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PROPOSAL TO FUND THE ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION LANGUAGE RESOURCE CENTER (AELRC), 2022-2026, UNDER THE LANGUAGE RESOURCE CENTERS

PROGRAM (Assistance Listing Number 84.229A)

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# PLAN OF OPERATION

Georgetown University, in partnership with the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) and ACTFL proposes to continue the Assessment and Evaluation Language Resource Center (AELRC) as part of the U.S. Department of Education’s Language Resource Centers Program for 2022-2026. Following its foundation in 2014, the AELRC has become a leading innovator and resource provider for best practices in assessment and evaluation, helping foreign language educators improve and transform their programs, ensuring accountability to students and society, and articulating the value of foreign language studies in the world today. The Georgetown, ACTFL, and CAL partnership provides an exceptionally strong base of resources, expertise, capacity, and reach in fulfilling the overall goal of the Language Resource Centers, to improve national capacity for teaching and learning foreign languages.

## Project Design

In the 2022-26 cycle, the AELRC will focus on three primary content areas across projects and activities: (1) Expanding the availability and use of our highly successful assessments for Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs); (2) Supporting the implementation of a ground-breaking approach to useful language program evaluation, and (3) Overcoming barriers to effective K-16 program articulation as a high-impact area for expanding national foreign language capacity. These three focal areas are aligned with the AELRC’s mission, build upon our previous work and research, reflect pressing needs in U.S. foreign language education, and directly support the Department of Education’s priorities for LRCs. Below, we provide an explanation of each focal topic followed by a detailed plan for the projects, activities, and outcomes that align with these three priority areas.

***Expanding the availability and use of LCTL assessments:*** Effective, valid assessments are essential to high-quality language education. LCTL teachers need reliable assessments designed for their unique contexts, including both summative and formative tools. Educators and program administrators need a comprehensive understanding of the purpose, uses, and best practices of language assessments to be able to use them to improve instruction and learning and make appropriate programmatic decisions. Challenges particular to LCTLs can include lack of available and appropriate assessments, and limited pre-service or in-service training about language assessments. The AELRC’s activities are designed to address these often-unmet needs.

The AELRC has a proven track record of developing high-quality assessments and tests as well as language assessment training materials. For example, in 2018-22, AELRC’s professional development offerings impacted more than 1,000 language educators and language professionals, demonstrating the wide reach of our work. In the 2022-26 cycle, we will build on existing projects by: (a) expanding assessments for LCTLs by creating materials in Arabic, Cantonese, Korean, Mandarin, and Ukrainian; (b) developing and providing language assessment training in both in-person and innovative digital formats; and (c) developing assessment materials specifically for young LCTL learners.

***Supporting high-quality LCTL programs through transformative language program evaluation practices:*** Since 2014 the AELRC has led the field in applying utilization-focused evaluation to language programs (Patton, 2008; Norris, 2016; Davis, 2018). This approach, often referred to as useful program evaluation, is a systematic process for collecting, analyzing, and using program-level data to answer evaluation questions and focuses on the application of evaluation outcomes to inform decisions and improve programs. For the 2022-26 cycle, we will maintain a strong focus on language program evaluation because high-quality evaluation is one

of the most impactful ways LCTL programs can ensure they are building and implementing effective programs. Well-planned evaluation can help language programs attract and retain students, ensure they are meeting their learning targets, and strengthen instruction.

The AELRC’s research to date shows that educators often have limited understanding of and training in program evaluation (Malone, Stevenson, & Pineault, 2021). Our projects and outcomes in the 2022-2026 cycle will build on our previous research in K-12 and higher education contexts by (a) devising new, research-supported evaluation tools that focus on student equity and diversity; and (b) delivering summer institutes tailored to the needs of LCTL and community college educators.

***Overcoming barriers to K-16 program articulation:*** In 2022-26, Georgetown, ACTFL, and CAL will collaborate to conduct a national study on program articulation from K-12 into higher education contexts. This study is designed to address some of the most critical practical barriers to expanding foreign language capacity in the U.S.

To develop high levels of language proficiency, students must be able to move from secondary to post-secondary language programs and continue building their language skills without beginning the same language at an introductory level. However, the most recent Modern Languages Association (MLA) foreign language enrollments survey in higher education that foreign language enrollments have declined by 9.2% from 2013 to 2016; this loss underscores the need for strong student retention at the transition point into higher education. Effective K-16 articulation is facilitated by state-level policies, incentives including the Seal of Biliteracy, and the policies and practices of institutions and language programs; articulation affects student retention, curricula and learning continuity for students who do continue in language classes.

The proposed study extends and expands the AELRC’s ground-breaking initial studies on the Seal of Biliteracy, which promoted Equity in awarding the Seal and revealed the different and sometimes conflicting practices used by states and institutions for recognizing and awarding the Seal (Subtirelu, Borowczyk, Hernández, & Venezia, 2019; Borowczyk, 2020). The articulation study will magnify the underlying issues of equity and articulation by documenting how students’ skills and achievements are recognized as they matriculate into higher education, the barriers they encounter, and what can be done to overcome these. The combined network and reach of Georgetown, ACTFL, and CAL will allow the study to draw on a wide range of language experts, policy makers, and language programs. The study will include a focus on program articulation at community colleges and Minority Serving Institutions.

Collectively, these three areas (***Expanding the availability and use of LCTL assessments, Supporting the implementation of useful program evaluation, and Overcoming barriers to K-16 program articulation)*** represent the core work of the renewed AELRC over the next four years and will be realized through five goals and their associated activities. Across activities, we will prioritize the creation of innovative digital materials and tools. The pandemic has accelerated and expanded the use of online learning while demonstrating how dynamic and effective these modes can be when done well. Additionally, for LCTL educators and underserved programs, digital formats can help to increase equity because they provide widespread access to resources, and can be used to create online networks that connect LCTL educators across the

U.S. Our project outcomes include the development of extensive digital resources that will be freely available on the web. In addition, we will tailor our outreach, dissemination, and materials formats to help ensure that we are reaching our target audiences.

***Project Goals:*** Based on these focal areas, and building on successful projects from the last two cycles (2014-2018 and 2018-2022), we have developed five project goals designed to improve the nation’s capacity for teaching and learning foreign languages through assessment and useful evaluation. The outcomes and activities within each project goal align to one or more of the areas defined in the Federal Register: teacher training, materials development, assessment, research, and dissemination. Appendix A provides a summary table of activities related to each goal and lists the timeline of outcomes by project year. Appendix A also demonstrates the alignment of activities to the Department of Education’s priorities.

*Project Goal 1: Language Assessment Tools.* Enhance national capacity in language assessment by developing assessment tools and providing professional development in how to use these tools for foreign language educators, with a particular focus on resources for LCTLs, community colleges, and MSIs. To meet this goal, we will develop the assessments and materials listed below along with corresponding research studies, validation work, and training materials.

* 1. *Short-cut proficiency tests:* Since 2014, the AELRC has developed and piloted fourteen C-tests, a type of short-cut proficiency test, and has created a web-based system for sharing these instruments. C-tests are useful for estimating global proficiency quickly and accurately with university, community college, high school and heritage learners using written texts. Work in the 2022-26 will expand on the AELRC’s work creating on C-tests by adding two new languages to the C-test repository, Cantonese and Ukrainian, and by piloting an elicited imitation test, a short-cut proficiency measure that uses speaking to assess language proficiency, in Ukrainian. The purpose of this pilot will be to demonstrate the viability of the elicited imitation format and inform the AELRC’s future development work on this format.

This activity, which will be led by Dr. Lourdes Ortega, an expert on short-cut proficiency assessments and elicited imitation, will have three outcomes: (a) a Cantonese C-test; (b) a Ukrainian C-test; and (c) a Ukrainian elicited imitation proof of concept. To promote short-cut proficiency tests and their use by researchers and educators, we will publicize our work through two presentations at professional conferences such as the East Coast Organization of Language Testers and the ACTFL Convention. We will create at least one updated AELRC brief on this topic and will submit at least one article to a peer-reviewed academic journal based on our research.

* 1. *Intercultural Pragmatic Interactional Competence (IPIC) Assessment:* The AELRC will collaborate with the Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS) at the University of Oregon to develop two new forms of the Intercultural Pragmatic Interactional Competence (IPIC) Assessment in Mandarin. The IPIC is a digital simulation instrument that assesses second language learners’ pragmatic, interactional, and intercultural competence. Through scenarios with varying degrees of social and individual factors (e.g., gender, social distance, power), the assessment tool reflects the individualized, dynamic interactions learners are likely to encounter in real life.

Specifically, in the 2022-26 cycle, we will build on our collaborative work with CASLS during the 2018-22 cycle and use the IPIC Framework to develop career-specific IPICs in Mandarin for medical and business situations and pilot these with our new partners, including one community college partner, Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA), and two MSIs, Portland State University (PSU) and the University of New Mexico (UNM). The AELRC’s role will be to assist with the medical and business domain analyses, to support pilot recruitment, and to work collaboratively with CASLS to analyze the results of piloting work, deliver two

conference presentations, and write one article for a peer-reviewed academic journal based on the research. The project will result in pre/post assessment tools with associated learning modules and validation research that can be used and adapted by other programs. (*Collaboration with the Center for Applied Second Language Studies, Northern Virginia Community College, Portland State University, and the University of New Mexico.)*

* 1. *Oral Proficiency Assessment Tasks:* Working with Georgetown, CAL will develop oral proficiency assessment tools in Arabic and Mandarin that will support classroom-based assessment. These tools will be in the form of banks of oral proficiency assessment tasks and exemplar rated responses in Arabic and Mandarin appropriate for high school and postsecondary contexts. The purpose of the online task banks in Arabic and Mandarin is to provide model assessment tasks for teachers that can be adapted and used in their classrooms. In addition, the sample responses are useful for helping educators understand ACTFL proficiency levels. For both Arabic and Mandarin, our partners at the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) will create a set of five tasks, task responses, and resources for developing similar oral proficiency tasks available in a free but secure manner to educators and researchers in an online format.

