



Language Certificates

Milestones in Further Education

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“Cultural educational work is a necessity, not a luxury. Multilingualism and Integration are empowering.”

Prof. Dr. Rita Süßmuth
President of the German Adult
Education Association (DVV)

European Language Certificates –

Communication and Multilingual Competence in Europe

*This book contains translations
of this summary in the following languages:
German, Hungarian, French, Italian, Polish,
Russian, Spanish and Turkish.*

The European Language Certificates, which are now called *telc – language tests*, but which were originally known as Volkshochschul-Zertifikate, have made a distinctive and lasting contribution to the development of foreign language learning and teaching in adult education. Trend setting and forwardreaching, *telc – language tests* have been and are significant both in their sustained effectiveness of foreign language learning and teaching methods and their international acceptance.

Introduced in the late 1960s, the first *telc* examinations were the catalyst for the changes taking place in language learning and teaching which saw an increasing emphasis on, and a shift towards, the communicative approach. State-of-the-art language testing designs and test formats, based on needs analyses and learner orientation, were introduced and found their way into language teaching, forming the structure for today's contemporary language education, not only in further education institutions. The adult education centres (Volkshochschulen) in Germany, forging the way in test development, adopted ways of teaching languages as they are used in everyday situations, in private life and in the workplace. The communicative approach of learning and teaching languages, introduced by adult education in the 1970s, albeit with delay, has ultimately established itself in the language teaching methodology in secondary schools and colleges.

The evolution that has led to today's *telc – language tests* has shown European dimensions from the start. An international vision beyond national boundaries was manifested at the initial stages of the European Language Certificates. Right from the beginning *telc – language tests* were available in several European languages and spawned awareness for today's multilingualism.

This vital and mutual exchange among languages, test experts and item writers from many European countries and from many linguistic backgrounds has continued uninterrupted for almost half a century. Teaching concepts associated with the *telc – language tests* promote Europe's efforts toward communicative language learning and teaching and fair testing procedures. Europe's quality benchmarking instruments promoted by the Council of Europe continually influence the further improvement of language tests developed by *telc*. This is also supported by *telc*'s close cooperation with test developers in Europe (Association of Language Testers in Europe).

Today, *telc – language tests* supply a range of opportunities for a successful career in a globalized world by promoting active participation in society at large, including the language requirement for citizenship application.

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Foreword

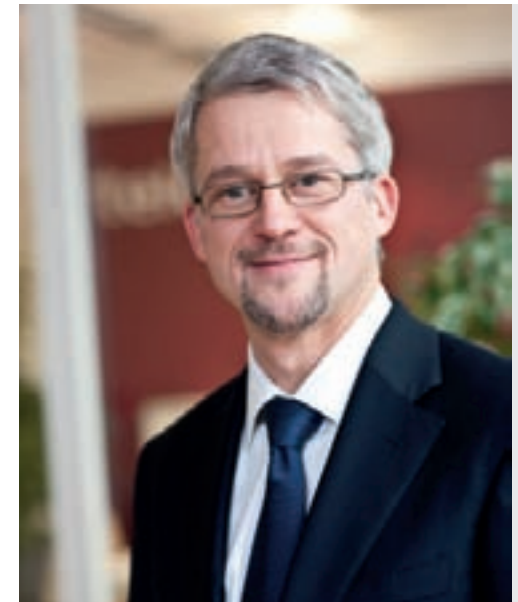
The idea behind *telc – language tests* is pretty much as old as I am. In my personal case, it is difficult to say whether that is a lot or a little. In the case of European Language Certification, it is a considerably long time, and one which is certainly worth looking back upon and building on.

The occasion for this publication is the more than four decades of objective, standardized certification of language skills of today's telc GmbH and its forerunners within the German Adult Education Association (DVV).

We would especially like to thank the prominent authors for their congratulatory greetings in this book; the Minister of Education and Research, Professor Dr. Annette Schavan, the Minister for National Education of the Republic of Turkey, Mrs. Nimet Çubukçu, the former President of the German Federal Parliament and present DVV President, Professor Dr. Rita Süßmuth, as well as the Head of the Department of Language Education and Policy in the Council of Europe, Joseph Sheils. We have all long been aware of how important education is to the future of our society. The continuous involvement of political decision makers in this, our cause, is especially important and noteworthy in such socially and economically challenging times as ours.

