**Maria Dikaiou:** Hello, everyone. I’d like to welcome you to today’s session on the online language assessments. My name is Maria Dikaiou. I’m from the Languages Curriculum Unit at the VCAA, and I would like to thank you most sincerely for taking the time, in particular on this particular day, out of a very, very heavy work schedule that you all have, to participate in the webinar.

I would like to start with an acknowledgement of country. We are all joining today’s session from across Victoria and I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the many lands across Victoria on which we are living, learning and working from today. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Kulin Nations. When acknowledging country, we recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ spiritual and cultural connection to country. We acknowledge the continued care of the lands and waterways over generations and celebrate the continuation of a living culture that has a unique role in this region. As we share our knowledge in teaching and learning, may we pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, traditions, culture and hopes of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the nation, and hope that they will walk with us on our journey.

I would also like to welcome today all members of our panel, and I would like to introduce them to you. We have Craig Smith, the manager of the F-10 Victorian Curriculum Unit. Thank you, Craig, for joining us today. Our co-presenters from ACER, Fusae Nojima and Scott Haines. We’ll be hearing from Fu and Scott a little bit later on. We also have Kylie Witt, who is the manager of the Languages Curriculum Unit. And helping us with technology and moderating, we have Alicia Farrell from the F-10 Curriculum Unit and Catherine Bryant from the Languages Curriculum Unit.

Before we start, just a couple of housekeeping matters. This webinar is being recorded and the recording will be made available on our website. We’ll give you all these links, not only in the presentation, but in the chat box. Could you keep the chat clear so that we can enter the links for you? However, if you wish to ask a question, could we ask that you ask that question via the Q&A box, but select both and all panellists so that we all see the question. These recordings will be made available on the past professional learning website. The first one will be made available in the next week or so, as will this one. So there really is no need for you to take notes, because you will be able to access it. And if you missed the first one, don’t worry – you will be able to access that as soon as it becomes available.

The aim of this webinar today is to have a closer look at the language assessments, and how they can be used by teachers. This is for teachers of the target languages who wish to see what they actually look like and sound like, and we’ll provide you with some information as to how they can be used. In the examples that we will show you – that, actually, Fu and Scott will show you – we’ll also provide you with ideas of how to use them, feedback that we have received from teachers who have used them, and how they link with the Victorian curriculum. So, hopefully, we’re able to help you in these areas.

I’m going to run through the next series of slides quite quickly, just so that we do have the time to spend on the actual items. And this is just a reminder of what the language assessments are. They are listening and reading assessments only, and the items are for receptive skills in listening and reading assessments, they are all in a multiple-choice format. There are three levels of assessment, and, for want of a better description, we’ve referred to them as Assessment A, Assessment B and Assessment C. There is information available on the ACER and on the VCAA website regarding recommendations for their use. However, you are able to use them to suit your particular classroom situation.

Oops. I’ve just repeated that. I do beg your pardon.

OK, they are available on demand, so you can decide when you want to use them and how often you want to use them. They are suitable for levels 5 right up to Year 10. They are for individual teacher use. And the data and reports that you get back from ACER after you have used them supports you in your teaching. The third webinar that we are providing will focus solely on data and reporting, and we’ll provide you with some information about that a little bit later on. However, we do strongly encourage and urge you to preview the tests before using them, so that you choose the assessments that are suitable for your current situation and your classes. Results are available immediately, and all these assessments are available at no cost to all Victorian schools – that’s government schools, independent schools, Catholic schools, the Victorian School of Languages and community language providers, at no cost.

We refer to them as Assessment A, Assessment B, and Assessment C. I think you’re able to see from the screen that Assessments B and C in both listening and reading have 28 items. Assessment A has 24 items. And in a little while we’ll have an opportunity to see some of these items, so that you can see how they progress from Assessment A right up to Assessment C. They’re accessible on all types of devices, and of course, headphones are required for the listening tests. These are not intended to be the sole means of assessing student progress. They are an assessment tool. And again, we strongly urge teachers to preview the items so that you use the items that are suitable for your classroom.

