The Keys to Assessing Language Performance: Lessons Learned from Proficiency Guidelines

语言测试之关键: 从语言能力水平标准谈起

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The Keys to Assessing Language Performance: Teacher’s Manual
By Paul Sandrock
Publisher: ACTFL

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eBook non-member price: $12.95

Students continually ask, “Does this count?” “Is this on the test?” They want to know how they’ll be evaluated. Discover how to answer these questions in ways that shape student learning and keep teaching focused on what really matters. Written by language expert Paul Sandrock, this superb manual clarifies precisely what language educators need to understand in order to successfully assess student performance.

Relevant to new teachers and seasoned professionals alike, Sandrock provides step-by-step guidance on how to design assessments, illuminates the process of designing rubrics that focus on proficiency and helps educators create assessments that motivate students to offer language samples that accomplish authentic purposes. School administrators will also benefit from the section that focuses on the impact of performance assessment on instruction and program design.

BUY THE BOOK!  DOWNLOAD THE EBOOK!
Outline of Presentation

1. Background:
   • Clarifying standards
   • Defining communication

2. Assessing students’ performance and proficiency
   • OPI, WPT
   • AAPPL, AP Chinese
   • IPA

3. Examples
   • Novice → Intermediate level
   • Intermediate → Advanced level
   • Increasing students’ motivation
   • Designing your own assessment
✓ Why do we assess students?
✓ What information do we want to learn through assessment?
✓ What could we do with the information gained through assessment?
DISTINGUISHED
Can reflect on a wide range of global issues and highly abstract concepts, use persuasive hypothetical discourse, and tailor language to a variety of audiences

SUPERIOR
Can support opinion, hypothesize, discuss topics concretely and abstractly, and handle a linguistically unfamiliar situation

ADVANCED
Can narrate and describe in all major time frames and handle a situation with a complication

INTERMEDIATE
Can create with language, ask and answer simple questions on familiar topics, and handle a simple situation or transaction

NOVICE
Can communicate with formulaic and rote utterances, lists, and phrases
ACTFL World Readiness Standards

**Cultures**
Interact with cultural competence and understanding

**Connections**
Connect with other disciplines and acquire information and diverse perspectives in order to use the language to function in academic and career-related situations

**Comparisons**
Develop insight into the nature of language and culture in order to interact with cultural competence

**Communication**
Communicate effectively in more than one language in order to function in a variety of situations and for multiple purposes

**Communities**
Communicate and interact with cultural competence in order to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world
How to define communication?
Expression
Interpretation
&
Negotiation
of meaning in a given context.
Help students *communicate* in the target language!
Three modes of communication:

**Interpretive**: the appropriate interpretation of cultural meaning that is read, heard, or viewed.

**Interpersonal**: the active negotiation of intentions and meaning. Initiate, maintain, and (at some levels) sustain the conversation, making necessary adjustments and clarifications.

**Presentational**: The creation of oral and written messages to facilitate interpretation by listeners, readers, or viewers.

- **Expression**
- **Interpretation & Negotiation** of meaning in a context.
蒙城中华语文学校
二年级2014-2015学年度第一学期 期末考试 中文第三册（第三单元）

学生姓名：

一、看拼音写汉字。（6分）

1. jù （ ）
2. xiǎo （ ）
3. zhēn （ ）
4. fēi （ ）
5. qǐ （ ）
6. rì （ ）

二、照例子写出下列字的偏旁部首。（10分）

例：说（ ）

冲（ ） 层（ ） 把（ ） 竹（ ） 让（ ）

三、数笔画，填空。（10分）

“诗”一共有（ ）画，左边是（ ）画，右边是（ ）画。
“友”一共有（ ）画，第六画是（ ）。
“破”一共有（ ）画，左边是（ ）画，右边是（ ）画。
“床”一共有（ ）画，第三画是（ ）。

四、选出下列句中划横线的字正确解释，在（ ）里打√（5分）

1. 半头望明月
   A. 看 B. 月亮 C. 问

2. 低头思故乡
   A. 思考 B. 思念 C. 想法

3. 晚是地上霜
   A. 不觉得 B. 以为 C. 不知道

4. 白日依山尽
   A. 白天 B. 一天 C. 太阳

5. 更上一层楼
   A. 上面 B. 上边 C. 上去

五、选词/字填空（13分）

1. 时候 后来 （ ）后，他成了一名科学家。
   昨天我回家的（ ），妈妈正在做饭。

http://forum.vanpeople.com/showtopic-272498.php
How do we teach and assess language performance in given contexts?