We sincerely thank the numerous national and international partners as well as the competent authors for their contributions to the book at hand, 'Language Certificates – Milestones in Further Education'. An idea needs goals, an undertaking requires a plan to get there, and milestones such as this one are reached only with the help of good, dependable partner institutions. Also part of our team are the no less than 14,664 licensed examiners as well as the 1,872 accredited telc examination centres in 20 countries. We feel good about this large network, and together we will continue to expand it in Germany, Europe and beyond.

telc – language tests stand for over 50 test formats in 9 European languages to date. No other institution has implemented the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages of the Council of Europe and the vision "Mother Tongue Language Plus Two Foreign Languages" of the European Commission as consistently as the non-profit-making telc GmbH. Our current 60 employees are natives from ten different countries, not taking into account their family ancestries; the authors, consultants, and trainers come from at least that many more countries. Our new central headquarters in Frankfurt am Main connect us even better to key personnel and decision-makers from all the different countries and regions. telc offices can now be found in nearly every German federal state, and recently an office was established in Istanbul, Turkey. Even in China and South Korea interest has been shown in the European Language Certificates.



Jürgen Keicher
Managing Director of telc GmbH



Internationally recognized certificates as a proof of language competence are in demand all over the world; they stand for determination in the acquisition of language skills, for objectivity in the evaluation and transparency in the assessment – in short: for mobility-enhancing and culture-connecting communication skills for growing numbers of people in our ever-increasingly connected world.

For the entire telc team – and I believe I can speak not only for our staff at the telc headquarters and the regional telc offices, but also for our trainers and examiners – it is out of conviction and identification with our partners in Adult Education Centres and their associates, in language schools, in politics and business, at home and abroad, that we provide sound language training and unbiased certification, as well as communicative language competency and the best quality in education. On the one hand, foreign languages – and language as such – are only a part of reality for us, just a section of an altogether much broader offering in the area of further education and vocational training. On the other hand, we all know: Language is more than just speaking, more than just a tool to communicate with. The language of a person is central to everything: his or her knowledge and expertise, culture and personality.

Read our book, test what we have on offer, and stay with us!

Prefaces

Those who are able to come up with the right ideas at the right time, and also inspire the right partners, are the ones to initiate a creative process which will dismantle encrusted structures and help change things for the better. This also applies to the field of further education.

Someone who gave such an impetus for innovation that really set things in motion was erstwhile Bavarian Language Liaison Commissioner Robert Nowacek who, more than four decades ago, started to develop the language certificates of the Adult Education Centres (VHS) under the aegis of the German Adult Education Association (DVV). He did this in Munich, at just the right time, and the nationwide family of Adult Education Centres proved to be the perfect partners. Soon they also received support from the Federal Ministry responsible for Continued Education.

These VHS Certificates led to a fundamental change of direction in language classes – away from hobby courses towards a syllabus-based set of language classes with specific learning goals. Those were milestones in further education, taken note of by language experts far beyond German language borders.

This process of change in continued education did not happen overnight; it happened over decades, as supported by education experts. Many of my predecessors leading this Federal Ministry, which I now head, recognised the importance of this process, securing it financially.

Hence, national politics can be credited with having played its part in the success story of these milestones. In hindsight, these positive results of tax spending are even more valuable if we consider that the adult education project groups that used to receive federal money have become a non-profit-making limited liability company (gGmbH). Today, *telc – language tests* stand on their own two feet financially. They operate successfully in twenty countries and have become ambassadors for multilingualism and integration in multitudinous ways.

The development of language certificates documents in a rather impressive way – and also quite generally – the ever increasing importance of further education in our society. I respect and applaud all those in further education institutions who work to meet this challenge with great professional competence and personal commitment.



Prof. Dr. Annette Schavan, MP
Federal Minister of Education and Research



Nimet Çubukçu
Minister of National Education
of the Republic of Turkey

The current fast-paced advances in technology have led to a situation in which the knowledge that formal education provides is no longer sufficient for meeting the demands of our time. In this respect, lifelong learning models have become a necessity. Since lifelong learning cannot be achieved through formal education alone, these requirements – in our country as well as in many other countries – are being fulfilled by adult education centres.

Globalisation has made learning the languages of other countries into a necessity of our century. During this process, the word foreign has been replaced by other words. In the near future, it will no longer be possible for the people of different countries to regard one another as completely foreign. Therefore, lifelong learning will not only prove to be a means of orientation to the technological advances within a country, but also to be necessary to the globalisation process.

In particular, the standardisation of language teaching and of the certification of languages to an international level is a milestone along the way toward better and more accurate understanding among people and governments of different countries. Successful communication will contribute to the building of even stronger bridges among countries as well. In this way, Europe's goal of multilingualism and multiculturalism will come one step nearer.