This particular page has two links showing you how to register - two ways – either through the VCAA website or the ACER page. And both websites have plenty of information, background information, for you, if you are looking at these for the first time and you haven’t registered.

Before we hand over to Scott and Fu, just some background information, if you like, some feedback that we have had from teachers who have used the items, that they are easy...it’s very easy to access aural and written text. The listening texts in particular are very valuable, because students have the opportunity to listen to different speakers and real language. And again, with the listening items, that it’s valuable to have a range of listening texts at the very early stages of learning.

Teachers use it as an assessment tool. Some teachers have used it a number of times, some in term 1 just to have a look-see where the class is at, and then later on in the year, in term 3, as a pre- and post-learning tool. The flexibility allows teachers to assign different assessments to different students in the classroom, and of course, this helps with differentiation.

After we’ve had a look at the items, we’re going to look at how we...how they are aligned to the Victorian curriculum. We’ve got some specific examples to show you, alignment with the content descriptions, the achievement standard, and we’ll also have a look at one of the band descriptions.

I think it’s probably best now if we hand over to Fu and Scott. We’re going to use French as an example. We have, from Assessment A, B and C, one listening item and one reading item. And this has been deliberate, so that you can see the progression and you can see the range and different types of assessment items that are available.

Can I just say again that there is a lot of flexibility when using these assessment items. There are a range of items for you to have a look at. We’ve only...because of the period of time that we have, we just thought it best to show you one of each, so at least you have an idea. You do, however, have the opportunity to preview these at another time.

So I’ll hand over now to our colleagues from ACER for the next section of this presentation. Thank you, Scott.

If you could just bear with me for one minute...

**Scott Haines:** Thanks, Maria.

**Maria Dikaiou:** Thank you, Scott.

**Scott Haines:** Just share my screen here. Thanks, Maria.

So, this session follows on from the previous one, where we had a look at registering. The key thing here is that, as part of the registration process, you all nominate, through coordination with our team, which languages are relevant for your school, and we will make sure those are available in your account. And you can get in and have a look at the assessment items straightaway to get familiar with them.

So, today, we want to show you how to preview the assessment - and in particular, the French ones – to see the progression from those items, as Maria mentioned. Under the students page, you can preview the test even before you have any student data in the account. And we’d recommend that you do that. From the test menu, there is an option to preview, and depending on the languages at your school, you may have various options in here. We’ll select the French option and have a look at the first listening form A. This process will be the same for all the different...all eight languages, and a lot of what the structure of the application and website will be similar regardless of the language being looked at, and is listed at the top of the website here.

The students are presented with a direction screen that will give them some audio. We have some administration instructions to go along with this, which we’ll show in a moment, and it basically gives them some information. And the key one to think about in the listening that we wanted to point out is that the students... They control their own progress through the assessment. And the key thing is that the system will provide them a certain number of attempts at listening to the audio. So, it’s listed here where the audio will play, and in a moment, I’ll play an item, and you’ll be able to hear the audio as well as the tone that plays, and then the audio is repeated.

So, when we start viewing this, we can see... This is what a student would see when they were doing the assessment. Across the top here, we have the navigation within the assessment form, and, as Maria mentioned, there are a slightly different number of assessment items in the different levels. This forms as a navigation and a progress bar. So, as students answer the questions, then they can see where they are. The system saves their progress, so, if you’re worried about internet connectivity, they won’t lose any progress. And one of the questions that came up fairly frequently is, is if a student is interrupted, can they resume and...sort of leave off and resume, and the system will save their progress?

