



**ACTFL**  
Language Connects

# **ACTFL's innovations in assessment and professional learning: How our priorities guide our work**

Interagency Language Roundtable  
June 2022

*Howie Berman, MA, CAE*

*Meg Malone, PhD*

*Thomas Wagener, PhD*



# Session Agenda

- About ACTFL
- ACTFL's five strategic plan pillars
- Early pandemic adjustments: Outreach and professional learning
- Pivoting to virtual assessment
- Working with partners
- Future directions

# Session Goals

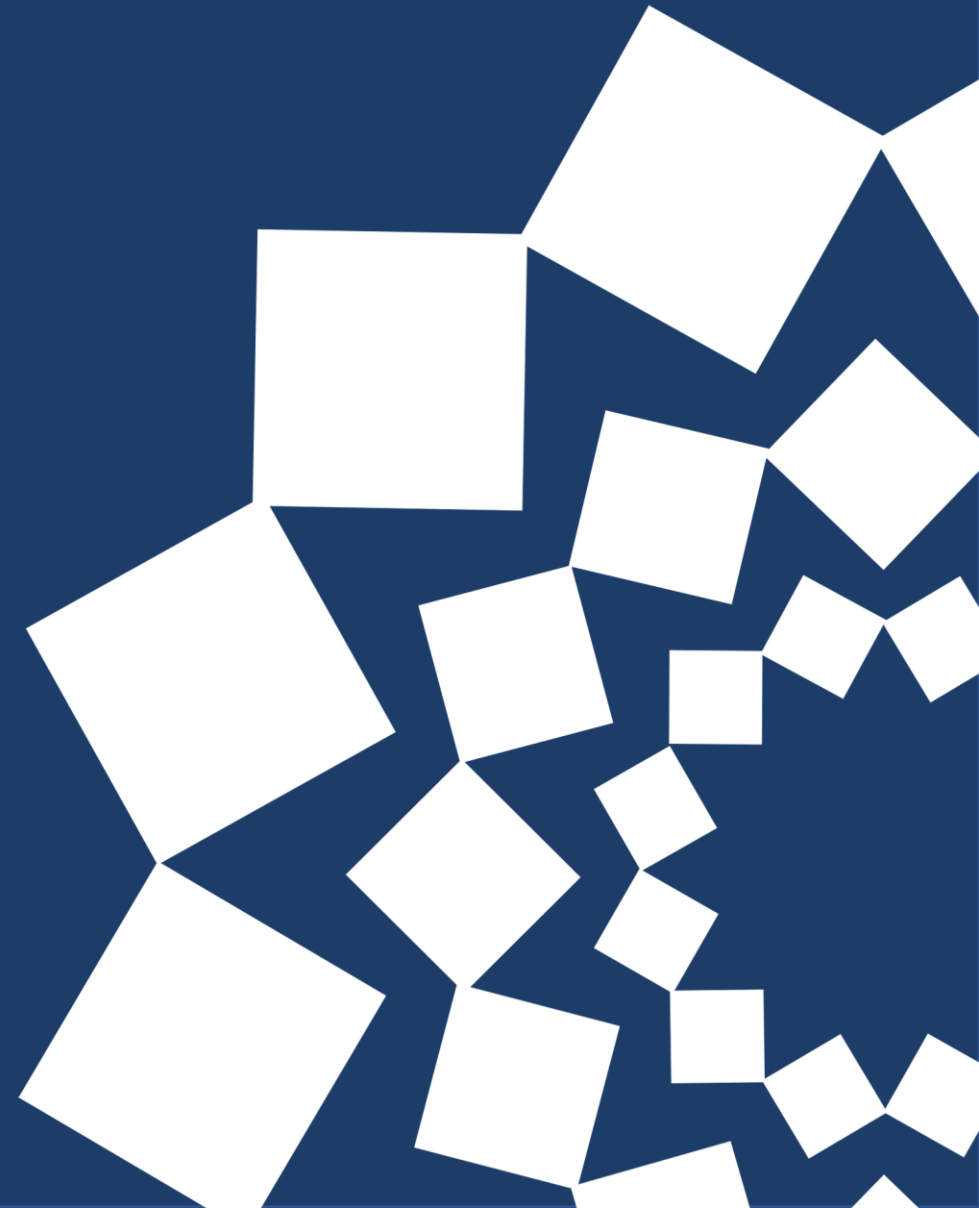
At the end of the session, participants will:

- Understand ACTFL's mission.
- Be familiar with ACTFL's five pillars.
- Recognize how ACTFL innovated to meet the needs of our field during the pandemic.
- Identify ways ACTFL will continue to innovate into the future.