Offers from public establishments as well as private suppliers afford people of all ages who haven't gone through the formal education system great opportunities for education.

The efforts which were initiated years ago in consideration of societal and individual needs deserve admiration. Above all, they have to be supported and encouraged as they provide a major contribution to multilingualism and multiculturalism.

For more than four decades the European Language Certificates have been making a valuable contribution to adult education. Particularly the European aspect is more important today than ever before. Today's telc examinations, like their predecessors, are consistently multilingual in their design. They offer certificates in German, English, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Czech, Russian, and, last but not least, Turkish. This list gives impressive evidence of telc's international outlook, which already existed long before the term "multilingualism" became a political buzzword.

Being able to speak several languages not only brings personal enrichment, it also makes a significant contribution towards an understanding of other cultures. Going beyond national borders, promoting international cooperation, and by doing so overcoming prejudices: this is yet another area where telc examinations have been making an important contribution. Recently, I have observed with acute interest how *telc – language tests* are now also being offered in Turkey.

As president of the German Federal Adult Education Association, I am especially proud that these language tests – which not only offer linguistic versatility, but, through their high level of quality have become leading European language certificates – have their origins in the German Adult Education Centres (Volkshochschulen).

First developed in the 1960s, these language examinations have shown high innovative power and effectiveness. We can rightfully speak of a milestone in language teaching. The non-profit organisation telc GmbH, a subsidiary of the German Adult Education Association, is a worthy embodiment of the tradition of multilingualism, quality and innovative thinking. I congratulate telc on their anniversary and wish them every success for the coming decades.



Prof. Dr. Rita Süssmuth
former President of the Federal Parliament
President of the German
Adult Education Association



Joseph Sheils
Language Policy Division
Council of Europe

This anniversary publication illustrates the valuable contribution that the European Language Certificates have made to the promotion of plurilingualism in Europe. Early work was based on Council of Europe reference tools such as Waystage and Threshold Level, and today's tests draw on its Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The framework is widely used in Europe and beyond in the planning, guiding and assessment of learners' progress in developing their plurilingual repertoire in a lifelong learning perspective.

In view of the widespread use of the CEFR, it is important to recall that the framework is a descriptive rather than a prescriptive instrument that is intended to assist users in reflecting on and analysing their own situation and needs. It is meant to facilitate them in making the decisions that are appropriate to their specific context, while respecting certain shared principles and values. Its flexible nature allows decisions to be made as close to the point of learning as possible.

All users have a shared responsibility for applying the CEFR in a principled, coherent and transparent manner. This involves making use of the full apparatus that the CEFR provides to promote the development of plurilingual and intercultural competences and includes availing of its unique potential to validate the differentiated plurilingual profile of the language learner – a developing, uneven profile with different competences, at different levels of proficiency, in more than one language, which changes throughout the individual's life.

It is noteworthy that telc tests are available in a range of languages in a number of countries, helping to convey the CEFR as a valuable tool in the necessary shared reflection, communication and networking across languages and national boundaries. Professional bodies who like telc work in the field of assessment appreciate the support provided by the 'toolkit' developing around the CEFR: In addition to illustrative material for the proficiency levels, there are manuals on relating language examinations to the CEFR and on language test development and examining.

I note that telc is also dealing with high stakes situations involving the development of fair and impartial language tests for citizenship purposes. This is a rapidly developing and politically sensitive area with human rights implications. As the CEFR is increasingly used as a basis for language requirements for entry, residence and citizenship purposes, the Language Policy Division has developed guidelines and tools relating to the development, implementation and evaluation of language policies to support the integration of adult migrants. I am pleased that telc is contributing its considerable experience and expertise to this very important area and I wish it continued success in its worthy initiatives to ensure the highest professional standards in the field of testing.

Europejskie Certyfikaty Językowe – komunikacja i wielojęzyczność w Europie.

Europejskie Certyfikaty Językowe – dzisiaj egzaminy telc, dawniej Certyfikaty VHS – wnoszą od ponad czterech dziesięcioleci swój istotny wkład do rozwoju dydaktyki języków obcych w kształceniu dorosłych. Wytarczają one dalszy rozwój nauczania języków w aspekcie międzynarodowym. Egzaminy prowadzące do certyfikatu były przyczyną zwrotu ku komunikatywności w nauczaniu języków obcych od końca lat sześćdziesiątych. Wpływające z nowatorskiego w formie i treści egzaminu idee poczęły z kolei oddziaływać na sposób nauczania. Dzięki temu procesowi niemieckie Uniwersytety Ludowe stanęły na czele przeobrażeń prowadzących do przekazu zarówno języka codziennego jak i zawodowego, co w innych szkołach nastąpiło z pewnym opóźnieniem.

