

Report of CES Rating Review Team
May 24, 2018

This is the final report of the AVLIC CES Rating Review Team and reflects the discussions and recommendations of the team. We met in Vancouver from January 15-17, 2018 to complete our work.

Consultant Team:

- Betty Colonomos
- Anita Harding
- Sara MacFayden
- Amy Parsons
- Debra Russell
- Marty Taylor

Task:

AVLIC Canadian Evaluations Committee Chair, Debbie Parliament, appointed the team and their task was to conduct an evaluation of the current rating process for the CES Phase Three: Test of Interpretation Rating Process. The team was asked to provide recommendations to the AVLIC Board of Directors. We met two times over several days (August 2017 and January 2018) in addition to completing work via Skype calls and emails. During the January 2018 meeting the committee was joined by Debbie Parliament, CES Committee Chair and Jen Best, AVLIC Executive Director. Their role was to observe the discussions and decisions and to provide contextual background information as required by the committee.

Administrative Aspects

Our task in January was to complete the work identified in our August 2017 report, addressing administrative aspects. During the course of the meeting, our discussions led to a full disclosure of the financial aspects of operating the AVLIC CES, which resulted in the following recommendations:

1. **Financial Responsibility**

Based on financial information provided by AVLIC and received for this meeting, it is clear the the AVLIC Board of Director's has chosen to continue to offer the Test of Interpretation at a loss of \$30,000.00 per year.

Recommendation: Therefore, this committee is recommending that the TOI be suspended and not offered until it can be delivered in a way that is consistent with effective testing principles AND in that is at minimum cost-recoverable for AVLIC. The financial losses incurred over the past few years have a significant impact on AVLIC and should be of concern for each member, including the entire Board of Director's.

2. External Testing Body

Tied to the above recommendation, a significant challenge is that AVLIC, and the voluntary, elected CES Committee are trying to manage a standardized testing process without the necessary skills and qualifications to do so. Other countries have removed the testing processes from the professional organizations, for example, the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) system in Australia and the recent changes within RID leading to the creation of an independent testing body¹. This ensures that the resources, qualifications and specialized knowledge of interpreter assessment can be harnessed in one body, leaving the professional association to pursue its mandate of advocating for the profession, advancing standards and providing membership services.

At the current time, it would appear AVLIC is primarily a testing organization, placing it in a conflict of interest position, and a position of not being able to have the skills, aptitudes and experience to operate a standardized testing system. As a professional organization, its mandate of supporting the development of the profession would be better served, and ultimately the Deaf community would be better served, if AVLIC functioned solely as a professional membership-driven association.

As stated in our August 2017 report we are **strongly in support** of an independent testing model, based on the framework and resources that we have developed for the report.

Recommendation: AVLIC engage in a thorough analysis of the option for working with an external testing body that currently exists, or if there is no suitable existing testing and certification body, then consider the creation of an independent testing and accreditation body.

This option analysis process could begin by asking this same group of consultants to examine the options in conjunction with their suggestions for a standardized testing process and report back to AVLIC prior to the next AGM in 2019.

3. Increasing the Number of Successful Candidates

Based on the information reviewed by the team, there appear to be challenges with test takers proceeding to take the TOI when they may be unprepared. We also recognize that the previous TOI workshops did not result in significant increases in TOI candidate success, and yet there is still a need to support members in obtaining the Certificate of Interpretation. `

¹ See RID website for complete description of CAESLI system and <https://www.naati.com.au> for the NAATI system

Given that the data reveal that members are not successful on the TOI due to insufficient language skills, the team recommends

3.1 Language Readiness Assessment

- Members submit two language samples, one of formal ASL and one of formal English. This would be managed through an on-line platform, and candidates would be presented with questions or prompts, have 45 minutes to prepare a response to the prompts, prior to be taped using formal English and formal ASL.
- Deaf interpreters would be required to provide two samples of ASL and use of gestural communication.
- These samples are to be assessed by language mentors who provide a clear statement of readiness to proceed to the TOI, or a recommendation that the member seek language mentoring and community supports to address the language needs.
- Members that demonstrate the language proficiency required are then invited to proceed to the next step.

Deliverable: We have supplied a Language Readiness rubric in August 2017 and we recommend that this be available to members in both ASL and English.

4. Pre-requisites for Test Candidates

The team recommends:

- Candidates for the Test of Interpretation be:
 - o AVLIC members for a period of 3 years (this can include one year as a student member plus two additional years as an active member OR three years as an active member)
 - o Three years of interpreting experience
 - o Successful completion of the Written Test of Knowledge.
 - o Have documented a minimum of 36 hours of professional development over the past 3 years

Members meeting the Language Readiness Requirements and the necessary Pre-Requisites are then invited to take the TOI. They have two years to take the test, after which point their eligibility expires, and they would have to begin the process again should they wish to pursue the TOI.

- AVLIC will provide on line resources to assist candidates in conducting a self-assessment of their readiness, including:

- Video sample of a successful COI holder with the rubric and examples of why the candidate was successful
- Information about the aptitudes and traits of successful interpreter practitioners (ex: Bontempo's &/or MacNamara's work)
- The TOI Rubric that can be applied to own interpreting practice
- Other resources deemed to support interpreter development (websites, current readings, samples of videos, etc.)