But for today’s session, we wanted to have a look at the types of items. So this is the first item we wanted to have a look at. And in the listening test form, we have this audio play widget. So, when they start, there is one play remaining. And what that will do is have the audio with a tone in the middle, so the student can control this audio at their own pace. And that’s why we have the recommendation for headphones, so they can listen to their own test as they’re going. There’s a volume adjuster here, and when they’re ready, they can press play and listen to the audio. So I’m hoping now if I play this one, you should be able to hear this audio.

**Man:** Paul and his mother are in the kitchen.

**Woman & Man:** (CONVERSE IN FRENCH)

(TONE SOUNDS)

**Woman & Man:** (CONVERSE IN FRENCH)

**Scott Haines:** OK, so, as you heard there, the audio plays once and then there is a tone. And on the next item, I’ll show you how you can control that. But I think that sounded like a fairly tasty tuna salad in that one, from my very basic French. And what you can notice is that students can adjust their answer. But once the audio has completely finished, I cannot listen to that again. So when we’re having a look at an item...like that instruction says at the start, the student can control the audio. So, for example, if I have a look at another item here, we’re in the B level...B level form. The student can listen to the audio.

**Man:** A conversation in the car.

**Man & Woman:** (CONVERSE IN FRENCH)

(TONE SOUNDS)

**Scott Haines:** So I’ve listened to it once. I have a feeling that maybe it’s this option here, and if I want to make sure I can...have got it correct, I can resume the audio and listen to it for the second time.

**Man & Woman:** (CONVERSE IN FRENCH)

**Scott Haines:** So I think, actually, maybe my...I was incorrect the first time around, so I can adjust the answer. And listening to the audio all the way through is a good way to make sure that they’ve got all the information.

And one of the things that we’ll talk about later is the different types of items, which I think Maria will be able to speak a bit more about and the extra information that you get in the reporting, which will mainly be covered in the next webinar.

The next item we wanted to have a look at was in the level C form - so, the most difficult form – and this item...there are actually two items, two questions, that are related to the same audio passage. And these items appear on the page together, and can be answered at the same time, or... The passage in the audio refers to both items. So we’ll listen to this one now.

**Man:** A radio announcement.

**Woman:** (SPEAKS FRENCH)

(TONE SOUNDS)

Scott Haines: So, I can listen to that audio once, and put in my answer, and I can then listen to it again and adjust it and see how I go. It’s useful to explain to students... (AUDIO CUTS OUT) ..to the tone, If I was navigate to a different question and come back, I wouldn’t be able to listen to this anymore. So it’s important that the candidates listen to the audio all the way through to make sure they get as much information as possible.

And in this case, I can adjust the answer, and when I progress, the system indicates that these questions have been answered. I can always return back and adjust my answer if needed, but I cannot listen to the audio repeatedly.

The other thing with these items that you may have noticed from question...or from form A, B and C, both back here, is that some of the items are in English, and as you advance through, then some of the questions I answer are in a different language. So you’ll notice things...like that through the different levels. One of the other questions... (AUDIO CUTS OUT) ..the test forms are not more difficult than the previous ones – they will cycle through more difficult and a bit easier, to encourage students to participate. (AUDIO CUTS OUT) ..questions in the target language was the highest... (AUDIO CUTS OUT) ..forms.

The other thing that we have... (AUDIO CUTS OUT) ..listening items, the transcriptions are available to you as teachers, and you can access these to view the question and the options. So, these are available in the help section within the account and can be used as reference material, especially when looking at your reports.

**Maria Dikaiou:** OK.

**Scott Haines:** Maria, did you have something to add?

**Maria Dikaiou:** I just wanted to... Thank you very much, Scott. That was great that you showed the area where you can preview the actual listening, so that teachers know that they can preview them.

Just to recap that all these listening items have a small phrase, if you like, that sets the scene – a radio announcement, at the restaurant, or something. If the question is in French, for example, or the target language, so will be the answers. So it might be French or it might be in English. Assessment C, there are some questions where there are two questions that relate to the same text, and you are able, and the student is able, to control when you actually hear the listening. And Scott showed us that he... Playing at once, then pausing, having another read, changing the answer and then playing it again. And teachers have found this repetition really, really helpful.