Rozwój ten miał zawsze wymiar europejski. Aspekt międzynarodowy przejawia się już w tym, że certyfikaty językowe VHS od samego początku oferowane były w kilku językach europejskich i otwierały w ten sposób drogę do wielojęzyczności. Jednocześnie powstało działające do dzisiaj sprzężenie zwrotne: niemieckie pomysły wspierały europejskie starania o nauczanie komunikatywne i odpowiednie testowanie, a europejskie kryteria oceny oddziaływały na dalszy rozwój niemieckich certyfikatów językowych, także poprzez kontakty partnerskie z innymi europejskimi twórcami testów.

Dzisiaj egzaminy telc, jako Europejskie Certyfikaty Językowe, dają szanse w nacechowanym mobilnością świecie poprzez niezawodną i rzetelną ocenę poziomu: są to szanse zawodowe, a także możliwość kontaktu społecznego, aż do uzyskania obywatelstwa włącznie.

The History of telc

Centralised language examinations guarantee validity, reliability and objectivity; qualities which the tests themselves embody. Moreover, the history of the European Language Certificates (*telc – language tests*) highlights a number of additional advantages.

Today as in the past, these tests represent an innovative contribution to language teaching, a vehicle toward the internationalisation of standards and a key to 'real life' outside the classroom.

The European Language Certificates: Setting Standards

The development of telc examinations coincided with the shift towards 'real life' learning by the German further education sector in the 1960s. While there was a rather socio-cultural and political focus in the post-war era, demand soon increased for new courses providing business qualifications. There were also changes in approaches to educational theory within the network of German Adult Education Centres, the Volkshochschulen (VHS).

The European Language Certificates were integral to the logic of this development, in terms of both goals (the advancement of language learning as practical knowledge) and methods (standardised, empirically reliable rather than individually developed, non-standard tests), representing a major milestone.

The seeds were sown for standardised testing in Germany following the translation of Robert Lado's 1961 publication 'Language Testing', advocated by long-time Chief Coordinating Examiner of English and test methodology expert, Rheinhold Freudenstein. The qualitative and statistical analysis of test items contained in Lado's publication informed the development of new examinations from their inception.

The development of the first VHS Language Certificates was chiefly motivated by the desire for a new communicative form of teaching based on everyday life and supported by multimedia resources – in a word, modern. In the minds of progressive adult education practitioners, teaching methodology that focussed on grammar and translation was no longer effective.

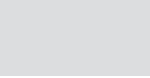
The concept of communicative competence was debated by a group that included Christopher Candlin (University of Lancaster), D. A. Wilkins (University of Reading) und Jan van Ek (University of Utrecht), the latter in connection with preliminary work toward a 'threshold level in a European unit/credit system for modern language learning by adults'. The 1990 revised edition of this publication set out the basis for the levels later defined by the Council of Europe.

How can a widely established institution such as the VHS be motivated to adopt a new approach? What can be done to support the practical implementation of new ideas? Innovative examinations presented an effective solution. Developed from the outset with a communicative aim, the tests were designed to provide a clear direction for learning upon course completion and to encourage speaking, authentic language use and the employment of audiovisual media.

**New directions:
Adult education for modern life**

**The breakthrough to
communicative teaching methods**

**telc Milestones:
A Timeline**



New partners



New exams



Other milestones



1968

1968 Certificate in English
(today: telc English B1)

1969 Certificate in French
(today: telc Français B1)

*cooperative project between
DVV/WBT GmbH/telc GmbH
and Goethe-Institut

1970

1971 Goethe-Institut
(joint development
of German exams)

1971 Certificate in German
as a Foreign Language*
(today: Zertifikat Deutsch/
telc Deutsch B1)

Certificate in Russian
(today: telc Русский язык B1)

Certificate in Spanish
(today: telc Español B1)

1972 Certificate in English for
Business Purposes
(today: telc English B2 Business)

1973 Certificate in Italian
(today: telc Italiano B1)

1972 DVV
examination centre established

1973 DVV, VÖV and VSV
found the ICC - International
Certificate Conference

1975

1977 AGERCEL
(language centres of the
French Chamber of Commerce)

1975 Council of Europe publishes
the "Threshold Level" (B1)

1980

1984 Migros Club Schools,
Switzerland

1981 Basic Module for the
Certificate in German
(today: Start Deutsch 2)

Basic Module for the
Certificate in English
(today: telc English A2)