The development of the Mandarin task bank will begin with a research study of the oral proficiency assessment needs of community college educators of Mandarin. This needs analysis research will be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal for publication and will simultaneously be used to inform the development of the Mandarin materials. This approach will ensure the final format of the materials is aligned with the authentic needs of community college programs, although they will also be broadly useful in high school and post-secondary contexts in general. This work will be informed by CAL’s previous research on LCTL educators’ assessment needs

(Nier, Di Silvio, & Malone, 2014; Malone, Montee, & Di Silvio, 2010). *(Collaboration with CAL and community colleges.)*

* 1. *Student Oral Proficiency Assessment (SOPA) Training:* CAL will develop an oral proficiency assessment training using the Student Oral Proficiency Assessment (SOPA) framework and conduct an online training session with 10 Korean educators. SOPA is designed for young language learners and assesses PK-8 students’ speaking and listening proficiency according to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. A trained administrator follows a script to administer a series of interactive tasks to pairs of students that allow them to show what they can do in the target language. Educators must receive training to administer and score SOPA. Because there are often limited off-the-shelf options for LCTLs in the U.S., especially for elementary and middle school language learners, SOPA can be used as an adaptable assessment tool that allows programs to evaluate student proficiency. *(Collaboration with CAL.)*
  2. *ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL):* Georgetown and our partners at ACTFL will work collaboratively to identify one LCTL to add to languages assessed by Form E of the ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) test. The AAPPL is a web-based proficiency and performance assessment of K-12 standards-based language learning. The AAPPL Form E is an assessment of Interpersonal Listening and Speaking in which learners participate in a simulated conversation with a virtual chat partner. It is developed for learners in Grades 3 and 4. Georgetown and ACTFL will devise and execute a means to identify the most-needed LTCL to add to ACTFL’s AAPPL assessment via language program data and surveys of the field, as well as feedback from the National Council of State Supervisors of Foreign Languages. In Year 4, the new form will be piloted with 50 learners. This project will help expand resources particularly designed for

assessing young learners. In addition to developing one new AAPPL Form E, ACTFL will also conduct an educator workshop in Year 2 for 20 LCTL educators designed to support educators in building connections between the assessment and instruction. *(Collaboration with ACTFL.)*

*Project Goal 2: Language Assessment Literacy Research and Teacher Training*. Increase language educators’ ability to conduct useful, accurate language assessment, with a focus on LCTLs and teachers working in community colleges and MSIs. The AELRC will provide a series of face-to-face and online professional development opportunities in language assessment for language educators, and will focus on making these trainings available to and relevant for educators working with less commonly taught languages, in community colleges, and in other underrepresented settings.

* 1. *AELRC Multimedia Resource Library:* The AELRC will develop a multimedia and downloadable resource library populated with two primary types of videos: recordings of live webinars and pre-recorded videos series, each supported by related resources. The resource library will be freely available and designed to make assessment and program evaluation information accessible to LCTL educators and underserved programs in an accessible and engaging format.

As part of creating this library, each year the AELRC will also develop and present four 30-minute, synchronous webinars on topics such as C-test uses and the development of the Intercultural Pragmatic Interactional Competence Assessment. Our partners at CAL will contribute to the webinar series in Years 1 and 3. While the AELRC recognizes that day-long and multiple-day institutes and workshops support professional development best, studies also show that short webinars can introduce basic concepts and provide useful support to the field. The webinars will be video recorded and posted on the AELRC’s website and YouTube channel

as part of the AELRC Muti-media Resource Library. Electronic materials such as frameworks, handouts, and other related resources developed for the webinars will be posted along with the recordings. These webinars will be open broadly to foreign language educators and we will conduct targeted advertising and recruitment efforts for LCTL and community college educators, as well as those working with other under-represented programs.

AELRC will also create video series about three different topics as specified below, and each series will be made up of three to four short, standalone videos, about 5 minutes in length, about validity, LCTL assessment, and LCTL language program evaluation. These videos are designed to provide educators with short, accessible introductions to topics from experts in the field, and they can be used as part of professional development workshops or as an independent resource educators can view on their own. Video is an engaging, multimedia format that reflects the evolving way people learn and seek information online. The AELRC video series will cross- link to other resources, including AELRC briefs, webinars, research articles, and professional development opportunities. In order to ensure the series is tailored to the needs of LCTL educators, and to validate the usefulness of this resource, we will elicit educator feedback about the content via short surveys as part of the development process, and will apply this feedback to improve the accessibility of these videos.

* 1. *Conferences:* For more than 20 years, the East Coast Organization of Language Testers (ECOLT) has been a valuable forum for gathering researchers, educators, and professionals working in language assessment both in person and virtually. In collaboration with our partners at CAL, the AELRC will continue its support of this conference to provide a forum for the dissemination of high-quality, peer-reviewed research on language assessment to a national audience of educators, scholars, students, and other professionals, including members of

the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR). Over 100 language testers have participated annually in recent years, and post-conference evaluations reveal high satisfaction (over 4.0 on a 5-point scale) with the conference. In Year 1, ECOLT will be held in collaboration with the Language Assessment Research Conference (LARC) in Chicago, Illinois. In subsequent years, the AELRC will plan and host the ECOLT conference for at least 70 attendees annually with a pre-conference workshop in Year 2 and Year 3 for at least 10 participants. The pre-conference workshop provides in-depth training to educators and researchers about critical topics in language assessment. *(Collaboration with CAL, LARC.)*

* 1. *Assessment for Language Instructors: The Basics:* Georgetown’s partners at CAL will deliver a moderated, online course to 50 language educators each year. The purpose of the course is to help LCTL educators understand the essentials of language assessment. *Assessment: The Basics* has been an ongoing AELRC offering for the past eight years, and in recent years interest has grown with 208 applicants for the Spring 2022 iteration of the course and 428 applicants for the Fall 2021 iteration of the course. Of the 50 participants enrolled in the most recent iteration of the course, 5 participants reported working in a community college and 34 participants reported working in a minority serving school or institution.

Recruitment for all of our courses during the 2022-26 funding cycle will continue to include targeted outreach to LCTL educators working in community colleges and MSIs. The course will be updated in Year 3 with a new module on developing performance tasks and rubrics, and this expanded version of the course will be delivered in Year 4. CAL has received numerous requests from course participants to provide support for rubric development, and this new module will meet this need. (*Collaboration with CAL.)*

* 1. *Foreign Language Assessment Directory (FLAD):* Working with Georgetown, CAL updates and continually maintains a free, online, searchable directory of information about currently available language assessments ([www.cal.org/flad).](http://www.cal.org/flad)) The FLAD also includes a free, web-based tutorial designed to support educators in selecting an assessment, with sections devoted to the needs of heritage educators and post-secondary contexts. In 2022-26, CAL will update the FLAD in Year 1 and Year 3, and focus on adding available LCTL assessments to the directory. To meet the need for information about the availability of LCTL assessments, they will also produce a research report of available assessments by language in Year 4 based on FLAD data. (*Collaboration with CAL.)*
  2. *OPI Training:* Since 2018, the AELRC has collaborated with our partners at ACTFL to provide ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview workshops to 10 language instructors annually at no charge. The workshop introduces participants to the ACTFL rating scale, the structure of the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), and techniques of administering and rating the OPI, including its applications in the language classroom. Participants have been and will continue to represent those educators who will most benefit from this gold-standard professional development: instructors of LCTLs, community college instructors, and instructors from MSIs. Each year, through a recruitment and application process, 10 language instructors from across these groups will be able to participate in an ACTFL OPI workshop for no charge. (*Collaboration with ACTFL.)*

*Project Goal 3: High-impact Research****.*** Improve national capacity for foreign language teaching and learning through high-impact research and research tools on topics of critical importance to foreign language education, including K-16 program articulation and the impact of professional learning and teacher training opportunities in assessment and evaluation. To support

the impact of this research, Georgetown faculty Dr. Alison Mackey and Dr. Lourdes Ortega will guide the research design and publication and dissemination plans for activities under Goal 3. Dr. Mackey, with 25,000 unique citations to her work (h index of 57 and i10 of 88) is the 9th most highly cited scholar (#1 highly cited woman) in Google Scholar’s Applied Linguistics search.

Dr. Ortega, (17,300 citations and in the top twenty scholars for second language acquisition, has an h index of 50 and i10 of 78). Both have published extensively on language learning and research tools and methodology, and Dr. Mackey has published six books on research methodology. They are ideally placed to guide our research and publication plans.