# About ACTFL

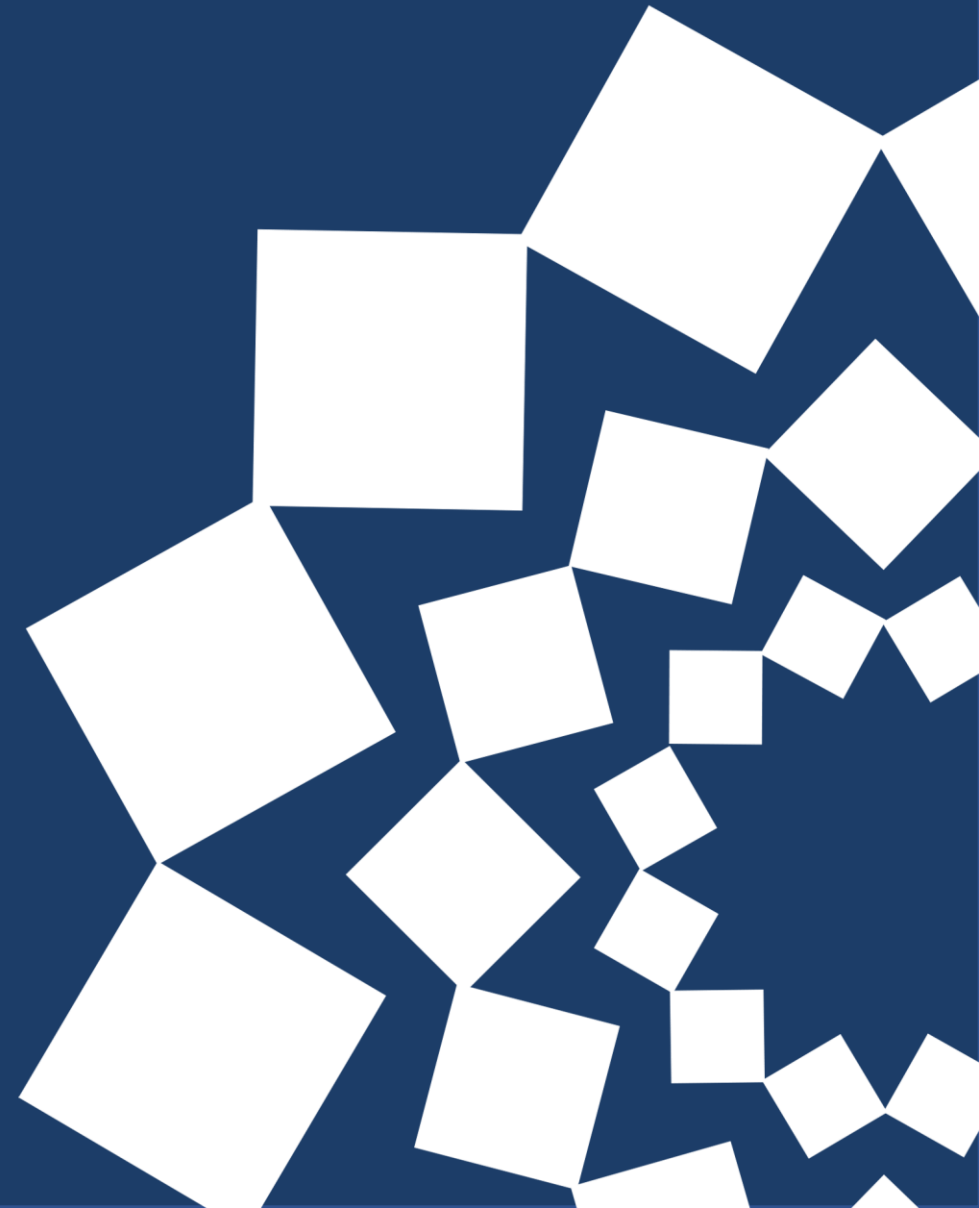
# ACTFL's Mission

*To provide vision,  
leadership, and support for  
quality teaching and  
learning of languages*



# ACTFL's Vision

*ACTFL envisions an interconnected world where everyone benefits from and values a multilingual and multicultural education.*



# Who We Are

Educators, students, and administrators representing preK-20, government, industry, community, and non-profit sectors



# Who We Are

- 45% of members have been members for less than five years, 43% for 6-20 years, and 12% for more than 20 years.
- 20% of our members identify as “early career”, 45% as “mid-career”, and 26% as “late-career”.
- About 65% of our members teach in K-12 settings, 48% in Higher Ed, 4% in government/industry/business, and 3% in community/weekend schools.