Basic Module for the
Certificate in Spanish
(today: telc Español A2)

1982 Basic Module for the
Certificate in French
(today: telc Français A2)

Basic Module for the
Certificate in Russian
(today: telc Русский язык A2)

1984 English for the Hotel
and Catering Industry
(today: English B1 Hotel
and Restaurant)

1985

1987 TIT, Hungarian
Adult Education Association
Łódź University
language centre, Poland

1985 English for Technical Purposes
(today: English B2 Technical)

1986 Basic Module for the
Certificate in Italian
(today: telc Italiano A2)

1987 French for Business Purposes
(today: Français B1 pour
la Profession)

Basic Module for the
Certificate in Dutch
(no longer offered)

1989 Japanese Stage One
(no longer offered)

1989 Council of Europe publishes
the "Waystage Level" (A2)

1990

1994 Comune di Milano

1993 Certificate in Portuguese
(today: telc Português B1)

English Stage 3
(no longer offered)

Certificate in Catalan
(no longer offered)

Basic Module for the
Certificate in Portuguese
(no longer offered)

1994 Business German Certificate
(today: telc Deutsch B2 Beruf)*

Sprachstandsanalyse Deutsch
Assessment Test for German
(no longer offered)

Although not all teachers implemented this new concept right away, the development of the European Language Certificates provided a decisive boost for the general, widespread discussions that were already underway regarding optimum methods for foreign language learning.

The European Language Certificates have stood for innovation and progress from the start, above all in the classroom. The establishment of a reliable scale of assessment not only facilitated an improved programme structure with the attendant possibility of transferring between courses, but also gave the tests a European dimension.

This European aspect was first introduced through the establishment of certificates in various foreign languages, starting with English and soon extended to include French, Italian, Russian and Spanish. The Certificate of German as a Foreign Language also joined the list in the early 1970s, widening perspectives beyond the classical educational scope of the Adult Education Centres. The next logical step was cooperation with similarly equipped institutions across Europe, leading to the foundation as early as 1973 of what is known today as the International Certificate Conference (ICC).

Alongside the movement towards European collaboration, VHS test development activities received significant support from throughout the continent. The Council of Europe busied itself with questions regarding the comparability of language standards, which, rather than stemming from a scientific wish for deeper knowledge, were motivated by entirely practical considerations. These included mutually accepted performance standards, practicable across borders. Such discussions also coincided perfectly with the initial development of the certificates as a means of progressing through the VHS course programme structure.

The elaboration of the 'Threshold Level' was an initial step towards the development of the Common European Framework for Languages (CEF) in its current format. These European efforts towards communication-orientated standards were inextricably linked to the ongoing development of the European Language Certificates themselves. Throughout several stages of revision, the tests contributed to the process for defining European standards. In the 1990s the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) joined forces with the Council of Europe, bringing further Europe-wide consensus. The comparability of the examinations remained a central concern and ALTE created a scale of competence during the same period that the CEF was under development. The increasingly diversified range of language certificates offered by the German VHS represents the practical implementation of both these initiatives.

Mobility and Europeanization

European standards

1995

- 1995** Accession to ALTE
(Association of Language Testers in Europe)
- 1997** Trinational cooperation between WBT GmbH, Goethe-Institut, ÖSD (Austrian German Language Diploma) and the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers (EDK)
- 1998** Language centre of the University of Information Technology and Management Rzeszów in Poland
- 1999** VDP
Association of German Private Schools

1998 Certificate in Czech
(today: telc Český jazyk B1)

1995 Council of Europe publishes first version of "A Common European Framework of References for Languages"

1997 Council of Europe publishes the "Vantage Level" (B2)

1998 Testing Centre of the DVV becomes a separate entity, WBT GmbH

2000

2002 Cooperation agreement with the Saarland Ministry of Education for the implementation of telc exams in Saarland schools

2003 telc becomes partners with the German Federal Ministry of the Interior for the implementation of language exams in integration courses

2000 Start Deutsch 1z and Start Deutsch 2z*
Test Deutsch (language test required for obtaining citizenship)

2001 Test Deutsch alfa
(language test for naturalization of people who cannot read or write)
Test German for the Workplace (today: telc Deutsch A2+ Beruf)

2002 Start Deutsch 1 and Start Deutsch 2*

2003 telc English A1, telc Français A1, telc Español A1,
telc Italiano A1, telc Русский язык A1

2001 Final version of the "Common European Framework of References for Languages" is published in several languages
Publication of the "European Language Portfolio"

2003 The Federal Office for Refugees commissions WBT GmbH with the central implementation of the Start Deutsch 1z and Start Deutsch 2z exams

2004 The Federal Office for Refugees commissions WBT GmbH with the central implementation of the Zertifikat Deutsch as the final exam for integration courses.