And teachers have told us that after they have...some teachers, after they have participated in a particular assessment, A, B or C, they have followed up in class, with the same sort of questions, going over the questions, just to recap.

I will also say that some teachers have told us that they don’t do both items – listening and reading – depending on their situation. So you are able to, if you like, just to participate in the listening items or, if it suits your needs, the reading items, which Scott will show us now too.

The reason we wanted to show you one from assessment A, B and C, so that you can see the progression. Some teachers have told us that they’re teaching Year 8 and Year 9 and they...they complete Assessment A, some years 7 and 8. So they’re flexible enough according to your needs, because we know all schools have different learning and teaching requirements. Again, the flexibility allows you to choose what is suitable for your needs.

So, perhaps now, Scott, if we go to the next set of assessments.

**Scott Haines:** Yep, sure thing.

**Maria Dikaiou:** Thank you.

**Scott Haines:** Again, the... So to the preview menu option, we can access the reading forms, and when we have a look at these again, they will give us a set of instructions that outline the assessment. These are just general guidelines for the candidate. And when we preview the assessment again, the similar structure... (AUDIO CUTS OUT) ..across the top... (AUDIO CUTS OUT) ..and sometimes you’ll notice the systems on the right-hand side. The system is adaptive, so, depending on the size of the screen that you’re accessing the assessments on, the system will adapt and display appropriate to the screen size. You may notice sometimes that the question is below the stimulus, which is usually either the passage or the image on the left-hand side, and it will adapt if you need to zoom in or out and things like that. So, the reading is a little bit simpler technically. There’s no... (SPEAKS INDISTINCTLY) ..or any of that kind of information.

The left-hand side, there’s usually some important information, and then the question with the answers below. And very similar to the listening, the students can answer the...the question in the best way they can advance, and return back and adjust if needed. They can progress with that answer, and when they hit the end of the assessment, they will be prompted If they have missed that they can go back in... (AUDIO CUTS OUT)

So, in this case, there’s a reading card promoting a business, with a question about who this is for, or what kind of doctor this would be. So this is the reading A form.

And this one here is the reading B form, so a bit more difficult item. This time, the stimulus is in the target language, but the question is in English. And again, the student can take their time to read this. They can answer as they see fit. If they maybe read it, they can adjust their answer as needed and then progress on to the next one.

And the last one is test form C. So, with the reading, what you might notice is that the reading passages can be a bit longer in the harder test forms and harder items. And in reading, you might also notice that, like the listening, we had two items on the one page. There can be multiple items for the same passage. So they only have to...they read through the one...passage once and then they might be between one and, say, three items that relate to the same reading passage. But, in terms of answering the question, it’s the same process. They can take the time to read this, provide an answer. If they continue on, they might realise, actually, “Maybe I had the wrong one.” They can adjust their answer. Especially in the case where there are multiple questions on the same passage, they might realise by looking at the next question. They can always return back, adjust the response, and then progress onwards.

**Maria Dikaiou:** OK. Just one question here for you and Fu. We have a question regarding the order of questions and options, and the question is, if the order of questions and order of options can be set to be randomised every time we use the test.

**Scott Haines:** Unfortunately, not at this stage. So, the question order and the items here will be consistent across students, so that is something to keep in mind. But, yes, unfortunately it doesn’t randomise in that specific way.

**Maria Dikaiou:** OK. So, if we can just have a look at these reading items, again, you can see, as Scott has said, a very accessible text, a short scene-setting, if you like, an advertisement, question in English, multiple-choice, choice of one or four answers. And they can change the answers. Here, of course, you can control how much time you actually spend on each particular reading item. But I think, even just from the three examples that we have shown you, that there are a different range of texts that are used, so that students can become familiar with different texts, different language, accessible...and, again, a real focus on understanding and choosing the correct answer in English, and, obviously, further up, there are some questions in the target language to be answered in the target language as well. And some questions, just like the listening items that Scott showed us, might – not all questions, but some – might have two questions, but relating to the same text.