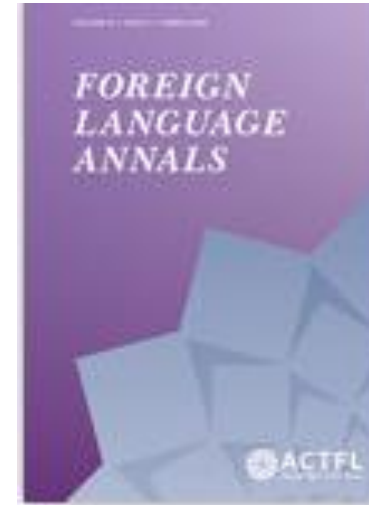
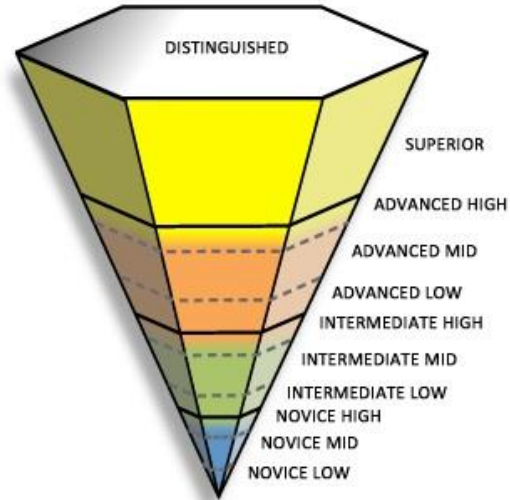


# What We're Known For



## WORLD-READINESS STANDARDS FOR LEARNING LANGUAGES

GOAL AREAS	STANDARDS		
<b>COMMUNICATION</b> Communicate effectively in more than one language in order to function in a variety of situations and for multiple purposes	<b>Interpersonal Communication:</b> Learners interact and negotiate meaning in spoken, signed, or written conversations to share information, reactions, feelings, and opinions.	<b>Interpretive Communication:</b> Learners understand, interpret, and analyze what is heard, read, or viewed on a variety of topics.	<b>Presentational Communication:</b> Learners present information, concepts, and ideas to inform, explain, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics using appropriate media and adapting to various audiences of listeners, readers, or viewers.
<b>CULTURES</b> Interact with cultural competence and understanding	<b>Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives:</b> Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied.	<b>Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives:</b> Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied.	
<b>CONNECTIONS</b> Connect with other disciplines and acquire information and diverse perspectives in order to use the language to function in academic and career-related situations	<b>Making Connections:</b> Learners build, reinforce, and expand their knowledge of other disciplines while using the language to develop critical thinking and to solve problems creatively.	<b>Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives:</b> Learners access and evaluate information and diverse perspectives that are available through the language and its cultures.	
<b>COMPARISONS</b> Develop insight into the nature of language and culture in order to interact with cultural competence	<b>Language Comparisons:</b> Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.	<b>Cultural Comparisons:</b> Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.	
<b>COMMUNITIES</b> Communicate and interact with cultural competence in order to participate in multilingual communities of home and around the world	<b>School and Global Communities:</b> Learners use the language both within and beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate in their community and the globalized world.	<b>Lifelong Learning:</b> Learners set goals and reflect on their progress in using languages for enjoyment, enrichment, and advancement.	