* 1. *K-16 Program Articulation:* The AELRC will work with our partners ACFTL and CAL to design and implement a national study of K-16 program articulation practices and challenges, and, as part of this research, will convene experts and decision-makers from states, institutions, and language programs to discuss the transition to post-secondary language learning, and LCTL language learning in particular. The research will produce findings and practical recommendations related to how K-16 program articulation can be strengthened in pursuit of three goals: (a) expanded language enrollments in higher education; (b) high-level proficiency outcomes; and (c) increased access and diversity of the student population. The research questions will focus on LCTL programs and post-secondary programs, and will include a special focus on community colleges and MSIs.

Results will widely disseminate the findings and recommendations at conferences and virtual meetings and through publications. Project activities and outcomes include a project design document and expert panel in Year 2, a national survey using multiple instruments triangulated with interviews resulting in a research report and conference presentation in Year 3, and in Year 4 at least one peer-reviewed journal article, a white paper, and conference

presentation focused on guidance and recommendations for states and programs. (*Collaboration with ACTFL and CAL.)*

* 1. *Impact Assessment:* Georgetown and ACTFL will investigate the impact of the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview training (see Activity 1.3) for LCTL instructors. The study will focus on the impact of the professional development on participants’ teaching and classroom assessment practices and will leverage survey data from participant workshop evaluations. An impact report, produced in Year 3, will present the findings of the impact assessment and will discuss implications for teaching and curriculum development, and the results of the impact assessment will also be used to improve recruitment of LCTL educators for OPI workshops. (*Collaboration with ACTFL.)*
  2. *Research Databases and Other Resources:* The AELRC will maintain and update our web-based language assessment and program evaluation resources, including: research databases, annotated bibliographies, example evaluations, evaluation instruments, and AELRC briefs. These are hosted on our website and provide free, research-based information to language educators in an accessible format. We will refresh these materials with two updated bibliographies and the addition of two AELRC briefs that focus on how educators can translate research into practice. We will also cross-link and promote our research databases, briefs, and support materials with the AELRC Multimedia Resource Library, including the video series about critical topics in assessment and evaluation, in order to create dynamic self-access learning experiences for our website users.

*Project Goal 4: Program Evaluation Research and Training*. Enhance national capacity in language program evaluation by conducting research and providing training to foreign language educators representing multiple languages, including less commonly taught languages

and a wide range of language program settings (community colleges, K-12, and Minority Serving Institutions). Program evaluation allows foreign language educators and administrators and others involved in promoting language learning in the United States to collect, analyze, and use appropriate data to make decisions about resource distribution, conduct periodic program reviews, reflect on federal accountability requirements, and provide ongoing quality assurance and improvement. Often, program evaluation is perceived as a task imposed by administrators without a clear connection to supporting program outcomes. In the 2022-26 cycle, AELRC evaluation projects will focus on research, professional development, information dissemination, and developing resources aligned with programmatic needs.

* 1. *Program evaluation for promoting student access and diversity:* The AELRC will create and validate at least five program evaluation instruments and tools that allow language programs to understand and evaluate their program’s equity and diversity, including student access to the language program, diversity of the student population, and barriers to promoting equity. These evaluation instruments and tools, which will include a survey, interview protocols, data analysis procedures, and sample evaluation scenarios, will be freely available and will provide programs with much-needed resources to understand their strengths and challenges related to student diversity and equity, and will help them make improvements where needed.

In Year 2, AELRC will conduct an efficacy study by delivering a pilot training about the materials to 15 educators as part of a Summer Evaluation Institute (See Activity 4.2), collecting feedback about the usefulness and efficacy of the evaluation instruments from these educators, and updating and improving the materials based on their feedback. The efficacy study will result in one AELRC brief. After the efficacy study, we will add a website landing page in Year 3 dedicated to using program evaluation to understand and promote student equity and diversity,

and final versions of the evaluation instruments and tools will be freely available to language educators.

* 1. *Summer Evaluation Institutes:* The AELRC will conduct two summer institutes on language program evaluation with the goal of improvement of foreign language education. Our partners at CAL will provide support for content development and delivery of the institutes. Content will include training in program evaluation techniques, the use of evaluation to promote student diversity and equity, and the exploration of evaluation as a means for curricular innovation. In Year 2, the institute will be tailored to the specific needs of 15 LCTL educators and in Year 4, the institute will be aimed at the needs and interests of 15 community college language educators. (*Collaboration with CAL.*)

*Project Goal 5: Dissemination and Communication.* Enhance the capacity of all foreign language educators to conduct language assessment and program evaluation by disseminating research findings, examples of best practices, and training materials. Through these efforts we will communicate with educators, researchers, and other stakeholders about the work of the AELRC and make sure our resources are widely available and accessible. All project outcomes are publicly available and documented. For the 2022-26 cycle, we will create a comprehensive dissemination plan detailing quantifiable annual targets for social media, web, email, and professional meetings and conferences both globally and aligned to specific projects. This dissemination plan will be submitted to the Department of Education and used as part of the Evaluation (See Section 4). This plan will also include an outreach plan for strategically reaching language programs at community colleges, and Minority Serving Institutions.

* 1. *Print-based Materials:* The annual *AELRC Bulletin* provides a comprehensive update about the center’s activities each year including project highlights and staff accomplishments.

Printed, full-color copies have a visually-appealing, professional look and are disseminated at meetings, workshops, conferences, and special events along with other print-based materials.

* 1. *AELRC Website:* The AELRC website receives over 8,000 unique hits annually, accumulating over 21,000 unique hits in its the last three years of operation. This site is regularly updated with project information, resources, and AELRC briefs in downloadable PDF format. Recently, we have updated our PDF templates for briefs to follow best practices for accessible documents and ADA compliance. In Year 1 of the project, we will analyze and report on the AELRC website’s usability and accessibility, update the website to improve functionality and accessibility, and create a log of web changes to track and report new material posted to the site.
  2. *Social Media and Email:* The AELRC maintains social media accounts on Twitter (@aelrcdc), Instagram (@aelrc), Facebook (@aelrcdc), and YouTube (@Assessment and Evaluation Language Resource Center) and disseminates content through each of these channels. This includes promoting resources and research from AELRC staff and highlighting relevant conferences and materials for language educators. We maintain an active presence through weekly posts on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. We also have a central email for distributing updates and announcements (aelrc@georgetown.edu). In Year 1, we will develop an outreach plan and communication strategy for social media and email that analyzes how to better target and reach LCTL educators and educators from community colleges and MSIs.
  3. *Cross-promotion by Partners:* ACTFL and CAL have each worked in the area of foreign language education for over 50 years, and reach large networks of educators through their social media channels and email listservs as respected and sought-after sources of information. For example, ACTFL has over 26,00 Twitter followers and CAL has over 1,700. As

Georgetown’s partners, they cross-promote collaborative projects to their networks and significantly expand the reach of the AELRC.

* 1. *Professional Meetings and Conferences:* AELRC staff regularly attend the annual ACTFL convention and promote the work of the AELRC collaboratively with other LRCs, including dissemination of the *AELRC Bulletin* and other printed materials such as AELRC briefs. In addition, we attend meetings and conferences for foreign language teachers such as the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL) and disseminate information about the AELRC through presentations. These opportunities provide valuable opportunities for direct and in-person connections with foreign language educators.

## Management Plan

The AELRC’s management plan is designed to optimize and strengthen the collaboration between Georgetown, ACTFL, and CAL. The AELRC’s Director and Principal Investigator, Dr. Megan Montee, will lead all personnel and activities associated with the AELRC and lead all assessment, evaluation, research, teacher training, materials development, and dissemination activities as well as grant reporting and financial management. At Georgetown, ACTFL, and CAL, the work of the AELRC will be supported through clear areas of responsibility.

At Georgetown, Dr. Alison Mackey will serve as Co-Principal Investigator. Dr. Mackey, who is Chair of the Department of Linguistics and Editor-in-Chief of the CUP journal, the Annual Review of Applied Linguistics (an official journal of AAAL) will provide expert guidance on the AELRC’s research agenda. She will provide feedback and revisions on all of the research methodologies and instruments for the AELRC’s research projects, and support and promote excellent scholarship, wide dissemination of AELRC research, and publications in tier one research journals.

Georgetown’s Linguistics Department will provide support from of the department’s Business Manager, at minimal cost to the AELRC. The Linguistics Department Business Manager will assist Dr. Montee with financial reporting and monitoring and other day-to-day business transactions of the AELRC. In addition, at least two graduate research assistants, funded as Georgetown University Linguistics Department fellows, will work at the AELRC each semester at no cost to the AELRC. Monthly staff meetings ensure that projects are meeting their expected outcomes and timelines. Additional staff will include Georgetown University Master’s students who will be paid hourly to conduct research and complete administrative and technology-oriented tasks in support of the AELRC. Georgetown Assistant Teaching Professor Dr. Alexandra Johnston serves as an Associate Director for the AELRC and will lead work on the Intercultural Pragmatic Interactional Competence Assessment, support workshop implementation, and provide general support for the operations of the AELRC at Georgetown.

At CAL, AELRC Associate Director Francesca Di Silvio will provide technical assistance for all projects and direct all CAL-initiated projects. At ACTFL, former AELRC Director Dr. Margaret Malone will coordinate ACTFL’s work and serve as a Senior Advisor to the AELRC and provide expert-level guidance about language assessment and program evaluation projects and effective dissemination practices.

