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DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION
INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION GOVERNING BOARD

Group of National Experts on the AHELO Feasibility Study

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE GENERIC SKILLS STRAND

6th meeting of the AHELO Group of National Experts

Paris, 28-29 March 2011

This document was prepared by the CAE.

The AHELO GNE is invited to
- _TAKE NOTE of progress report_
- _COMMENT on progress as necessary_

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Overview

1.   This summary of progress discusses the last phase of AHELO Module A adaptation and translation, and the progress of the pre-implementation phase. CAE completed all of its obligations for the Module A adaptation and translation phase on December 31, 2010; work on pre-implementation began in early 2011. This report outlines the final phase of translations and adaptation, and country progress on pre-implementation for the original cohort of Generic Skill Strand countries (Finland, Korea, Kuwait, Mexico, Norway, United States).

Final Translation Review Phase

Status: Complete

Overview

2.   In the final translation review phase, countries empirically tested their reconciled translations through the utilization of Cognitive Workshops/Labs. The Cognitive Labs are intended to ensure that the translation of the tasks from English into each country's language:

    1.   does not alter the constructs measured;

    2.   is interpreted by the students in the ways originally intended; and

    3.   is not more difficult for the country's students to read and understand than it would be if the tasks had been written originally in the country's language.

3.   There was no expectation to have completed written responses. All pilots were carried out with paper and pencil. Once the Cognitive Labs were complete, the country teams integrated two types of changes to the performance tasks: within country changes and across country changes. We first describe each respective country findings as a result of the Cognitive Labs. Next we outline the types of changes made to the tasks, both within country and across countries.

Cognitive Labs

Finland

4.   Finland was the first to complete their Cognitive Workshops. For each task, the Finnish team conducted six think-alouds (total n=12). Generally, the Finnish team found the performance tasks to be functioning as intended, with some minor exceptions. They provided a list of recommended changes to CAE that did not merely impact the Finnish translations, but also the performance tasks as a whole. As a result, CAE decided to revise the Work Plan to incorporate an additional step: country-wide revisions. This added step further ensured that cross-country performance tasks are as closely aligned to one another as possible.

Korea

5.   Korea completed their Cognitive Workshops with six students total (n=3 per task). The team generally found the performance tasks to be functioning appropriately. Both Finland and Korea noted the importance of providing explicit instructions as to the criteria for evaluation. In the February 2010 meeting in New York, this same issue was addressed. It was agreed that merely more explicit instructions would not be sufficient in describing the expectations of the performance task. As a result, the CAE team agreed

to develop a "mini" performance task that could be distributed to students in advance of AHELO implementation. However, this mini performance task was not an appropriate item to distribute prior to the Cognitive Workshops as it was not related to the purpose of these think-alouds.

Kuwait

6.   Kuwait completed their Cognitive Workshops with eight students total (n=4 per task). Kuwait, in particular, encountered some challenges in translating English into Arabic. Standard Arabic writing differs greatly from English. As Kuwait's GNE and NPM Imad Al-Atiqi writes:

> All documents needed multistep translation. The first step concentrated on accuracy to the English version but eventually was not in a style deemed to be suitable to students and assessment staff. Thus linguistic adaptation took more effort than was originally planned.

Mexico

7.   Mexico's Cognitive Labs are complete; they conducted 13 workshops total (n=6 for Catfish, n=7 for Lake-to-River). The country representatives found the performance tasks to have no major issues. One important aspect of the performance task that came to light as a result of the Cognitive Labs was the issue of political governance and reliability. In Mexico, political entities may not be considered as trustworthy as they are in the United States. In the future, a cross-country discussion surrounding what are considered reliable and unreliable sources will be important to integrate into the adaptation and translation phase.

Norway

8.   Norway finished their last Cognitive Workshop. The team conducted the labs with five students per task, for a total of 10 students. Generally, their overall impression was that the performance tasks are operating as intended and there are no major issues.

USA

9.   CAE continues to include the team members in communications and keep them up to date on what is happening with the other countries. However, the US team is still awaiting funding for participation in AHELO. Once secured, CAE will support the US team in conducting Cognitive Labs if they chose to do so. The US team has provided feedback on various aspects of the study, including providing input on motivation items, as well as clarifying instructions for the mini-performance task. In both cases, CAE has integrated their suggestions.

Final Performance Task Modifications

Status: Complete

10.   The Cognitive Workshops/Labs provided important evidence and feedback on the translations. Participating countries incorporated final changes into each PT based upon feedback from the Cognitive Labs. Changes included:

4.   Within country modification (for example, spelling errors, sentence structure errors, tense issues and so on).

5.   Across country modifications – issues that every country integrated into their respective performance tasks. CAE collected these recommended changes from each of the countries, synthesized them, and disseminated a list of changes. Countries integrated the changes and

provided CAE with PDFs of their final performance tasks. A brief summary of the country-wide changes are described, below.

Catfish

1. Removed the word "reasonable" from Question 1b, Question 2b, Question 3b, and Question 4 because this term does not translate well across other countries.

2. Changed the *formatting* of the instructions in the second sentence in Paragraph 3 to include bullets so that students better understand criteria for entering a response (none of the wording changed).

3. Changed some of the titles, dates, and other minor wording.

4. Added a label to the map document.

Lake to River

1. Changed the *formatting* of the instructions in the second sentence in Paragraph 3 to include bullets so that students better understand criteria for entering a response (none of the wording changed).