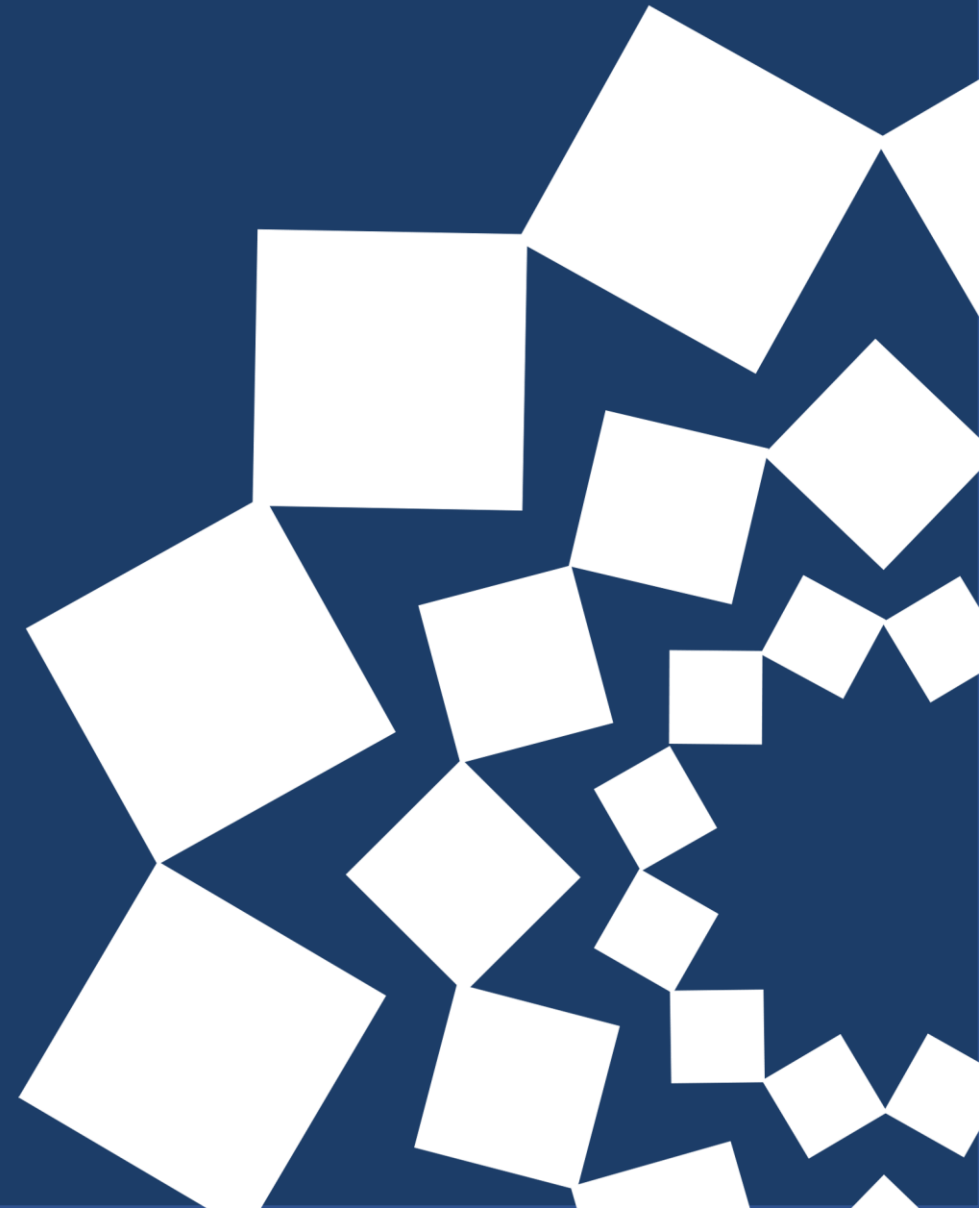
**ACTFL 2022**  
**BOSTON**  
**NOVEMBER 18-20**



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# ACTFL's Strategic Plan



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**Advocacy & Outreach**

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**Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion**

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**Professional Learning**

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**Research**

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**Teacher Recruitment & Retention**

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# **ACTFL Strategic Plan**

# Reflection

- What challenges do the virtual learning present in aligning ACTFL's work to these pillars?
- What guidance do the pillars provide for adjusting for the needs of the field?
- How can the pillars guide our ongoing work?