Dr. Montee will meet monthly with CAL and ACTFL partners, and the longstanding collaboration and frequent communication between partners is a strength of the AELRC. We have elected not to convene an external advisory board because of the strong partnership between Georgetown, ACTFL, and CAL, and the support, internal evaluation, and thought leadership that each partner organization already provides.

Every year, the AELRC will receive input and feedback from Dr. Judith Liskin-Gasparro, the project’s External Evaluator who will meet with AELRC staff, review documentation and project outcomes, and provide both formative and summative evaluation feedback about the work of the AELRC.

Figure 1 depicts the management structure for the AELRC.

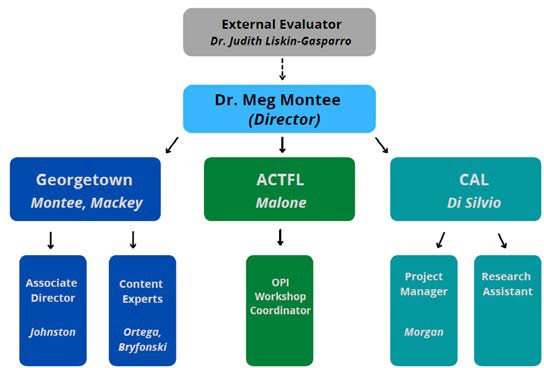


Figure 1. AELRC Management Structure.

## Relationship of Project Goals to Purpose of LRC Program

The purpose of the LRC program is to establish, strengthen, and operate “centers that serve as resources for improving the Nation's capacity for teaching and learning foreign languages through teacher training, research, materials development, assessment, and dissemination projects.” Assessment and evaluation are key elements in a comprehensive approach to language education that is accountable to the needs of learners, the values of scholarly disciplines, and the well-being of society. Assessment and evaluation provide critical mechanisms for understanding, improving, and demonstrating the worth of foreign language education. Since 2014, the AELRC has provided leadership, scholarship, and outreach in the practices of foreign language assessment and program evaluation to foreign language teachers, program administrators, and researchers in diverse educational settings. In doing so, the AELRC

will continue to improve the nation's capacity for effective teaching and learning of foreign languages in several ways:

* + - By developing language proficiency assessments and assessment tools in less commonly taught languages, where such assessments are not available,
    - By providing professional development workshops and resources on language assessment and program evaluation for teachers, administrators, and other language education professionals, particularly those in community colleges and MSIs, and
    - By researching K-16 program articulation and promoting a national conversation about overcoming barriers to language study in higher education contexts

The primary audiences for AELRC endeavors will include LCTL teachers in K-12, and higher education, and government settings, and particularly LCTL educators from community college and MSI contexts; language program administrators responsible for quality assurance and accountability; state administrators and policy makers; and foreign language professional organizations. Through its research, development, and dissemination activities, the AELRC will strengthen the field at all levels in multiple ways.

## Use of Resources and Personnel

The partnership of Georgetown, ACTFL, and CAL creates efficiencies within the project management structure which allow the AELRC to achieve its scope and deliver high-quality outcomes and materials defined in the project goals. Specifically, the project team has extensive experience with project-based work and with LRC management. Dr. Montee will be responsible for allocating staffing and resources to each activity. As an experienced project director and program manager, Dr. Montee has the practical skills to implement the AELRC’s agenda.

In addition to the coordination among Georgetown, CAL, and ACTFL, the AELRC will leverage its relationships with the Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS) to develop the Intercultural Pragmatic Interactional Competence assessment with clear roles for each organization. The AELRC will lead various aspects of test development for this project.

## Equal Access and Treatment for Members of Underrepresented Groups

With its emphasis on improving teacher preparation, assessing student and program outcomes, and improving foreign language programs, the AELRC recognizes that some populations are traditionally underrepresented in research on and outreach within foreign language education. The traditionally underrepresented groups include heritage speakers of LCTLs as well as LCTL teachers and students more generally, and language learners and teachers in community colleges and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs). In carrying out its proposed activities, the AELRC will actively seek to include members of these groups in three main ways:

* The AELRC and its partners will actively engage teachers from community colleges, MSIs, and heritage LCTL programs as participants in Oral Proficiency Interview workshops, our *Assessment: The Basics* online course, summer institutes on program evaluation, and other professional development opportunities. Professional development events will be held virtually or in physical locations that are convenient and accessible for these instructors. For example, of the four Oral Proficiency Interview workshops, participants will be solicited from across the U.S and priority given to LCTL instructors from community colleges and MSIs.
  + In emphasizing the use of digital materials, we will ensure that AELRC resources and outcomes are widely accessible. Our dissemination plan includes metrics for communication with traditionally underserved programs and this will be reviewed annually as part of our

evaluation activities (see Section 4). The AELRC is also committed to using accessible document formats and video captioning.

* + In exploring K-16 program articulation (Goal 3), we will include research questions related to articulation for community colleges and MSIs, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Tribal Colleges and Universities. Through this research focus, our work will support the expansion of foreign language education to diverse students and programs.

# KEY PERSONNEL

See Appendix B for the curricula vitae for key personnel and the biographic statements of key collaborators.

## Project Director

Dr. Megan Montee (Ph.D, Georgia State University) will continue as AERLC Director and Principal Investigator (PI). She will oversee all projects and activities and coordinate the work of the institutional partners on language assessment development and evaluation. AELRC’s Associate Director from 2018-2021 and Director since 2021, Dr. Montee has nearly two decades of experience in developing tests and providing professional development to teachers on the use and development of tests and the impact of testing on teaching. She began her career in language assessment in 2004, serving as a Research Assistant for the National Capital Language Resource Center and since that time has worked extensively with Language Resource Centers. Under her leadership, the AELRC has continued to meet or exceed its project goals and produce an impressive body of professional development, research, test development, and outreach. As Director, she has seamlessly continued the AELRC’s ground-breaking work and collaboration with partners and colleagues throughout the United States. Her main areas of focus include language teacher training in the areas of language assessment, program evaluation, and oral

proficiency assessment. She has published research regarding language assessment and assessment literacy, including articles in peer-reviewed journals and book chapters.

Dr. Montee is also the Director for Performance-based Language Assessment at the Center for Applied Linguistics. In this role, she specializes in performance-based language assessment, with a focus on computer-based speaking assessment, and is committed to working with educators to create and implement useful and practical assessment tools. Her research interests include oral proficiency assessment and language assessment literacy. She has worked with STARTALK summer teacher programs since 2009 and for the past two years has served as CAL’s STARTALK program director and PI. Currently, Dr. Montee serves as the PI and Project Director for a U.S. Department of Education Grant *Oral Proficiency Assessment Training for PK-8 Language Educators*.

## Other Key Personnel

Dr. Alison Mackey will serve as Co-Principal Investigator for the 2022-26 grant cycle and contribute expertise in research design, methodology, second language acquisition and applied linguistics research, and advice and support on research publication. Dr. Mackey is Professor and Chair of the Department of Linguistics at Georgetown University, serves as

Editor-in-Chief of Cambridge University Press’s *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, co-series editor (with Kim Geeslin and Susan Gass) for Taylor and Francis’s “Second Language Research” series and Routledge’s Handbook series, and has published over 100 journal articles and book chapters and 18 books. She has won the 2022 Distinguished Scholarship and Service Award from the *American Association for Applied Linguistics*, the MLA’s Mildenburger book prize, Georgetown’s Presidential Teacher-Scholar Award and Georgetown’s Career Research Award. Google scholar ranks her the #1 woman in the world for citations in applied linguistics.

Dr. Margaret Malone, the AELRC’s Co-Director and Director from 2014-2021 and current Director of Assessment and Research at ACTFL, will serve as a Senior Advisor to the AELRC and, in coordination with other ACTFL staff, will oversee ACTFL’s partnership with Georgetown. Dr. Malone has served as Chair of the Council of Directors of the Language Resource Centers (COD), Secretary of the International Language Testing Association, and co- founder of the East Coast Organization of Language Testers. She is a published author of a number of peer-refereed journal articles, book chapters, and encyclopedia entries on language assessment, as well as co-author of a book on classroom-based language assessment. Dr.

Malone’s expertise and sustained involvement with the AELRC strengthen the continuity of its work and she continues to play an active advisory role.

Francesca Di Silvio will continue to serve as Associate Director of the AERLC and project director for all CAL projects, a role she has had since 2021. She holds an M.A. in Linguistics from Georgetown University. As Director of World Languages at the Center for Applied Linguistics, Francesca leads projects to develop language proficiency assessments for English and world language learners, manages research on world language instruction, and delivers professional development to language educators. Ms. Di Silvio will support Dr. Montee in the day-to-day management of the AELRC and will direct all CAL projects.

Dr. Alexandra Johnston, Assistant Teaching Professor in the Department of Linguistics at Georgetown University, will lead work on the Intercultural Pragmatic and Interactional Competence assessment and assist with summer workshops. Dr. Johnston is an applied sociolinguist and critical discourse analyst with research and publications on workplace communication and intercultural (mis)communication. In addition to providing expertise on

intercultural and interactional competence, Dr. Johnston, an experienced administrator and director of masters programs, will also provide support for AELRC operations at Georgetown.