Start from performance tests!
Outline of Presentation

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   • Novice → Intermediate level
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   • Designing your own assessment
Proficiency-based performance tests

• ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)
• ACTFL Writing Proficiency Test (WPT)
• ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL)
• Advanced Placement (AP) Chinese

• Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA)
What is OPI? (1/3)

• Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI)
  • 15-30 minutes interview
  • Is a standard procedure for global assessment of functional speaking ability. It measures language production holistically by determining patterns of strengths and weakness.
    • tasks, text type, accuracy and content areas
What is OPI? (2/3)

• face-to-face or telephonic assessment
  • Tester asks appropriate questions
  • Follows standardized structure and protocol
  • Adjusts the level of difficulty based on the testee’s performance, in order to find the floor (lower limit) and ceiling (upper limit)
  • Evaluates based on the ACTFL guidelines (criterion referenced evaluation)
What is OPI? (3/3)

• An OPI rating does not depend upon:
  • When, where, how long, what textbook one has used to learn the language
  • What kind of pedagogy or curriculum that one has experience with.
Four major levels of proficiency

- Novice
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Superior
Four Assessment Criteria of OPI

- **Global tasks/ Functions**: Real-world tasks that the speaker can do in the language.
- **Context/Content**: Circumstances or settings in which a person uses language/topics or themes of conversations.
- **Accuracy/ Comprehensibility**: Acceptability, quality, and precision of the message conveyed.
- **Text Types**: Structure of the discourse
# Table of Assessment Criteria for OPI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficiency Level*</th>
<th>Global Tasks and Functions</th>
<th>Context / Content</th>
<th>Accuracy</th>
<th>Text Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superior</td>
<td>Discuss topics extensively, support opinions and hypothesize. Deal with a linguistically unfamiliar situation.</td>
<td>Most formal and informal settings. <em>Wide range of general interest topics and some special fields of interest and expertise.</em></td>
<td>No pattern of errors in basic structures. Errors virtually never interfere with communication or distract the native speaker from the message.</td>
<td>Extended discourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Narrate and describe in major time frames and deal effectively with an unanticipated complication.</td>
<td>Some informal settings and a limited number of transactional situations. <em>Predictable, familiar topics related to daily activities.</em></td>
<td>Understood, with some repetition, by speakers accustomed to dealing with non-native speakers.</td>
<td>Paragraphs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Create with language, initiate, maintain, and bring to a close simple conversations by asking and responding to simple questions.</td>
<td>Some informal settings and a limited number of transactional situations. <em>Predictable, familiar topics related to daily activities.</em></td>
<td>Understood, with some repetition, by speakers accustomed to dealing with non-native speakers.</td>
<td>Discrete sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novice</td>
<td>Communicate minimally with formulaic and rote utterances, lists, and phrases</td>
<td>Most common informal settings. <em>Most common aspects of daily life.</em></td>
<td>May be difficult to understand, even for speakers accustomed to dealing with non-native speakers.</td>
<td>Individual words and phrases</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OPI Major Levels (1/4)

Novice:

• **Tasks/Functions:** Communicate minimally with formulaic and rote utterances, lists, and phrases

• **Context/Content:** Most common informal settings. *Most common aspects of daily life.*

• **Accuracy:** May be difficult to understand, even for speakers accustomed to dealing with non-native speakers.