# Early Pandemic Adjustments: Outreach and Professional Learning

# The world context in 2020

- Changing information
- Confusing data
- Fear
- Lack of precedence
- Unknown outcomes
- Racial violence/nationwide protests
- Political unrest

# The learning context in 2020

- **In-person learning mostly halted**
  - Universities tended to close for the semester
  - Public K-12 closed for weeks with updates
  - Government language teaching went online
  - Access to physical materials limited
  - Access to in-person resources limited
- **Classes became virtual with little warning**
  - Instructor limitations
  - Student limitations
  - Administrative frustration and challenges

# The learning context in 2020

- **Language instruction moved online**
  - Shifting constructs
  - New expectations
- **At all learning levels: assessment moved online**
  - Changing construct
  - New security needs
  - Differentiation in:
    - Resources
    - Comfort level with virtual tests
    - Understanding of requirements
    - Social emotional health
- **Ambiguity, fear and mixed messages**
- **Uncertainty and lack of control**



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**Advocacy & Outreach**

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**Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion**

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**Professional Learning**

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**Research**

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**Teacher Recruitment & Retention**

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# **ACTFL Strategic Plan**

# ACTFL's early response

- Outreach
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Recruiting and retaining teachers (who were worried, exhausted, and burnt out)
- Providing free or low-cost, high-quality PD
- Examining the research on virtual learning

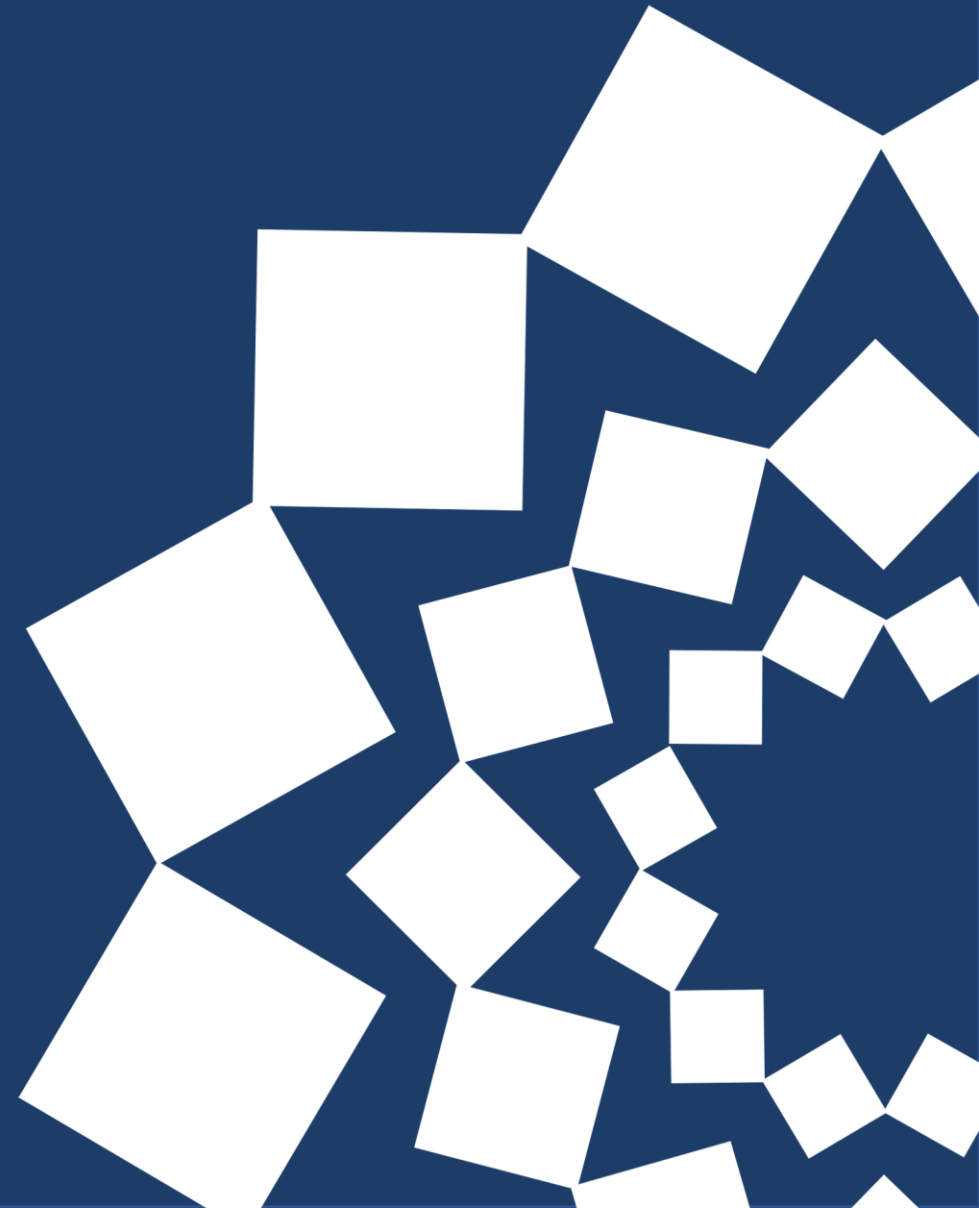
# Specific actions taken to support educators