**Collaborators.** The AELRC will draw upon the expertise of Georgetown faculty members and staff as collaborators on specific projects. Dr. Lara Bryfonski (Linguistics) will serve as a technical advisor on best practices in professional development for language educators, her area of expertise, and on AELRC briefs, given her experience in translating complex concepts in applied linguistics to non-technical audiences. She will also lead the development of the three distinct video series included in the AELRC Multimedia Resource Library. Dr. Lourdes Ortega (Linguistics) will be the primary technical expert related to the development of short-cut estimates of language proficiency, including C-tests and elicited imitation, given her extensive research on measurement in foreign language research and her expertise in elicited imitation tests. She will also contribute advice on research publications given her own expertise and extensive publications.

**Evaluator.** Dr. Judith Liskin-Gasparro will serve as the AELRC’s External Evaluator.

Dr. Liskin-Gasparro (Ph.D., University of Texas–Austin) is Associate Professor Emerita of Spanish and Applied Linguistics at the University of Iowa. She directed the Spanish language program (1993-2006) and co-directed the interdisciplinary doctoral program in Second Language Acquisition from its founding until her retirement (2000-2015). She designed and led the first Oral Proficiency Interview workshops in the early 1980s and was principally responsible for training the first generation of OPI testers and trainers in Spanish. She served on the first AELRC advisory board (2015) and in that capacity contributed to the external evaluation of the AELRC. She was also a member of the CAL Board of Trustees (2005-2012) and in 2012 served

as chair. As the External Evaluator, she will provide both formative feedback and a summative evaluation of the AELRC’s work and impact.

For the 2022-26 funding cycle, the AELRC will rely on its partner organizations, extensive input of the Georgetown faculty and a uniquely qualified and experienced evaluator, to provide formative and summative feedback on the progress of AELRC projects. Thus, the AELRC will not convene an external advisory board.

## Key Personnel Time Commitments

Dr. Montee will devote 40% of her time to AERLC activities year-round. At present, Dr. Montee’s full-time salary is shared between Georgetown University and CAL; this arrangement will continue from 2022-26. Dr. Mackey will devote approximately 8% of her time to the AELRC and will be compensated via one month of summer salary. Associate Director Di Silvio will devote approximately 4% of her time to the AERLC and will be supported by additional staff including a CAL project manager at approximately 10% and two research assistants at approximately 5%. Dr. Malone will contribute 4% of her time supported by an ACTFL staff members at approximately 5% to support OPI workshop planning. Dr. Johnston will contribute approximately 5% of her time to the AELRC, and Dr. Bryfonski will devote approximately 8% of her time to the AELRC and be compensated via one month of summer salary.

## Nondiscriminatory Employment Practices

The three institutions that comprise the AELRC and carry out its activities are all equal opportunity employers that prohibit discrimination against any person on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, handicap, veteran status, or sexual orientation. Georgetown, ACTFL, and CAL actively encourage applications from minorities and members of traditionally underrepresented groups in all publicly posted employment opportunities.

## Relevant Training and Experience of Key Personnel

Dr. Montee, Ms. Di Silvio, and Dr. Malone are leaders in language assessment and evaluation with expertise in test development, evaluation, and language teacher education. In addition, key personnel have extensive experience in teaching, teacher training, curriculum and materials development, assessment, and other areas relevant to foreign language teaching and learning and have served as project directors, senior advisors, principal investigators, and supervisors at their current and previous organizations; taken together, their expertise pertains to all aspects of foreign language assessment and evaluation. Dr. Montee has nearly two decades of test development, program evaluation and professional development experience with K-12 and post-secondary language teachers. Francesca Di Silvio has more than 12 years of experience in test development, research on language education and assessment, and development of delivery of professional development for language instructors, as well as extensive project management experience. Dr. Malone, a national and international expert on language assessment, has more than three decades of experience in language program assessment and evaluation and over 50 journal articles, book chapters and encyclopedia articles and is a frequent keynote speaker.

# BUDGET AND COST EFFECTIVENESS

## Adequacy of Budget

The AELRC budget will maximize efficiency through the use of existing resources and institutional support from Georgetown, ACTFL, and CAL and will expand its impact through the strategic collaboration of these three organizations and other partners.

***Institutional support***. Georgetown will provide substantial support and resources for the AELRC. Dr. Montee’s salary for serving as the AELRC director at 40% time will be provided by Georgetown as well as physical space and essential equipment and technology capacity for project activities. Additional support from the Linguistics Department’s Business Manager,

provided at minimal cost to the AELRC, and the support provided by Dr. Alexandra Johnston, Associate Director, both smooth project operations and management. Another major source of support will come from the availability of well-trained graduate research assistants from Georgetown. At least two full-time research assistants (15 hours per week) are typically provided by the Linguistics Department during the academic year. At no cost, the AELRC is allocated a large office and conference room space with computers, telephones, and high-speed internet.

***Coordination and collaboration****.* Strong collaboration ensures that the AELRC’s budget is used efficiently and expands our resources. The AELRC receives essential institutional support from ACTFL and CAL. Both organizations provide physical space, equipment, and communications support, and CAL staff provide technology expertise and development support for AELRC web-based training materials and resources. Georgetown, ACTFL, and CAL are all located in the Washington, DC area, which facilitates efficient coordination between the organizations. In addition to these two key partners, the AELRC also has a strong collaborative relationship with the Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS) at the University of Oregon and we work together on the development of the Intercultural Pragmatic Interactional Competence Assessment (IPIC). CASLS provides virtual learning environments for the IPIC.

## Reasonableness of Costs

Given the institutional support and collaborative engagement in projects described above, the proposed budget maximizes investment in the expertise required to accomplish AELRC’s ambitious objectives and the time required of directors, staff, and participants in making project activities happen. Salaries are based on current salary estimates plus fringe requirements for the corresponding Georgetown faculty/staff classifications, with a 3% annual estimated escalation factor. A graduate research affiliate, paid through the grant will update the website, provide

regular social media updates on Twitter and Facebook, and support research activities for approximately 15 hours per week and in the summer. Salary provisions are made for an annual graduate student intern at CAL, who will be paid for 15 hours of work at $22/hour for approximately 43 weeks each year. The budget includes travel costs for Dr. Montee to participate in the annual meeting of the Language Resource Center Coordinators and Directors, hosted in conjunction with the annual ACTFL convention. The conventions will be held in Boston, MA, in 2022, Chicago, IL, in 2023, Philadelphia, PA in 2024, and New Orleans, LA in 2025. Cost estimates reflect the average economy class airfare, 4 days/nights hotel and meals, and local transportation costs. Travel is included for the Director to attend ACTFL and one additional conference annually to disseminate the AELRC’s work. Based on similar projects, the budget estimates $1,000 per year for office supplies, including requirements for maintaining a functional office. Other supplies are contributed by the Georgetown Linguistics Department.

The project will incur several types of consultant costs. The first will be costs to ACTFL for one Oral Proficiency Interview workshop per year, approximately 4% of Dr. Malone’s time to serve as Senior Advisor to the project, and approximately 4% of a coordinator's time to coordinate the Oral Proficiency Interview workshops at ACTFL. The second will be the AELRC Associate Director and project manager at CAL, who will take primary responsibility for CAL’s activities; the costs estimated are consistent with those for similar projects. Third, consultant costs include monthly support from an external Project Manager who also provides communications support. In addition, the budget provides for an annual honorarium for the External Evaluator. Another component of the budget is funding to support research participant compensation for data collection associated with assessment and evaluation development and validation projects. Incentives range from $10 to $50 per participant depending on the activity.

# EVALUATION PLAN

## Evaluation Plan

The evaluation of the AELRC will address three primary evaluation functions: (1) formative feedback designed to improve the quality and effectiveness of activities and dissemination efforts during the funding cycle; (2) annual summative review designed to ensure execution of project outcomes and impact; and (3) accountability to determine the extent to which the AELRC has met its mission for national stakeholders using public resources. Our plan meets these three goals through both internal and external evaluation throughout the four-year grant. Dr. Meg Malone, the AELRC’s former Director and a Senior Advisor to the AELRC, will serve as the Internal Evaluator. Internal evaluation will involve the project partners from the AELRC, ACTFL, and CAL, referred to throughout this section as the core team. Dr. Judith Liskin-Gasparro will serve as the AELRC’s External Evaluator. Together, Dr. Malone and Dr.

Liskin-Gasparro provide a high level of evaluation and content expertise.

The design of the AELRC’s evaluation plan is informed by the principles of useful evaluation (Patton, 2008; Norris, 2016; Davis, 2018), which has the goal of producing evaluation results that support concrete action and clear decision making. We have identified the following intended users of AELRC evaluation results: the U.S. Department of Education, AELRC staff and partners, foreign language educators, researchers, language learners, and the general public.

The foundation of the AELRC’s evaluation plan are the goals and objectives described in Section 1.1 and Appendix A. The project descriptions and outcomes provide clear and quantifiable measures for all activities by year. Additionally, the AELRC’s mission and goals specify our intended impact on U.S. foreign language education and the general public. Both internal and external evaluation activities will review the AELRC’s performance relative to the

mission, goals, projects, and intended outcomes as well as the efficacy of the management and administrative processes that support these goals.

As the External Evaluator, Dr. Liskin-Gasparro will provide a valuable independent perspective on the AELRC’s projects and overall efficacy and provide both formative and summative feedback. Dr. Liskin-Gasparro and Dr. Malone will work with the core team to create rubrics to compare project goals and outcomes to guide the evaluation work and ensure the consistency and transparency of evaluation criteria. Dr. Liskin-Gasparro will be responsible for producing reports and recommendations.