• **Text Type:** individual words and phrases
OPI Major Levels (2/4)

**Intermediate:**

- **Tasks/Functions:** Create with language, ask and answer simple questions, and handle a simple situation or transaction.

- **Context/Content:** Some informal settings and a limited number of transactional situations/ *Predictable, familiar topics related to daily activities and personal environment*

- **Accuracy:** Can be understood, with some repetition, by speakers accustomed to dealing with non-native speakers.

- **Text Type:** Discrete sentences and strings of sentences
OPI Major Levels (3/4)

**Advanced:**

- **Tasks/Functions:** Narrate and describe in all major time frames and deal effectively with an unanticipated complication in a routine situation and transaction.

- **Context/Content:** Most informal and some formal settings/ *Topics of personal and general current interest*

- **Accuracy:** Can be understood without difficulty by speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-native speakers

- **Text Type:** Oral paragraphs/ Connected discourse
OPI Major Levels (4/4)

Superior:

• **Tasks/Functions:** Discuss familiar and unfamiliar topics concrete and abstractly, support opinions, hypothesize.

• **Context/Content:** Most informal and formal settings/ *Wide range of public-interest topics and some special fields of interests and expertise*

• **Accuracy:** No pattern of error in basic structures. Errors virtually never interfere with communication or distract the interlocutor from the message.

• **Text Type:** Extended discourse
Start developing functions **at the next higher level** in teaching!
How about writing?
**NOVICE LEVEL**

Test forms addressing lower levels of proficiency will include Novice level questions. These prompts will provide a context in which you might have to create a list of words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Questions and/or Requests</th>
<th>Examples of Novice-Level Questions and/or Requests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lists</td>
<td>What colors do you want to paint your house? Make a list of the rooms in the house and the colors you want to use in each room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrases</td>
<td>In preparation for your friend’s party, make a list of the activities you want to prepare.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**INTERMEDIATE LEVEL**

At the Intermediate level, writers can write about their routines and personal interests. Questions will invite you to write with sentence-level discourse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Questions and/or Requests</th>
<th>Examples of Intermediate-Level Questions and/or Requests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simple description of a person, place or thing</td>
<td>Write a note to your parents in which you describe your best friend. What does he or she look like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple description of an activity or event</td>
<td>Write an e-mail in which you tell a new friend about what you usually do at an American picnic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask questions to get something you want or need</td>
<td>Write a letter to your host family to ask about their house and the family. Ask three or four questions to find out what you want to know.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**ADVANCED LEVEL**

Advanced-level questions invite you to write in detail about autobiographic topics and beyond. Writers will be asked to write about themselves and about their work, or community. Questions invite you to provide detail in paragraph-length discourse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Questions and/or Requests</th>
<th>Examples of Advanced-Level Questions and/or Requests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detailed descriptions of people, places, and things from your present and your past</td>
<td>You are writing a report about your internship in a computer company. Write about the area where you worked at the company. Provide a detailed description of the office and the people who worked there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detailed stories about something that has happened, is happening, or will happen</td>
<td>You just arrived from a camping vacation. Write a story about an interesting situation that happened while camping. What started the situation and how was it finally resolved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handle a complication that arises in a transaction</td>
<td>You bought an item on the internet but, when the package arrived, the item was not what the description advertised. Write a note to customer service. Explain what happened and request a replacement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report on a current event</td>
<td>You are writing a report for the local newspaper about the impact of climate changes in local weather. Report on the recent weather changes in your area and what has happened most recently. Comment on the most recent news.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**SUPERIOR LEVEL**