OK. Scott or Fu, would you like to add anything more? No? OK.

**Fusae Nojima:** Yep. Sorry, Maria. Yes. I’ve got one thing.

**Maria Dikaiou:** Yes. Thank you, Fu.

**Fusae Nojima:** Just the recommended testing time is 40 minutes. It’s not... The system is flexible. So, after 40 minutes, it wouldn’t shut it down. But 40 minutes is the recommended time to do this test.

**Maria Dikaiou:** And just on that – and thank you very much for raising it – some teachers have told us that it hasn’t been... For whatever reason they have started, let’s say, Assessment A, but the class has been interrupted, they’ve had to stop. So they’ve been able to save the work where it is and complete it in another session, so that...you are able to do that with these assessments. And teachers have found that very, very helpful.

If we can now just proceed, because we...I just want to very, very quickly show you how these can be aligned to the Victorian curriculum. We’ve chosen just the 7 and 8 curriculum, just for a period...because of the time allocated to this PD, but I think it’s important for us to see that, from the band description and from the test items, the assessment items that you have seen, that in the band description, students are able to expand their range of vocabulary, make clearer distinctions between sounds and intonation patterns, develop their grammatical knowledge, become more familiar with features of different types of text, and so on. I don’t want to read each one, but I just do want to alert you to the fact that these are aligned to the Victorian curriculum, and, regardless of which assessment you use, whatever level you use, you will be able to see that they do align. As we said, the assessments are very flexible. So you can choose.

In terms of... Beg your pardon, again. That... I seem... Here we go. I hope you can...you can see all that. This is just one example, again, looking at...not just the two that we have showed you, but all the assessment items, Communicating strand, the sub-strands, Reflecting, Creating and Informing. There are...there are more. I’ve only chosen three just... just to give you an idea. Related...related, of course, to the content descriptions and, I’m sorry, Alicia, but I can’t see on my screen the elaborations, just to give you an idea of how they do all interconnect. I don’t know if there’s anything I can...I can do there. Please trust me that I do have the elaborations on the other side. When you do get these, you will be able to see it. So you’re able to see that the assessment items are related to the curriculum information in the F-10, they’re visible on your screen. OK, they’re not in mine for some reason.

In the second sub-strand... Understanding again... The sub-strand... I’ve only chosen systems of language – there are others – but, as I said, I just wanted to give a very big overview, a quick overview, so that you can see how these online assessments can be aligned and are aligned to the Victorian curriculum. Remember that they are for receptive use. They’re not the only...and they are not the only form of assessment, but they certainly will help you and will guide you with your teaching.

And again, from the Achievement Standards, here is some more information, and again, we’ve only chosen French, so that you can see that with the assessment items...where you’re able to align them to the achievement standards.

OK. I have no idea why my screen has sort of shrunk. I’m sure there’s a very...very... Again, it is important that you preview, so that you use the items that are suitable for your current situation.

OK. We’ll just move forward now, to where you can find help. And as Fu and Scott have already told us and shown us, there is registration support. There is the help page on the ACER website. We also have, on the ACER and VCAA website, quite a number of frequently asked questions.

If you are working remotely, it is possible for you to undertake the assessments whilst working remotely. And we have provided information there for you as well.

On the ACER website, there are also, for every step of the way, step-by-step instructions and videos for you to have a look at if you require some more help, particularly if you’re using them for the first time, And if, for whatever reason, you’re...you need some more help or need some help straightaway, please call or email either us at the VCAA, or ACER, and we’ll give you their information, so that you can access that information...access that information and get help straightaway. We’ve provided the telephone number there for you for ACER, so that you can speak with Fu and Scott. There’s also an email, if you prefer to email. And the same with the VCAA.

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