The core team, which includes members from each partner organization, will work collaboratively with the evaluators on the implementation of the evaluation plan and will be responsible for documenting and implementing actions taken based on formative evaluation findings. Consistent with the practices of useful evaluation, the involvement of the core team in the design and implementation of the evaluation will help maximize the efficacy of the results.

## Methods of Evaluation

Table 1 describes the AELRC’s core evaluation activities over the four-year grant, including an evaluation launch meeting, annual evaluations, and a final summative evaluation. The chart includes key evaluation questions for each of activity, the evaluation data that will be reviewed and assessed, and the application of the results. Each of the evaluation activities in Table 1 will result in a written memo or report, and all feedback will be logged in an evaluation tracker to provide accountability. In addition, during the evaluation launch meeting, the External Evaluator and the core team will develop rubrics for annual review activities. The rubrics will support consistent results across years and will provide quantifiable results to stakeholders.

Table 1. AELRC Evaluation Activities

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Evaluation Activity 1 (September 2022): Evaluation Launch Meeting**  The Internal and External Evaluators will meet with AELRC core team and review goals, projects, timelines, and intended outcomes and produce an evaluation memo. | | |
| **Evaluation Questions** | **Evaluation Data** | **Application of Results** |
| 1.1 To what extent do AELRC objectives respond to high priority language education needs of U.S. foreign language educators and the public at large? | * 2022-26 Proposal * AELRC website * Historical data of AELRC projects and outcomes * Evaluator interviews with core team | Revise goals and outcomes based on evaluation findings to meet the AELRC’s mission and the needs of diverse U.S. foreign language educator groups. |
| 1.2 To what extent do AELRC activities support the program priorities of the LRCs (heritage language learners, community colleges, and MSIs)? | * 2022-26 Plan of Operation * Dissemination and communication plan | Revisit and revise recruitment plans for research projects and outreach  efforts to ensure that these populations benefit from the AELRC’s activities. |
| 1.3 To what extent does the AELRC structure of intended projects and activities enable AELRC to achieve its  objectives? | * Project management and administrative materials * Project timelines * Evaluator interviews with core team | Revise and supplement activities and project structures as appropriate to better  meet AELRC objectives. |
| 1.4 To what extent is AELRC evaluation capacity sufficient for undertaking high-quality, useful evaluation activities throughout the four-year grant term? | * AELRC Evaluation Plan and supporting materials for implementation * Evaluator interviews with core team | Adjust the AERLC evaluation plan and resources to align with objectives and create evaluation rubrics for use during the annual review. |
| **Evaluation Activity 2 (Years 1-4 in May): Annual Evaluation Review**  The Internal and External Evaluators will meet with AELRC core team and review annual outcomes and processes and produce an evaluation report. | | |
| **Evaluation Questions** | **Evaluation Data** | **Application of Results** |
| 2.1 To what extent is the AELRC continuing to meet its goals and outcomes? | * Project goals and outcomes * Project materials and documentation; project outcomes | Re-examine goals and revise annually to ensure that progress is being made. |
| 2.2 Which aspects of the AELRC are thriving? Which need more attention? | * Project materials and documentation * Evaluator interviews with core team and AELRC staff | Revise activities and determine whether they are meeting the timeline and goals of each project. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2.3 What human and financial resources are being used? What human and financial resources could be redirected to support activities? | * Administrative and financial documentation * Evaluator interviews with core team and AELRC staff | Re-direct financial and human support to ensure that activities are being carried out on schedule. |
| 2.4 Are recruitment and dissemination efforts effectively reaching target audiences? What could be adjusted to improve efficacy? | * AELRC website materials * Web and email metrics * Social media metrics * Attendee reports from events | Revise recruitment and dissemination efforts to ensure that target audiences are benefitting from the AELRC’s activities. |
| **Evaluation Activity 3 (June 2026): Final Evaluation**  The Internal and External Evaluators will meet with AELRC core team to review final project outcomes and impact and produce a final evaluation report. | | |
| **Evaluation Questions** | **Evaluation Data** | **Application of Results** |
| 3.1 To what extent have AELRC activities and dissemination efforts increased the capabilities of U.S. foreign language educators to engage in useful evaluation and high-quality  assessment? | * Annual Evaluation Reports Years 1-4 and supporting materials * Evaluator interviews with core team and AELRC staff | Demonstrate the impact, relevance, and usefulness of AELRC outreach  and dissemination activities using quantitative and qualitative evidence. |
| 3.2 What future changes are needed to AELRC activities, strategies, and human resources to better meet AELRC objectives? | Review and revise AELRC strategies and objectives for future funding cycles in  furthering national language education goals |
| 3.3 To what extent have AELRC outcomes and activities implemented the goals of the LRC program to expand national capacity for teaching  and learning foreign languages? | Justify the expenditure of public funds in support of AELRC and its role in furthering national language  education goals. |
| 3.4 To what extent have AELRC outcomes and activities promoted equity in student access to educational resources and opportunities? | Demonstrate the impact of the AELRC’s work on promoting access and equity using  quantitative and qualitative evidence. |

Table 1 lists the quantitative and qualitative evaluation data that will be used to assess the evaluation questions in each activity. The AELRC outcomes identified in Appendix A provide quantitative targets related to each project and goal. Additional quantitative data will be included in the form of ratings from the External Evaluator according to evaluation rubrics. These rubrics will be created during the Evaluation Launch Meeting and used as part of each year’s Annual Evaluation Review to assess activities according to standard criteria. Qualitative data will

include information gained via interviews of AELRC staff conducted by the External Evaluator and document reviews of project deliverables and outcomes. This expert review process, supported by evaluation rubrics, will further focus the evaluation on examinations of the quality, relevance, and usefulness of all products and activities (consistent with GPRA regulations) relative to the AELRC’s mission and the larger LRC mission.

The evaluation activities summarized in Table 1, including a launch meeting, yearly evaluations, and a final summative evaluation, will also be supported by informal, interim evaluation practices that will be integrated into project activities. These activities include evaluation surveys of workshops, trainings, conferences, webinars, and other events to gather stakeholder feedback as well as stakeholder reviews of the usefulness of materials and efficacy of materials development projects. These stakeholder surveys and reviews will be used to improve materials and will also be used as data for the annual evaluation. To support the implementation of evaluation findings and continual improvement of AELRC activities and dissemination efforts, evaluation findings and recommendations from both formal and informal evaluation activities will be logged in a tracker and follow-up actions will be monitored as part of AELRC project management and for reporting purposes to the Department of Education.

# ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES

## Facilities

The collaboration among Georgetown, ACTFL, and CAL offers extensive resources in support of the AELRC. Each institution is a leader in foreign language teaching, learning, and assessment and brings a history of researching, supporting, and promoting foreign language education, and each offers substantial intellectual, administrative, and physical resources.

***Georgetown.*** Established in 1789, Georgetown is one of the oldest and most prestigious

institutions of higher education in the United States. Among its many leading programs, the university is known for those with an international focus and degree programs that emphasize global understanding, intercultural awareness and competence, and foreign language proficiency. Georgetown also offers certificate programs that combine language and regional studies, and the university hosts the National Resource Center on the Middle East and the Initiative for Multilingual Studies (directed by Dr. Ortega). The Faculty of Languages and Linguistics offers a full academic program in foreign language, cultural, and literary studies; undergraduate majors are available in 11 languages, and coursework is available in 12 others.

***ACTFL.*** Established in 1967, ACTFL is the major national association of language professionals dedicated to promoting and fostering the study of languages and cultures as an integral component of American education and society. ACTFL provides leadership for the improvement of teaching and learning at all levels of instruction in all languages through programs and projects that range from those influencing educational policies to those furnishing practical assistance to classroom teachers. ACTFL staff and consultants provide a wide range of experience and expertise, including teaching experience at all instructional levels, instructional materials development, and the development and provision of language proficiency assessments. ***CAL.*** Since 1959, the Center for Applied Linguistics has been an established leader in language education and assessment. With a mission focused on language and culture, CAL accomplishes its goals through research, information collection, and analysis; teacher training and materials development; and publications and conferences. In collaboration with Georgetown University and the George Washington University, CAL has nearly 30 years of experience operating Language Resource Centers, including the AELRC, the National Capital Language Resource

Center, and the National Foreign Language Resource Center, with projects in materials development, language assessment, language education, and information dissemination.

## Equipment and Supplies

Georgetown will support the AELRC by providing physical facilities, computers and other equipment, and administrative staffing. The AELRC has a large office and conference space within the Linguistics Department with several desks, desktop computers, a printer, telephones, internet, and meeting space for staff and graduate students. The university’s technology resources, including the language labs, technology classroom, and consultation and development spaces, are also available for AELRC use. University facilities have equipment to produce and edit video and audio for online delivery, scan images and text, and create digital learning materials and environments. The department’s administrative office has standard office equipment that will be made available to support the administration of the project. The campus has videoconferencing facilities that can be used by the project as needed, and the university has extensive webhosting services available for online courses, blogs, websites, webinars, and other dissemination tools. All AELRC staff will have a Georgetown account with full access to computing resources and support available through University Information Services.

ACTFL and CAL will also offer a full range of services and facilities to support project operations, including digital resources, administrative support, project accounting, materials preparation/processing facilities, and IT services.