- **FREE** 1-year basic membership to new members.
- **FREE** access to eight (8) virtual learning modules.
- **FREE** access to ACTFL's complete online book library.
- **FREE** access to webinars provided by ACTFL's Distance Learning Special Interest Group (SIG).
- **FREE** access to additional live and recorded webinars by content experts on topics ranging from proficiency and performance to research and assessment.

# Specific actions taken to support educators

- ACTFL OPI familiarization and ACTFL OPI/MOPI workshops re-structured for online delivery by August 2020.
- *Foreign Language Annals* issue focused on virtual learning developed and made open-access.
- *Foreign Language Annals* issue that included resources that address race, diversity, and social justice.
- Creation of online community for sharing of online teaching/learning resources and support.

# Pivoting to Virtual Assessment



# The assessment context: 2020

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- **Secondary**
  - Seal of Biliteracy
  - AP
  - IB
- **Higher education**
  - TOEFL
  - **ACTFL Placement tests**
  - ACTFL OPI, WPT, RPT and LPT.
- **Government and Beyond**
  - Admissions tests
  - Certification
  - Licensure
- **How to test in government in light of security issues?!**

# The assessment context: 2020

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- General testing issues
- Isbell & Kremmel (2020)
  - Technology
  - Security
  - Validity
- Topics in the field
- *Language Assessment Quarterly (special issue)*
  - Access (Papageorgiou) Placement (Wagner)
  - Proctoring (Purpura) ITAs (Ockey et al)

# Summary of the 2020 testing context

- Changing technology
- Shifting constructs
- Unequal access
- Security
- Uncertainty and hesitancy for the future



