ACTFL’s innovations in assessment and professional learning: How our priorities guide our work

Interagency Language Roundtable
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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

50 STATES IN THE U.S. + D.C. + U.S. TERRITORIES

50+ COUNTRIES ACROSS THE GLOBE

60+ LANGUAGES from Afrikaans to Yoruba
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
ACTFL’s Strategic Plan
ACTFL Strategic Plan

- Advocacy & Outreach
- Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
- Professional Learning
- Research
- Teacher Recruitment & Retention
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
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

- **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

• 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

AAPPL: ACTFL Assessment of Performance Toward Proficiency in Languages
ACTFL LPT: ACTFL Listening Proficiency Test
ACTFL OPI: ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview
ALIRA: ACTFL Latin Interpretive Reading Assessment
ACTFL RPT: ACTFL Reading Proficiency Test
ACTFL OPIc: ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview Computer
APPT: ACTFL Proficiency Placement Test
L&RCAT: Computer Adaptive Listening & Reading Test
ACTFL OPI& WPT: For the Seal of Biliteracy
L&RCAT: Computer Adaptive Listening & Reading Test
ACTFL TEP: Test of English Proficiency
ACTFL WPT: Writing Proficiency Test

actfl.org
The Language Proficiency Journey

Language Learning & Benchmarking through Assessment

Grades 3-12
- AAPPL (grades 3-12)
- ALIRA (grades 5-12)
- OPIc / OPI
- WPT
- OPI & WPT for SoBL

Seal of Biliteracy

College
- OPIc / OPI
- WPT
- LPT
- RPT
- L&Rcat

ACE Credit

Career
- OPIc / OPI
- WPT
- LPT
- RPT
- L&Rcat

Certification
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

• 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

• 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

• 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

• 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

• 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

• 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!

Memberships start at just $45

actfl.org
Welcome back, Jessica Haxhi

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

Latest Discussions
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 considered.
Learn more at: bit.ly/34lxftp

ACTFL @actfl · 22h
"Storytelling allows discrimination to be named, and only once an injustice is named can it be addressed."
Lauren Miranda and @FrancisTroyan discuss how the #IPA can be used as a vehicle for Antiracist #WLEducational... bit.ly/2QNkO3w
#TuesdayTLE

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/2LSBUNY

“"The right mentor will change the way you teach and will allow you to feel like a superstar teacher. The right mentor will also keep you sane and become a lifelong friend. Take the steps to find the right mentor.”"
#ACTFL22

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EARLY REGISTRATION • July 13, 2022
ADVANCE REGISTRATION • October 26, 2022
HOUSING DEADLINE • October 24, 2022

REGISTER AT ACTFL.ORG
Thank you!

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