# NEED AND POTENTIAL IMPACT

The need for fluent language speakers of languages other than English in the United States is critical. Although the 2016 Modern Language Association survey indicates that enrollments have decreased in post-secondary education in many languages, the need for fluent speakers of languages in the U.S. workforce has escalated. According to ACTFL’s 2019 survey,

nine out of ten U.S. employers report a reliance on workers with skills in languages other than English and a majority of employers project this need will grow in the future. Similarly, the American Academy for Arts and Sciences 2016 study shows that, the United States needs to work with heritage speakers of languages to meet workforce demands for fluent speakers.

Thus, there is a clear and established need to build capacity in languages other than English for the U.S. workforce and beyond. The AELRC’s focal topics and five related goals clearly support the mission of the Language Resource Centers to improve national capacity for teaching and learning foreign languages as well address as the 2022-26 absolute priority of LCTL materials and the competitive preference priority of promoting equity in student access. The AELRC’s mission and activities contribute to workforce capacity development by ensuring that instructors, language programs, and other stakeholders have the assessment and evaluation tools they need to understand outcomes and develop highly proficient speakers. We view the AELRC’s three foci—language assessment, program evaluation, and K-16 program articulation— as areas where resources, training, and research can make the largest impact both because of the importance of these topics as well as limitations of current resources relative to the need.

In the following three sections, we will relate the three areas of the AELRC’s work, language assessment, program evaluation, and K-16 program articulation, to established and well-documented U.S. language needs. First, we describe the need for assessments and resources in the specific languages we have identified. While many AELRC projects and resources are designed for LCTL teachers generally, our five assessment projects under Goal 1 (see Appendix A) focus on Arabic, Cantonese, Korean, Mandarin, and Ukrainian. Second, in Section 6.2, we show how our resources and projects will be used across the U.S. by demonstrating the wide

applicability of our work as well as the strategic focus of our dissemination plan. Finally, in section 6.3 we demonstrate how each of the three focal topics we have selected for 2022-26 (language assessment for LCTLs, useful program evaluation, and K-16 language program articulation,) will strengthen, expand, and improve U.S. foreign language education.

## Need for Materials in Project Focus Languages

In this section we focus on the development of language-specific language assessment resources described in Goal 1 (see Section 1.1). The AELRC’s language-specific resources in Arabic, Cantonese, Korean, Mandarin, and Ukrainian will meet a general need for valid and reliable assessment in foreign language programs. Quality assessment tools and resources are necessary for understanding students’ language proficiency and can capture this using standard language scales such as the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. With assessment data, educators are able to plan instruction, develop effective programs, motivate students to continue in language learning, and understand and communicate student outcomes. The need for high-quality assessments is particularly acute for less commonly taught languages. With a focus on LCTL assessment, the AELRC will build overall national capacity for teaching and learning these languages by providing tests that will document outcomes and support teachers in understanding the outcomes their students need to attain. AELRC’s work includes both developing valid and reliable assessment instruments and supporting teachers in developing the knowledge and skills to use assessments appropriately and effectively in their own contexts. The improvement of national capacity in language-specific activities described in Goal 1, such as an instructor workshop about AAPPL-E and training modules for the IPIC, as well as general language assessment training for LCTL instructors, such as the *Assessment: The Basics* online course.

Our comprehensive approach to language assessment, from developing assessments to helping teachers understand and use appropriate assessments, ensures that LCTL instructors and programs effectively assess students for both formative and summative purposes, and in 2022-26 we include assessments and training specifically for young LCTL learners. According to a search of the Foreign Language Assessment Directory ([www.cal.org/flad),](http://www.cal.org/flad)) a repository of information

about nationally available foreign language tests, there are 45 available K-5 assessments, and of these only 17 are available in one or more LCTLs, and for many LCTLs there are no tests available, indicating a high need for expanded assessments and related resources focusing on young learners.

For the 2022-26 cycle, the AELRC’s assessment development activities (See Project Goals 1 and 2 in Section 1) will focus on the following high-priority needs for LCTL educators and underserved populations:

* + - Short-cut proficiency assessments in Cantonese and Ukrainian estimate global proficiency quickly and accurately with diverse populations, such as university, community college, high school, and heritage learners, allowing for rapid initial placement or to monitor progress. We have not previously developed short-cut proficiency measures in these languages. The Cantonese test will support recent efforts to expand the study of the language in the U.S., and Ukrainian is currently an important language for geopolitical reasons. (Activity 1.1)
    - In collaboration with the Center for Applied Second Language Studies, we will develop the Intercultural Pragmatic Interactional Competence Assessment in Mandarin using medical and business scenarios. The medical and business contexts represent dynamic areas of real-world language use, and materials tailored to these contexts can help build student motivation and engagement. The innovative assessment scenarios are explicitly linked to the language skills and

cultural competencies students need in the workplace and no such assessments are currently available. The project also builds program capacity and instructor knowledge in workplace communication and intercultural assessment through the training modules. (Activity 1.2)

* + - In collaboration with CAL, we will create oral proficiency assessment tasks and training materials in Arabic and Mandarin. Based on teacher feedback, we have identified oral proficiency tools and example tasks as a high-need area for development. Teachers frequently request model tasks and professionally-developed examples are not widely available. The assessments will meet a need for high-quality, adaptable assessment resources for oral proficiency assessment. (Activity 1.3)
    - CAL and the AELRC will work together to hold a training in the Student Oral Proficiency Assessment (SOPA) for 10 Korean educators. Language assessments for young learners of LCTLs are particularly limited, as is training for instructors of these students, and SOPA, which is designed for PK-8 students, fills this need and is appropriate for foreign language, dual language, and heritage contexts. (Activity 1.4)
    - The AELRC will work with ACTFL to develop the ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages -Form E in one less commonly taught language. In 2021, over 581,000 AAPPLs were administered in 13 languages, and school districts regularly request AAPPLs in additional less commonly taught languages. The new AAPPL Form E will meet a need for LCTL assessments for young learners. (Activity 1.5)

## Use of Proposed Materials Throughout the United States

Across all projects, our efforts will result in resources, materials, and tools for foreign language educators across multiple languages and contexts in order to increase abilities to conduct useful, accurate assessment and evaluate the quality of their programs. All materials and

outcomes will be disseminated widely via our website and social media accounts, and our communications and dissemination plan will ensure that we are reaching the intended audiences (see Project Goal 5 in Appendix A). Our development of digital resources, including the AELRC Multimedia Resource Library and associated video series, will also help ensure widespread dissemination and use by creating permanently accessible resources for LCTL educators. Finally, we will ensure the national reach of our work through the robust publication of scholarly articles and AELRC briefs.

## Contribution to Strengthening Programs

Within the LRC context, the AELRC provides a unique research, development, and outreach agenda by supporting language educators in conducting useful language assessment, identifying and developing appropriate language assessments, and working toward continuous improvement through useful program evaluation. Without assessment and program evaluation, there is no way to determine the effectiveness of programs and to identify ways to improve.

***LCTL Language Assessment:*** In recent years, the demands for language assessment and evaluation instruments and professional development from K-12 schools, community colleges, and four-year university programs have increased. The needs are vast; an examination of the AELRC’s performance measures from the 2018-22 cycle shows high levels of demand for AELRC resources, research outcomes, and outreach activities from the K-16 foreign language field. For example, from March 2019 to March 2022, the AELRC’s website had over 21,000 unique users which shows the need for and value of the AELRC’s work.

In addition to test development efforts in specific languages, the AELRC will continue to provide workshops, webinars, online courses, and summer institutes on foreign language assessment and evaluation designed to meet the needs of diverse LCTL educators across multiple

languages (see Project Goal 2 and the five related activities). The AELRC’s assessment training and professional development efforts reflect a national need; developing assessment literacy is an ongoing professional need for language educators at all levels; such knowledge is a prerequisite for creating and using assessments effectively. A primary challenge for foreign language educators is conducting valid and reliable assessment when they lack information and training on best practices. From 2014 to 2022, the AELRC’s activities to provide professional development on assessment have included the online course *Assessment: The Basics*, with over 325 participants to date, ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview Workshops, with 40 participants who work with over 3,000 students annually, as well as other workshops, institutes, and webinars focused on assessment and program evaluation. The AELRC has also continued to sponsor the annual East Coast Organization of Language Testers conference which averages about 100 annual attendees. The level of participation in the AELRC’s offerings shows the need and ongoing demand for teacher training in language assessment and need to expand our work.

***Program evaluation:*** Because program evaluation allows language educators to systematically investigate their educational practices and change them for the better, language program evaluation is critical to the mission of the LRCs. The AELRC has a strong tradition in program evaluation, specifically in less commonly taught languages; as noted in our initial 2014 application, support and outreach efforts in this area have historically focused on commonly taught languages. Despite a prevailing view that evaluation is primarily an imposed process of external judgment, the AELRC asserts that evaluation is a systematic mode of empirical inquiry during which information about how a program functions is collected for different purposes, including to understand and improve the program, to judge program quality, to hold the program accountable, and to empower evaluation participants. Contemporary research illuminates how

evaluation can be conducted productively and looks for contextual and methodological factors within organizations that seem most associated with useful evaluation activity. Such factors and program elements are termed “evaluation capacity” (that is, evaluation knowledge and skills, resources, implementation quality, facilitative leadership, productive teamwork); where there is robust evaluation capacity within an organization, research suggests there is a greater likelihood for productive evaluation practice. The burden of program evaluation often falls on teachers and administrators who may lack the needed resources, support, and capacity to conduct such work. When evaluation functions usefully and productively, it serves as an agent of reform, as demonstrated by AELRC’s outreach, research and professional development.