2. Changed footnote 2 in one of the document libraries to reflect common grammar structures.

3. Changed a few dates to maintain consistency.

Summary of Recommendations for Adaptation/Translation Phase

Status: Complete

Recommendation 1

11.   A mini-performance task that describes the nature of a performance task, provides a shortened example task, and outlines rationale for a good response should be made available to students. In fact, this will be done in the implementation phase of the AHELO feasibility study. Specifically, students selected for administration will be able to access the mini-performance task prior to implementation. In moving forward, it should be determined whether this mini-performance task should be made available in advance, as with the feasibility study, or during test administration, thereby ensuring that all students have been provided access to the mini-performance task.

Recommendation 2

12.   Integrate discussions about the reliability of sources in different countries. For example, as noted above, the reliability of government documents may be viewed differently from country to country. This issue is also addressed in our recommendation regarding original performance task development. By developing original performance tasks, reliability of source documentation will not be entrenched in a single country's cultural norms.

Recommendation 3

13.   Performance tasks should be developed through a collaborative process among CAE and participating countries.

Recommendation 4

14.   Include a rough initial translation for the adaptation phase. It was not until countries began translations that they were able to see some of the more substantial issues. It would be important for the participating countries to be able to discuss these issues amongst one other. As the study was initially designed, this could not occur.

Recommendation 5

15.   Integrate a test translation company. Similar to the AHELO Generic Skills Strand pre-implementation phase, the translation company would be responsible for initial translation; country teams would be responsible for revision and reconciliation of the translations. This would contribute to consistency in translator qualifications across all the participating countries. Additionally, it would ease time and country workload constraints. Lastly, it would also allow OECD to collect some verification data.

Pre-Implementation Phase: Status Update

Status: In process

Work Plans for Testing Operations

16.   CAE continues to develop detailed work plans for using performance tasks in the field, for either a full implementation of the Generic Skills Strand of the AHELO feasibility study – Phase 2, or for a smaller scale implementation. CAE developed and is finalizing draft work plans for (a.) overseeing proctor training, (b.) supporting NPMs, (c.) managing scoring of performance tasks, and (d.) managing data output. The work plans will be delivered to OECD in the next few weeks.

Online Platform Adaptation & Translation

17.   The finalized version of the AHELO platform interfaces have been configured in English on the ITS staging site. CAE completed a first round of User Acceptance Testing (UAT) to verify functionality.

18.   ITS then exported Internet platform documents for the student, proctor, and scorer interfaces. These documents were sent to an external translation company to produce translations for platform text. A total of 19 related Internet platform documents, including instructions, were sent to country teams to begin the process of revising contracted translations and entering performance task translations:

> GS.48_Directions_for_AHELO_Internet_Platform_Documents
>
> GS.49_AHELO_PT_Instructions_and_Questions_*TESTLANGUAGE*
>
> GS.50_AHELO-P-LR-INTL-Document Library_ *TESTLANGUAGE*
>
> GS.51_Lake-to-River-Document3_English
>
> GS.52_Lake-to-River-Document7_English
>
> GS.53_AHELO-P-CA-INTL-Document Library_ *TESTLANGUAGE*
>
> GS.54_Catfish-Document3-map_English
>
> GS.55_Catfish-Document7-Chart1_English
>
> GS.56_Catfish-Document7-Chart2_English
>
> GS.57_AHELO_Displays_UI_ *TESTLANGUAGE*

GS.58_Stopsign_English

GS.59_Student_StartTest_OECD_ *TESTLANGUAGE*

GS.60_ Student_StartTest_OECD_English_Reference

GS.61_Student_StartTest_Interface_Screenshots

GS.62_Proctor_Interface_OECD_ *TESTLANGUAGE*

GS.63_Proctor_Interface_OECD_English_Reference

GS.64_Proctor_Interface_Screenshots

GS.65_Human_Scorer_OECD_ *TESTLANGUAGE*

GS.66_ Human_Scorer_OECD_English_Reference

19.   Fully translated documents and revisions were returned to CAE in early March 2010 and revisions have been validated by an external translation company. ITS is currently engaged in the process of uploading the ITS documents for Finland, Korea, Kuwait, Mexico, and Norway.

20.   Once the Internet platform documents have been fully uploaded to the ITS staging site, CAE and country teams will begin another round of UAT to ensure correct display of text and verify functionality.

Proctor Training Manuals, Online Reference Tools, and Sampling Guidelines

21.   CAE has finished modifying its CLA proctor manual for AHELO. The finalized English content for the AHELO proctor reference manual has been sent to an external translation company to produce an initial translation for Finland, Korea, Kuwait, Mexico, and Norway. Country teams will begin reviewing and revising the initial translation in March/April 2011.

22.   The first stage of development for the proctor training video is almost complete. A storyboard of the video that includes instructional captions has been finalized in English. The captions for the video storyboard have been sent to an external translation company to produce an initial translation for Finland, Korea, Kuwait, Mexico, and Norway. Country teams will begin reviewing and revising the initial translation in March/April 2011. The second stage of development will follow once final translations are available. This stage will incorporate the full production of the video in each test language.

23.   Finalized English versions of sampling and recruitment best practices have been prepared as an addendum to the AHELO Proctor Reference Manual. This addendum is comprised of general recommendations and guidance provided to US institutions administering the CLA. Initial translations of this sampling and recruitment addendum can be drafted through a third party translation company if these best practices are deemed appropriate for the AHELO feasibility study. The main intent of such an addendum would be to support overall sampling efforts in Module E.

Test Result Report Parameters

24.   CAE is in the process of designing the results report information for the OECD, country-level results, and individual higher education institution level results. Design parameters will include a determination of what information to include on each level of report, the format for presenting the information and the explanatory and cautionary information to be included. CAE is also looking to confirm report recipients and distribution approach.