## CercleS Focus Group on "Language Testing and Assessment"

## Report October 2024

This is an email to all those who have been interested in the activities of the CercleS Focus Group on "Language Testing and Assessment" over the years. It is also a follow-up of the meeting we had in September in Durham.

### 1. Focus Group meeting in Durham: outcomes

Prior to the CercleS Conference in Durham in September we had a very productive focus group meeting with approximately 30 participants and have discussed the following three issues:

- The impact of the CEFR CV's action-oriented approach on university language testing and assessment
- The impact of the COVID pandemic on university language testing and assessment
- The impact of AI on university language testing and assessment

You will find the outcomes of the group work in the file attached.

A big thank you to all participants! Barbara, Julia, Laurent and myself enjoyed the meeting with you and were very much impressed by your active engagement and animated discussions.

### 2. Upcoming webinar "Leveraging AI Tools for Language Testing: Material Development and Test Task Creation" on November 19th at 16:00 CET

We are very happy to announce that on November 19th, 2024, at 16:00 hrs CET, **Alena Hradilová and Kateřina Chudová** from Masaryk University in Brno will chair a **webinar on AI** in which they will provide ideas for using AI effectively in assessment materials and will present examples from use in their Language Centre.

The webinar entitled "**Leveraging AI Tools for Language Testing: Material Development and Test Task Creation**" will focus on using selected AI tools to develop language testing materials for university-level students and convert them into test tasks. After a brief introduction on the role of AI in enhancing language learning, Alena and **Kateřina** will explore their approach to creating teaching materials and tests. They will demonstrate the process of producing selected language test tasks using several AI tools in their free version, showcasing how to clone such tasks. Attendees will be encouraged to sign up for these tools beforehand. They will then work in breakout rooms to test the tools and create tasks based on detailed descriptions.

More detailed information about the webinar and about registration procedures will follow in a separate email.

### 3. Göttingen workshop in February 2025

We are pleased to announce that – after a longer break – we will organise the 8th *Göttingen Workshop on language teaching, learning and assessing*, to take place on February 21st and 22nd, 2025. This time we will focus on the **integrated skills approach in teaching and assessment**. It is planned to organise this workshop in hybrid format.

You will find a brief presentation at the end of the attached workshop summary of our meeting Durham. More detailed information will follow soon.

**4. Handover of the Focus Group co-ordination**

The CercleS Focus Group on "Language Testing and Assessment" was launched in November 2009 at a CercleS event in Toulouse. Together with my colleague Nicole Wolder, and more recently with Barbara Sawicka, Julia Zabala Delgado and Laurent Rouveyrol, we have tried to organise focus group meetings during CercleS conferences, at CercleS events, the Göttingen workshops and on additional occasions.

- I am looking back at **twelve** successful and very inspiring **Focus Group meetings** with you,
- and so far **seven Göttingen workshops**.
- One major outcome of our focus group is the **NULTE network**, the "Network of University Language Testers in Europe",
- as well as the NULTE agreement on **mutual recognition** of our national certificates.
- A major event has been the publication of the **CEFR Companion Volume** by the Council of Europe, which has led to
- the development of the **VITbox resources**, co-financed by the European Centre of Modern Languages,
- and to the implementation of the **action-oriented approach** and the use of **real-life scenarios** in language testing and assessment. (*You know where my heart lies* ☺.)

All in all, I have tried to keep everybody on track with what is going on in terms of language testing and assessment at university, with Council of Europe developments and with language assessment policy issues, and I have tried to initiate new activities and projects as well as the revision of existing practices. Unfortunately, I have not done as much as I had wished. In my main function I have to act as Director of ZESS, and some health issues over the past few years have not been helpful either.

It is now time to hand over the baton to younger colleagues, and I am very pleased to see that my excellent colleagues **Barbara Sawicka** and **Laurent Rouveyrol** will take over the role of focus group coordinators, under the supervision of the new CercleS President **Julia Zabala Delgado**.

If you want to get more actively involved, have new ideas or projects, please contact Barbara (barbara.sawicka@put.poznan.pl) and Laurent (Laurent.Rouveyrol@sorbonne-nouvelle.fr).

I would like to thank everybody who took part in one of our focus group events for your fruitful contribution, thank those who helped to organise workshops and meetings, but also the various CercleS Executives over the years who provided considerable support for our focus group, and last but not least the colleagues who assisted me most over the past 15 years; a particular *thank you* goes to Julia, Barbara, Laurent and last but not least to Nicole. Nicole has always made sure that the ball kept rolling and that we addressed important and pressing issues.

Don't worry, I'll still be around and I hope to meet many of you at one of the next focus group meetings or webinars, and hopefully when we meet for our forthcoming workshop in Göttingen in February 2025.

Kind regards,

Johann

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