Since 2014, AELRC has conducted five research studies, ten conference presentations, 14 evaluation case studies, and eight faculty professional development sessions (these numbers do not include Year 4 of the project). These activities are typically rated at or above an average of

3.65 on a four-point Likert scale that measures participant perception of the effectiveness and usefulness of AELRC workshops and institutes. Over 180 K-16 language instructors have participated in AELRC workshops and related professional development efforts; this participation rate alone shows the need for and interest in professional development in language program evaluation. In addition to the high ratings, participants have provided thoughtful comments that describe the positive influences and critical importance of the workshops on current and future work.

***K-16 Program Articulation:*** The AELRC will work with partners ACTFL and CAL to conduct a national study about overcoming barriers to K-16 program evaluation. The proposed study is well-positioned to make a national impact by researching practices across states and programs. This will result in a national picture of practices and policies, and through comparative

data, states and programs can implement best practices to promote foreign language study and program continuity. This coordinated, comprehensive view of language education throughout the learning cycle is essential for the U.S.to develop high proficiency speakers who exit higher education ready to meet workforce language demands.

Research shows that student advising, scheduling challenges, a lack of colleges credit and a curriculum that repeats what students learned in high school serve as barriers to students continuing language study from high school and into higher education (Pancrazio, 2016). The AELRC’s own research on the Seal of Biliteracy, currently in progress, shows that states vary greatly in their guidance and policies for awarding credit for the Seal, and without clear or consistent policies, institutions and programs may not be equipped to award credit and thus incentivize further study. While some limited research has looked at barriers or inconsistencies in practice, there is a gap in comprehensive, national data about K-16 program articulation as well as a need for research-based guidance about how to overcome these, and the proposed study will meet this need.

# LIKELIHOOD OF ACHIEVING RESULTS

The AELRC has a high likelihood of achieving its expected outcomes by building on a powerful foundation of eight years of focus on language assessment (including research studies, professional development efforts, conferences, and online materials), test development (including eleven C-tests and the Intercultural Pragmatic Interactional Competence Assessment), and evaluation (including research studies, professional trainings, and a book on program evaluation). The AELRC has met or exceeded all goals in its performance measure standards for 2018-22. Since its founding in 2014, the AELRC’s contributions have been substantial, building on decades of experience evaluation and assessment as well as a long-established collaboration

between Georgetown University and the Center for Applied Linguistics. ACTFL was added as a partner in 2018, further expanding the AELRC’s reach and impact.

The AELRC has developed extensive assessments and materials, worked with the Center for Applied Second Language Studies on an intercultural assessment, and conducted cutting- edge research on language assessment and program evaluation. It has also worked to increase the capacity of K-16 language educators to conduct high quality language assessment and evaluation through workshops, institutes, multimedia materials, and conferences. The AELRC's approach to high quality project design is based on best practices in research, assessment development, evaluation, and professional development and is continually enhanced by feedback elicited and analyzed from participants, the advisory committee, experts, and partners. As demonstrated by the volume of participation in its workshops and conferences, requests for support, and positive responses to its work, the AELRC has become the “go-to” LRC for language assessment and evaluation. Representing three highly effective and influential partners, the combined personnel and physical and intellectual resources, as well as the populations with which each of the three organizations work, make the AELRC well-positioned to achieve all results proposed in this proposal efficiently and effectively.

## Quality of the Outlined Methods and Procedures

The AELRC uses established processes and procedures for developing assessment and evaluation tools, designing and delivering language teacher professional development, and disseminating materials, resources, and outcomes in efficient and productive ways to appropriate audiences. Each type of activity is led by a national expert in that area and adheres to recognized best practices in the field. For example, assessment items undergo an extensive process of validity and bias/sensitivity review as well as piloting and field testing, and resources are peer-

reviewed before publication; and teacher training materials are rigorously reviewed, piloted, and updated to reflect best practices in adult learning and online delivery. In addition, the AELRC will be supported by the strong partnership of Georgetown University, ACTFL, and CAL, each of which brings a history of quality work in foreign language teaching, learning, and testing.

Each of these institutions offers a robust collection of knowledge on foreign language assessment and evaluation as well as unparalleled practical experience in conducting evaluation and assessment projects and disseminating results via cutting-edge methods to relevant stakeholders, including expertise in technology-based tools and dissemination efforts.

## Practicability of Plans for Carrying out Activities

Each project goal described in this application identifies specific objectives and detailed, measurable outcomes as well as partners, if applicable. The proven working relationships between the AELRC and its partners ACTFL and CAL promise strong collaborations, effective project implementation, and high-impact results, as well as a broad reach for dissemination efforts. Similarly, collaboration with the Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS) will maximize the development potential of the intercultural communicative competence assessment, as CASLS will develop the simulated learning environment and the AELRC will develop the assessment components. In addition, the strategic partnerships with Northern Virginia Community College, Portland State University, and the University of New Mexico will offer the AELRC effective ways to reach and support language programs and language teachers in these often-underserved contexts. By providing professional development and conducting research on its efficacy, the AELRC will expand its understanding of the needs of community colleges and MSIs in order to incorporate useful strategies for working with organizations with similar program, teacher, and student profiles.

# FINAL FORM OF RESULTS

## Description of Final Form of Results

Project outcomes will include the following: resources, publications, and professional development. We describe each in more detail below, and the final forms of results correspond to the project outcomes listed in Appendix A.

***Resources***. Assessment and evaluation instruments, frameworks, training, and other resources will be developed and improved based on both new and existing work from AELRC research and outreach-oriented projects, including:

* Assessments: C-tests in Cantonese and Ukrainian, an elicited imitation test in Ukrainian, oral proficiency assessment task banks in Arabic and Mandarin, Student Oral Proficiency Assessment training in Korean, an Intercultural Pragmatic Interactional Competence Assessment in Mandarin, and an AAPPL Form E in one LCTL
* Multimedia resources: four recorded webinars and three video series on topics related to assessment and evaluation
* Regular updates to the Foreign Language Assessment Directory
* Five evaluation instruments and tools focused on evaluating student equity and access
* Research-based best practices for K-16 language program articulation
* Updates to the AELRC’s virtual research databases and resources

***Publications.*** Findings from AELRC research projects will be disseminated in peer- reviewed scholarly publications and practitioner-focused publications, including:

* At least four articles in widely read, top tier language education journals such as *Language Learning & Technology*, *Foreign Language Annals*, *The Modern Language Journal*, *Language Testing, Language Assessment Quarterly*, and the *Heritage Language Journal*
* Eight total AELRC briefs, disseminated through the AELRC website, that present the results of AELRC projects and explain the implications and applications of AELRC research for K- 12 teachers and community college, and four-year university instructors
* A white paper presenting the results of the K-16 program articulation study recommendations for strengthening pathways to language learning in higher education

***Professional Development.*** The AELRC will provide direct outreach to language educators through conference presentations, online materials, and through its support of the annual East Coast Organization of Language Testers conference. Results of AELRC projects will also be disseminated widely, and various audiences, from K-12 teachers to program administrators, will receive training in evaluation and assessment through summer institutes, webinars, online courses, workshops, and conference presentations, including:

* Workshops and presentations at the annual conferences of ACTFL, the East Coast Organization of Language Testers, the American Association of Applied Linguistics, local foreign language conferences, and the Language Assessment Research Conference
* Webinars, videos, and online courses on key topics in foreign language assessment tailored to the specific needs of K-12, community college, study abroad, and university audiences
* Two Summer Institutes about language program evaluation
* Four Oral Proficiency Interview workshops for LCTL instructors

# PRIORITIES

The AELRC’s proposed activities for the 2022-26 funding cycle respond to both the Absolute and Competitive Preference Priorities.

## Absolute Priority: Focus on LCTLs

The activities proposed for each of the AELRC’s five goals will create LCTL resources and professional development for LCTL educators:

* + The AELRC will develop assessments and assessment resources in Arabic, Cantonese, Korean, Mandarin, and Ukrainian as well as one LCTL to be determined for the AAPPL Form E.
  + The AELRC will provide professional development for LCTL instructors through OPI workshops, *Assessment: The Basics,* SOPA training, summer institutes, and an AAPPL workshop. We expect to impact at least educators through these activities.
  + The AELRC will develop and disseminate materials that address the needs of LCTL instructors and administrators, including the Foreign Language Assessment Directory, the AELRC Multimedia Resource Library, and AELRC briefs.

## Competitive Preference Priority: Promoting Equity

The AELRC will promote equity in student access to educational resources and opportunities in three primary ways. First, through working with partners on materials development and research activities. One community college, Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA), and two MSIs: Portland State University, and the University of New Mexico in the development of the Intercultural Pragmatic Interactional Competence assessment. These three institutions will support piloting assessment and training materials and will help improve training materials. In developing the oral proficiency task bank, CAL will also work with community college language instructors. Second, we will recruit language educators from community college and MSIs, including Tribal Colleges and Universities and Historically Black Colleges and Universities, for AELRC professional development activities, including ACTFL OPI workshops and *Assessment: The Basics.* Third, we will prioritize the development and effective dissemination of digital materials and resources. These resources promote access and equity by removing geographic barriers and creating dynamic online spaces for collaboration.

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