Superior-level questions invite you to reflect thoughtfully about issues and problems in our society. These questions ask you to organize your ideas in a logical manner, which will require more complex elaboration in an essay-like discourse. The context of these questions is more formal and will invite you to deal with a problem or issue at the community, national or global level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Questions and/or Requests</th>
<th>Examples of Superior-Level Questions and/or Requests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State and support an opinion</td>
<td>You have been invited to write a column for the local paper on the impact of air travel in our society. Write an essay about the most significant changes that aviation has produce for American society. In your opinion, what has been the most important contribution of air travel to contemporary American society? Explain why that contribution, and not others, is the most important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesize about possible conditions and outcomes</td>
<td>Continue your essay commenting on air travel changes that could be adopted by airlines and airports to improve the travel experience. Suggest some changes and describe what impact these changes would have on the traveler if they were adopted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss topics in general, abstract terms</td>
<td>Your city is inviting proposals for collaboration between your university and the community. As president of the student union, you are writing a proposal to the community for a collaboration between the student community and the city governance. Provide a rationale for this collaboration. Explain why student organizations and local governance collaboration can be beneficial for the community and an educational opportunity for student leaders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Re-designing writing to make it more communicative and more interesting!
Try to make your assignment meaningful or authentic

• RAFT: Role, Audience, Format, Task
• TIP: Task as Intriguing Problems
• Examples (OPI, WPT implications)
RAFT and TIPS

- **RAFT**: Role, Audience, Format, Task
- **TIP**: Task as Intriguing Problems
- **Proficiency objective:**
  - Intermediate High/ Advanced Low

- 我们需要坚持传统吗？
- 一次性产品和环境保护
- 徐力杀母是谁的错？
- 小心，大学里的作弊问题—给教务长的一封信
- 工作面试准备
AAPPL

For K-12 students, much cheaper! ($20)
• Interpretive listening
• Interpretive reading
• Interpersonal listening and speaking
• Presentational writing

https://www.languagetesting.com/aappl2-demo
AP Chinese


• Multiple Choice
  • Listening
  • Reading
• Free responses
  • Writing
  • Speaking
Sounds like we are teaching to tests?

Not if the tests are *well-designed* and help achieve our *pedagogical objectives*!
The washback effects of tests on instruction

• What is washback?
  • Washback: the influence testing has on the learning environment (e.g., instruction, curricular materials, student perceptions of learning, student performance).

• How to link performance tests with classroom instruction?
  • Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA)
  • Interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational tasks
IMPLEMENTING INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

*Implementing Integrated Performance Assessment*

By: Bonnie Adair-Hauck, Eileen W. Glisan, and Francis J. Troyan

Publisher: ACTFL

Print member price: $25.95
Print non-member price: $29.95

eBook member price: $10.95
eBook non-member price: $12.95

A follow-up to the ACTFL *Integrated Performance Assessment Manual* published in 2003. This book provides readers with expanded guidelines for how to design IPA tasks to inform the backward design of a unit. Suggestions on how to provide effective feedback and how to improve learner performance are shared. Also included is a re-conceptualized rubric for the interpretive mode and the addition of IPA rubrics for Advanced-level language performance.
Another great resource

Create a Standards-Based Integrated Performance Assessment Unit Step-by-Step

Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA)

ACTFL has developed a prototype for assessing the progress language students are making in building their proficiency through the World-Readiness Standards. The Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) is a cluster assessment featuring three tasks, each of which reflects one of the three modes of communication—Interpretive, Interpersonal and Presentational. The three tasks are aligned within a single theme or content area, reflecting the manner in which students naturally acquire and use the language in the real world or the classroom. Each task provides the information and elicits the linguistic interaction that is necessary for students to complete the subsequent task. IPAs are designed for students at the novice, intermediate, and advanced levels of proficiency. They are standards-based, performance-based, developmental in nature, integrative. IPAs are designed to be used with scoring rubrics that rate performance in terms of whether the performance meets expectations, exceeds expectations, or does not meet expectations for the task.