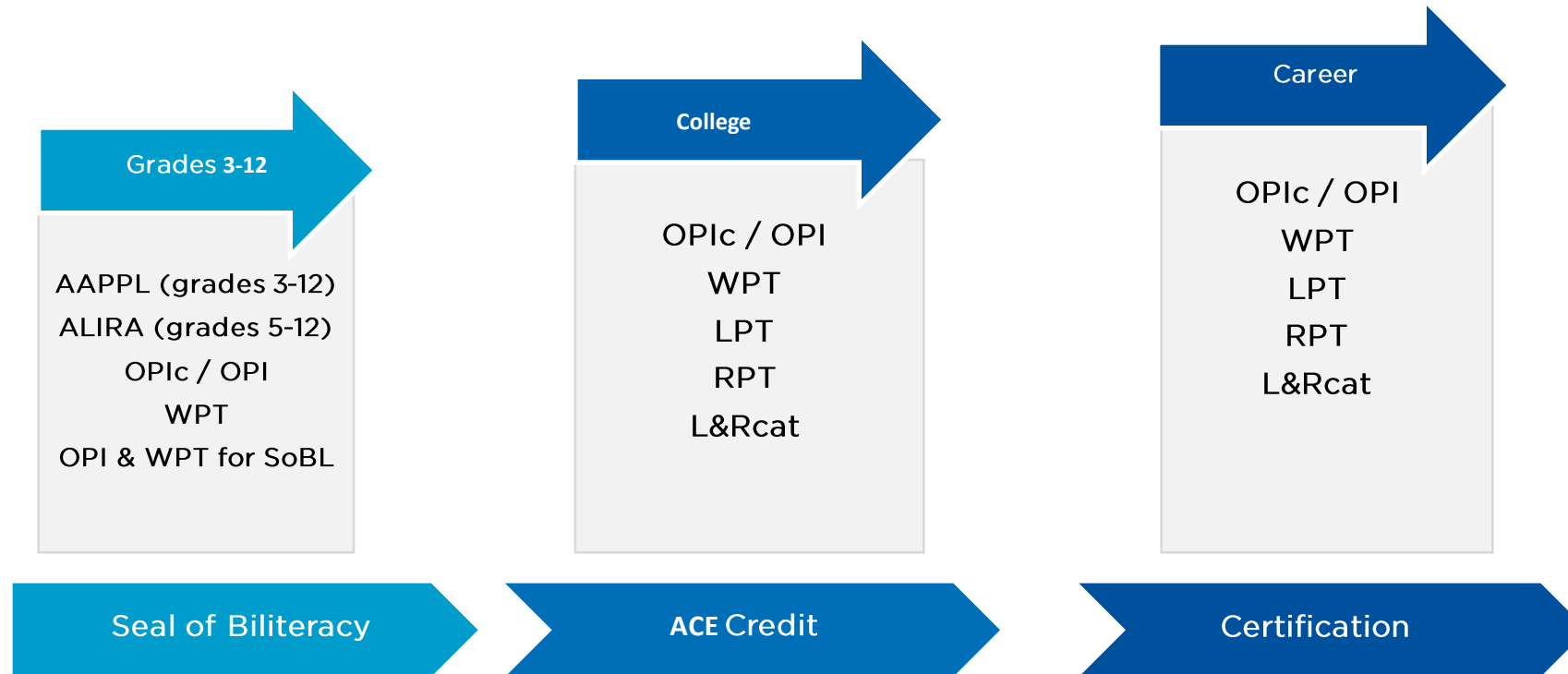
# ACTFL Assessments

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# The Language Proficiency Journey

*Language Learning & Benchmarking through Assessment*



# Existing affordances ACTFL brought to virtual assessment

- All assessments available via telephone or computer
- All assessments except the ACTFL OPI® were developed for computer administration
  - No validity issues
  - Tried and true technological access
  - Scoring and rating conducted virtually
  - Scorer and rating readiness conducted remotely
    - Except ACTFL OPI®

# Challenges for virtual assessment

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- Proctoring
  - Existing tests generally proctored in-person
    - Commitment from teachers and administrators
    - Experienced proctors
    - Institutional Internet and support
  - Where could learners take tests in places where
    - They were safe
    - Our tests were secure
    - Appropriate support was provided?

# Changes made for at-home testing

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- Parent/caregiver proctors
  - Administration directions re-written
    - For non-school audiences
    - Multiple languages
  - Extensive tech check procedures
    - For non-school audiences
    - Multiple languages
  - Trouble-predicting processes
- Computer proctored
  - Administrator directions
  - Test taker directions

# Findings

- Accessibility and access
- Technology gains by users
- Outreach to wider community

# Working with Partners

# Working with Partners

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- With the continued strong demand for OPI testing, ACTFL worked with its customers and partners to remodel tester training programs
- Tester training transformed into a blended model of synchronous/asynchronous learning with facilitated sessions over 8-week periods.
- Developed online content that needed continuous attention to meet the new demands of the virtual environment
- Worked with DLI, as the need for testers shifted to new and different languages.
- ACTFL brought on board new staff to focus solely on recruiting efforts
- As a result, ACTFL has a stronger network of OPI testers than ever in a broader variety of languages who are trained to operate in a virtual world.



# Working with Partners

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- Worked with DLIELC to shift to virtual focus groups and interviews to perform DLIELC needs analyses.
- The needs analyses inform the curriculum, instruction, and assessment of students who are studying at the English Language Center before the students move on to follow-on training.
- The needs analysis consists of 3 parts:
  1. Document analysis
  2. Individual interviews with 2-3 instructors and 2-3 students (non-native English speakers)
  3. Focus groups with 3-4 instructors and 3-4 students
  - Typically, the document analysis would be completed remotely and then interviews and focus groups would take place in person. However, given COVID, interviews and focus groups were done by phone on Zoom/Teams.

# Working with Partners

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- Worked with DLIFLC to host virtual Norming Summits via Microsoft Teams.
  - Prior to COVID, Norming Summits were performed in person in Monterey, CA every quarter
    - Summits consisted of a two-day Norming session with the testers and a one-day Post-Summit meeting
  - As a result of the pandemic, Summits are hosted virtually over a 4-day period via Microsoft Teams.

# Working with Partners

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- Increased communication and accessibility with partners across the board.
  - More fluid communications
  - Better availability to meet with partners around the country, around the clock
  - More frequent conversations

# What's Next?

# ACTFL Foundation Plans

- To raise money from individuals, corporations, and private foundations to support/scale up:
  - Language education research
  - Scholarships and awards for undergraduate/teacher prep candidates/underrepresented populations
  - Professional development
  - Public education/**ELEVATE THE PROFESSION**

# ACTFL Foundation Plans

- To highlight programs of importance to our members and other critical constituencies
- To demonstrate ACTFL's commitment to the future of language education



# Connect with your world language community

## JOIN ACTFL TODAY AND GET:

- Professional Development
- ACTFL Convention discounts
- Must-read publications
- Access to members-only teaching resources
- And much more!