5. Rater Qualifications

The team recommends **TOI Raters**² with the following qualifications be recruited for a three-year contract cycle and that in year two of the contracts that AVLIC recruit new Raters in order to stagger the appointments to the rating pool and maintain a consistent number of raters.

6. Rating Tools

The current rating process is insufficiently described to provide consistency among rating teams and this can impact reliability among the rating teams. We believe the criteria is valid in that the features used to determine a pass/fail performance are the evidence-based linguistic features and consistent across the interpreting body of literature.

The team recommends:

- AVLIC produce a clear and concise statement of what the TOI standard is so that members and consumers may understand what the test is designed to measure and what candidates must demonstrate in order to pass.
- AVLIC ensure that there are outlines of key points for each segment for raters
- **Deliverable:** We have supplied a recommended resource document with our August 2017 materials.

² We are purposely using the phrase "TOI Raters" to refer to both deaf and hearing raters, who we are suggesting rate together. The use of the phrase Message Equivalency has served AVLIC well over the past 25 years, however more current research and literature from the interpreting field helps us to understand that the "equivalency" term is less useful, in that people believe it means every word/sign must be represented. It also does not reflect the idea that an interpreted interaction will always be different – it can be accurate in meaning, effective for the participants but that it will always be slightly different than the source message in terms of grammar, cultural conventions, and the ways in which the interpreter is an active participant in the discourse (see Roy, 2000; Janzen, 2005 for further discussion of these concepts)

- **Deliverable:** We have supplied a recommended rubric for AVLIC and we recommend that this be available to members in both ASL and English.

7. Rating Process

Recommendation:

- Rating teams be comprised of one deaf and one hearing rater, who assess the candidates together. Initially a team of four raters to be trained.
- Rating could occur face to face, or it could also occur virtually, with facilitator(s) and rating teams working remotely, using a suitable web-based platform.
- Facilitation of the rating needs to be fully described in terms of role and the ways in which it can be most useful while not impeding on reliability of rating.

8. Rating Rubric

Deliverable: The committee has developed a rubric to be used by raters of the Test of Interpretation and that document is attached to this report.

9. Rating Team Training

Given that we have created a rating rubric, we recognize that rating teams will require suitable training in applying the rubric to TOI performances.

The team recommends the training be developed with the following features:

- Four-day retreat grounded in adult education activity based learning principles. This can include but is not limited to:
 - mock training by segments/discourse types
 - developmental training specific materials
 - Specific enhanced training for Deaf raters with limited experience – add to pool via orientation. This is necessary in that traditionally Deaf people have limited access to the language used in IEPs so prior to working with hearing raters it would be helpful to have an orientation to the terminology that may be unfamiliar to them.
 - Paid training
 - ASL and ENG materials ready at same time
 - Rubrics in ENG and ASL
 - Protocols for dealing with rating process - how will the rating happen (non- evaluative, non-judgmental, confidentiality)
 - Practice materials with previous test takers
 - Pair experiences or senior mentors with new raters for a mentoring approach
 - Training with fishbowl techniques

10. Feedback for TOI Candidates

The team recommends that candidates be offered the following feedback after taking the TOI

- Facilitator gather feedback from rating team, and insert in a template
- Provide a copy of the rubric for the candidate
- Continue to allow candidates to see their video with outside person per the current process, with an approved diagnostician and/or ASL and/or interpreting mentors.

11. Test Documentation

The current administrative processes appear to be insufficiently described to provide consistency among administrators and contractors, and test takers. We believe there is a need for **detailed administrative manuals** that are consistently reviewed and updated in order to maintain a current record of test administration. We remain concerned that there appears to be limited knowledge transfer between administrators, contractors, CES committee members and AVLIC Board of Directors, resulting in significant gaps in history, experience, tools, and relevant test data.

12. Demographic Data Collection

Deliverable: The committee has developed a structure for the demographic detail to be gathered and the document is attached to this report.

13. Setting the Bar

The team recommends that if the original 1990 videos exist to review those samples for relevant data such as: Coda pass rate; traits or profile aspects of the first group of certified interpreters and then archive the material in a way that will not be lost. If the videos do not exist, use the oldest existing videos that are available.

14. Communicating about the New Tools/Steps

While the standard has not been changed the work of the committee has allowed us to **improve the tools to help the process become as transparent as possible for members and consumers.** The stance taken behind each of the recommendations is the desire to support test takers and ultimately enhance the field.

The team recommends:

- AVLIC develop a strategic communication plan to reveal the tools and steps taken by AVLIC to support test takers and recruit a person who has the communication and marketing experience to develop a clear and comprehensive plan. This does not need to be an RFP rather a job advertisement targeting the skills necessary for this communication plan.
- AVLIC hire a competent CES administrator who can oversee implementation of the deliverables.

Summary

This final report highlights the recommendations of the committee, which include suspending the TOI, examining the options for cost effective test delivery which may include an external testing organization assuming management of the process, and/or improving the processes to support candidate success, and the more detailed view of the components that can support a reliable and valid approach to assessing interpreters that are candidates for national accreditation.

Respectfully submitted,

AVLIC CES Rating Review Team

Betty Colonomos

Anita Harding

Sara MacFayden

Amy Parsons

Debra Russell

Marty Taylor

May 31 2018