Design of the model IPAs, development of the rubrics, and research on test feasibility, reliability, and validity
I. INTERPRETIVE TASKS

Examples of interpretive tasks:

- Listening to radio commercials
- Listening to a podcast
- Reading a magazine or newspaper article
- Reading a letter
- Reading a short story
- Viewing a film or video segment
INTERPRETIVE TASKS

Comprehension Guide Analysis: Performance Expectations

- Literal comprehension
  a. Key word recognition
  b. Main idea detection
  c. Supporting detail detection

- Interpretive comprehension
  a. Organizational features
  b. Guessing meaning from context
  c. Inferences
  d. Author’s perspective
  e. Cultural perspectives
2. INTERPERSONAL TASKS

Two-way, interactive situations:

- Face-to-face conversation
- Phone conversation
- Text messaging
- Exchange opinions, feelings and emotions
- Provide and obtain information
- Spontaneous, without notes
- Active negotiation of meaning
3. PRESENTATIONAL TASKS

- Formal speaking or writing activities
- Produce a one-way communication to an audience of readers or listeners
- Based on the topic and information obtained in the previous two tasks
- Authentic, real world situations
- Audience includes someone other than the teacher

Speech  Report
Podcast  Paper
Video    Story
Newscast Letter
IPA Example

• Google drive example
• Textbook
• Different Levels
  • Final project (summative assessment)
  • Daily class (formative assessment—URI example)
• Reality Check! (mini IPA and culminative IPA?)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Interpretive</th>
<th>Presentational</th>
<th>Interpersonal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Novice</td>
<td>Listen to a travelogue: match photos to each description heard.</td>
<td>Write a brief website description for five places of interest (where, hours open, admission, etc.).</td>
<td>In pairs, look at five photos and discuss likes and dislikes, deciding which two places to visit on your last day in the target country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Using Internet resources, fill in requested information about the area you have selected to visit in the target country.</td>
<td>Create a commercial and a flyer to promote the region you have selected.</td>
<td>Discuss with a partner the places in classmates’ commercials, deciding which will be the most exciting to visit and how you will convince the rest of your class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate High</td>
<td>Investigate places for study, travel, or work in the target country; identify how they would be helpful to four careers you are exploring.</td>
<td>Evaluate with a partner the career advantages you could gain by studying, traveling, or working in the target country.</td>
<td>Write a letter to apply for an internship, explaining how the experience will fit into your career plans, and how you have prepared for it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Discuss stereotypes of the target culture that you know you see differently now; identify ideas you want to investigate while in the target country.</td>
<td>Write a newspaper editorial explaining one U.S. cultural phenomenon that is likely to be misinterpreted by tourists from the target country.</td>
<td>Read a work of literature with a strong sense of place; describe the cultural influences shaping the idea or conflict.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Template | Quick Summary
(Adapted from Clementi & Terrill, 2013, pp. 100-101)

Reproduce this template to develop future performance assessment tasks for your units of instruction.

**What Is the Target for Performance?**

*Theme/Topic*
Think about the unit you are planning. What is the engaging thematic focus?

**What are the assessment targets for interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational communication? Do these assessments engage and motivate your students?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summative Performance Assessment</th>
<th>Interpretive Mode</th>
<th>Presentational Mode</th>
<th>Interpersonal Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exhibit tasks that allow learners to demonstrate how well they have met the goals of the unit.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are integrated throughout the unit.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The template encourages multiple interpretive tasks.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Knowledge Students Need to Be Successful on These Performance Assessments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Toolbox</th>
<th>Vocabulary Expansion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Functions</td>
<td>Related Structures/Pat terns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Activities to Prepare for These Performance Assessments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Learning Activity/ Formative Assessment</th>
<th>How does this activity support the unit goals or performance tasks?</th>
<th>Mode of Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Representative samples from beginning to end of unit]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Final thought

Using technology to aid learning:

• Quizlet Live
• Kahoot: https://create.kahoot.it/share/language-assessment/5e931cd7-46a2-411c-85a1-4f4dc1869f75
• Wechat
• Fliggrid: https://flipgrid.com/

Creating rubrics:
https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/PerformanceDescriptorsLanguageLearners.pdf
Please join us at the NECLTA K-12 Wechat and Facebook Group (open to K-16)
https://www.facebook.com/groups/2198721913728030/

• Thanks to my colleague Dr. LeAnne Spino for sharing some slides.
Thank you! Questions?

yu_wu@uri.edu