[actfl.org](https://actfl.org)



**Memberships  
start at just \$45**



 [actfl.org/join](https://actfl.org/join)

# ACTFL Central Community

ACTFL CENTRAL



Home Communities Directory Engage Volunteer

Welcome back, Jessica Haxhi

- My Profile
- My Networks
- My Communities
- My Notification Settings
- My Inbox

Actions

Recommended Activities

- Complete your profile
- Post message
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Renew your membership

## Latest Discussions

What worked for me today

RE: Where do Authentic Resources fit in a CCLT cla

...



By: Flávia Henrique

RE: Where do Authentic Resources fit in a CCLT cla

...



By: Laura Skidmore



Where Language Educators  
CONNECT



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ACTFL provides vision, leadership  
at all instruction levels. RTs ≠ en

📍 Alexandria, VA [actfl.org](https://actfl.org)

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**ACTFL** @actfl · Feb 7

Are you ready to further develop your presenting skills? Join ACTFL's Team of workshop facilitators! Apply by March 15 to become a part of the first group of candidates to be selected. Learn more at: [bit.ly/34lxf](https://bit.ly/34lxf)

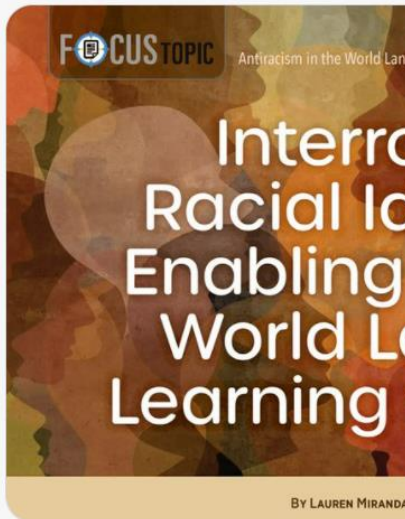


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**ACTFL** @actfl · 22h

"Storytelling allows discrimination to be named, and only once an injustice is named can it be addressed." Lauren Miranda and @FrancisTrojan discuss how the #IPA can be used as a vehicle for Antiracist #WLEducation. Learn more at: [bit.ly/2QNKo3w](https://bit.ly/2QNKo3w) #TuesdayTLE



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**ACTFL** @actfl · Feb 5

The right #mentor will change the way you teach. If you're looking to reinvigorate your practice and learn new skills for long-term success in your #career, consider joining the ACTFL Mentoring Program! Applications are due June 30th! #langchat Go to: [bit.ly/2LSBJNY](https://bit.ly/2LSBJNY)



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# #ACTFL22



**ACTFL 2022**  
**BOSTON<sup>+</sup>**  
**NOVEMBER 18-20**

## Where Language Educators **RECONNECT**

**BOSTON • NOVEMBER 18-20**

**PRE-CONVENTION WORKSHOPS • NOVEMBER 17**

Experience outstanding professional development with hundreds of educational sessions, dynamic keynote speakers, and an interactive expo at our very first hybrid convention. Join your colleagues **in Boston or virtually** to find innovative ways to improve your practice and support your learners at the not-to-be-missed event for language educators!

**EARLY REGISTRATION** July 13, 2022

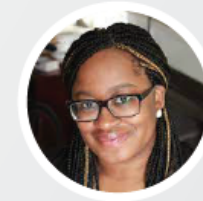
**ADVANCE REGISTRATION** October 26, 2022

**HOUSING DEADLINE** October 24, 2022



### **CHEF JOSÉ ANDRÉS**

Culinary innovator, author, educator, humanitarian, and chef/owner of ThinkFoodGroup



### **DR. KEISHA BLAIN**

Historian, author, and professor  
*Situating Black Internationalism at Home and Abroad: International Dimensions of the Black Freedom Struggle*



### **WAJAHAT ALI**

Columnist, Political Commentator, TED Speaker, Playwright  
*The Only Way This Country Succeeds Is If All of Us Succeed: The Immigrant Experience*

**REGISTER AT  
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Language Connects

# Thank you!

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