse student population.

August 2015

Proposed Addition to the Alternative World Language Assessment Process

Introduction

This agenda item presents a proposed addition to the Alternative World Language Assessment Process initially developed and adopted by the Commission in 2007 (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2007-10/2007-10-3G.pdf>) and subsequently updated in February 2012 (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/notices/coded/2012/1204.pdf>). The proposed addition addresses the unique situation of the lowest incidence world languages for which there is only a single candidate or a very small number of candidates such that the local language skills assessment option prescribed in the adopted subject matter competency assessment process may not be feasible to implement.

Background

The Alternative World Language Assessment Process was adopted by the Commission to address the situation where there were candidates who needed to meet the subject matter competency requirement for a particular lower incidence World Language but for which there was neither an approved subject matter program nor an existing CSET available and the number of candidates was not sufficient to warrant developing and maintaining a CSET subject matter assessment for that particular lower incidence World Language. The cost for developing and maintaining a new CSET World Language examination would be approximately \$50,000.

The current Alternative Language Assessment policy requires the candidate to complete two assessments, as follows:

Assessment 1: A standardized assessment of the domains of General Linguistics, Linguistics of the Target Language, Literacy and Cultural Texts and Traditions, and Cultural Analysis and Comparisons. This assessment was developed by the Commission using existing items from the World Language item bank. Candidates respond to the questions, which are all constructed response, relative to the respective low incidence language and culture for which they are seeking the credential. This standardized assessment is used for all low-incidence languages (currently Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, and Portuguese). This CSET subtest is administered and scored by the Commission's CSET contractor, the Evaluation Systems group of Pearson. Candidates register for this CSET subtest with Pearson using the regular examinations registration process through the Commission's Examinations website. This subtest can potentially accommodate additional low incidence World Languages as needed.

Assessment 2: A locally-developed integrated language skills assessment of the candidate's listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in the target language of the

credential sought. Local agencies and institutions associated with this language and culture may apply to the Commission to be an authorized alternative language skills assessor agency, and the agency/institution receives technical assistance from Commission staff for the development and subsequent administration and scoring of an acceptable language skills examination that addresses the same skills as the CSET language skills subtest. The passing standard for the locally-developed language skills examination is the same as for the CSET for the particular type of language (e.g., the Advanced Low level on the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) scale for a modern Western language, or the Intermediate High level on the ACTFL scale for a non-Western, non-English alphabet language).

There is presently one candidate for a Single Subject Credential in Turkish who needs to meet the subject matter competency requirement in order to clear his credential. Given that there is only one such candidate at the moment but there may be more in the future, and given that it is unlikely for a Turkish language or cultural institution/agency to step forward in the immediate future to develop an integrated Turkish language skills assessment, staff is proposing an option for the local language skills assessment that could apply, if approved by the Commission, to situations like these. Staff has also recently received an inquiry about addressing the subject matter competency requirement for Greek. Staff notes that the preference would continue to be for supporting the development of a local language skills assessment, but given the unlikelihood of this occurring for the lowest incidence languages, staff suggests that it would be appropriate to expand the current policy to include addressing situations like these to meet the individual needs of candidates and of district/school employers.

Proposed Addition to the Current Alternative Language Skills Assessment Process

Staff proposes that for the lowest incidence World Languages where the local language skills assessment development and implementation process is not feasible due to a lack of viable institutions/agencies available to develop a language skills assessment that the following assessments be implemented as needed:

Assessment 1: A standardized assessment of the domains of General Linguistics, Linguistics of the Target Language, Literacy and Cultural Texts and Traditions, and Cultural Analysis and Comparisons. This would continue to be the same assessment as described above that is now used for all candidates for a low incidence World Language credential. As indicated above, candidates respond to the questions, which are all constructed response, relative to the respective low incidence language and culture for which they are seeking the credential. This CSET subtest is administered and scored by the Commission's CSET contractor, the Evaluation Systems group of Pearson. Candidates register for this CSET subtest with Pearson using the regular examinations registration process through the Commission's Examinations website.

Assessment 2: A standardized assessment of the candidate's integrated listening and speaking language skills using the "Oral Proficiency Interview" (OPI) assessment developed and administered by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign

Languages. The OPI is widely respected in the World Language field and is a valid and reliable standardized assessment. Although this assessment does not directly measure the candidate's reading and writing skills in the target language, it does present what staff suggests could be a viable alternative that provides a potentially acceptable assurance that the candidate does have appropriate language skills in the target language being assessed. As the Commission's current passing standard for all of the World Language CSET examinations is based on ACTFL proficiency levels, using the OPI whose scoring system is anchored in the same ACTFL proficiency levels as the CSET and the locally-developed language skills assessment would be consistent with Commission practice relative to ACTFL standards. The recommended passing standard for the OPI would be the same as for the CSET in terms of the minimum ACTFL proficiency level that would need to be met, depending on the type of language as described above.

Further information about the OPI is provided below.

The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) Assessment

The information below about the OPI is taken from the ACTFL website at <http://www.actfl.org/professional-development/certified-proficiency-testing-program/testing-proficiency>.

The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview, or ACTFL OPI as it is often called, is a standardized procedure for the global assessment of functional speaking ability. It is a face-to-face or telephonic interview between a certified ACTFL tester and an examinee that determines how well a person speaks a language by comparing his or her performance of specific communication tasks with the criteria for each of ten proficiency levels described in the [ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Speaking](#). The ten proficiency levels are:

Superior	Intermediate Mid
Advanced High	Intermediate Low
Advanced Mid	Novice High
Advanced Low	Novice Mid
Intermediate High	Novice Low

Since the ACTFL OPI is an assessment of functional speaking ability, independent of any specific curriculum, it is irrelevant when, where, why and under what conditions the candidate acquired his/her speaking ability in the language.

The ACTFL OPI takes the form of a carefully structured conversation between a trained and certified interviewer and the person whose speaking proficiency is being assessed. The interview is interactive and continuously adapts to the speaking abilities of the individual being tested. The

topics that are discussed during the interview are based on the interests and experiences of the test candidate.

Through a series of personalized questions, the interviewer elicits from the test candidate examples of his or her ability to handle the communication tasks specified for each level of proficiency in order to establish a clear 'floor' and 'ceiling' of consistent functional ability. Often candidates are asked to take part in a role-play. This task provides the opportunity for linguistic functions not easily elicited through the conversational format.

See more at: <http://www.actfl.org/professional-development/certified-proficiency-testing-program/testing-proficiency#sthash.IFZ7fuex.dpuf>.

TESTING AND RATING PROCEDURE

ACTFL OPIs are conducted and rated by ACTFL certified proficiency testers. Each interview is tape recorded and rated by one or more certified testers. Advisory OPI Ratings are assigned to those OPIs conducted within a tester's own academic institution for internal purposes. Official ACTFL OPI ratings are assigned to those OPIs conducted under the supervision of the ACTFL Testing Office. Each Official OPI is blindly rated by a second certified tester. When a final rating is assigned, an ACTFL OPI Certificate is issued. The terms 'ACTFL OPI', 'Official ACTFL OPI', and the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview protocol are the property of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages and their use is restricted to those purposes intended by ACTFL.

The cost of the OPI is \$139. Candidates register through the ACTFL contractor's website and their results can be sent to the Commission through the ACTFL contractor and/or an official copy can be provided by the candidate.

The OPI is currently available for several very low incidence languages, including Turkish, Greek, Haitian Creole, Polish, Urdu, Thai, and Swahili.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission adopt the proposed addition to the Alternative Language Assessment process as described above to address the language skills subject matter competency assessment for the lowest incidence World Languages.