These Europe-wide developments have a dual focus: the comparability and therefore international applicability of the tests, together with the advancement of communicative language competence. Beyond the satisfaction gained from personal achievement, the latter provides scope above all for career development and mobility. In response to these international efforts, the German language certificate extended its scope beyond the VHS to target more diverse groups in Germany and abroad. Openness, mobility and comprehensive institutional and national transparency were fundamental to the newly-established European system for describing language competence.

After more than four decades of progress towards effective language teaching, student-oriented options in a European context and the fair certification of language ability, many aims have been accomplished – more, perhaps, than the pioneers of modern language assessment could ever have imagined. Today's telc certificates have given the long tradition of certified examinations a contemporary touch, simultaneously upholding the historical traditions of the VHS while engaging with and sustaining the debate within Europe.

The development of more recent telc examinations continues to be motivated by the desire to modernise language teaching. Although this aim has long been implemented by the VHS, it has yet to be realised in other educational contexts.

Now in their fourth and fifth decades, *telc – language tests* increasingly facilitate access to educational and career opportunities and life in foreign countries. While in the past such options depended more on informal, individual demonstrations of language competence, today the demand for formal qualification certificates is increasing. telc language certificates are being used to gain entry to further education and enhance career progress. The German language certificates are a nationally recognised proof of linguistic competence, opening the door to immigration to the Federal Republic of Germany, permanent residency and ultimately German citizenship.

Some may find the increasing restrictions on migration in a globalised world regrettable. Individual prospects now depend on passing a language examination to a greater degree than we could have imagined before. Hence, it is all the more important that telc examinations, having been honed over many years, offer the quality and professionalism that are essential in this officially regulated area. The examinations are fair and objective, offering everyone the same opportunities. At the same time they are also based on the communicative approach, providing not only a piece of paper but also a tool equipping people to communicate in another country, to take part in local life – to actually 'arrive'.

telc – language tests:
Continuing tradition
from a modern perspective

Certificates as a key to success



Additional qualifications for successful career moves



telc: today and tomorrow

Apart from supporting immigrants, telc language certificates are especially effective when it comes to successful educational transitions. Students can sit a telc examination in addition to their regular school leaving exams in order to be able to add an internationally recognised proof of language ability to their CV or college application. Especially intermediate school leavers purposefully pursue training for their career. telc takes this into account by offering tailor-made exams for 14 to 16-year-olds. Upper level senior school students can take the general telc examinations all the way up to the C1 language level.

At university and at work, tests which certify business language competence are coming more into focus, whether for general business usage or English for special purposes, such as examinations in technical English or English for Hotels and Restaurants. Demand for certificates which focus on practical everyday use of language is increasing. These examinations support the goal of enlarging linguistic capacity to operate in a career.

As part of a wider educational context, *telc – language tests* have many applications. They are offered in countries as diverse and distant from Germany as China, Hungary and Turkey. They influence and shape foreign language lessons in adult education and increasingly those in secondary schools, too. They appeal to many different target groups and institutions, from career-oriented academics to those unaccustomed to formal education seeking better integration within society. They encourage teachers with completely different fields of experience to take up further training and become telc examiners.

There still remains a great deal of work to be done. telc expertise continues to contribute to the European debate on standards and quality. Although much has been accomplished in this direction since the publication of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, its interpretation and design have yet to be completed. telc examinations already refer to Europe by name and embody the values of European multilingualism like few other organisations in the sector, since they are not restricted solely to testing the language of their country of origin, Germany. Both within Europe and beyond, the importance of goals such as professionalism in language education, differentiated proofs of competence in various languages and everyday language skills for a broad range of target groups will continue to grow. The telc language examinations will continue to be influenced by this European discussion, and, for their part, make an active and progressive contribution to language education.

2005

2008 First licensed partners in Turkey and China

2009 Cooperation agreement with HKM and the State of Bremen for the implementation of Turkish exams for "language of origin" classes

2005 telc Português B1 para fins profissionais

2006 telc English B1 School, telc Türkçe A1

2007 telc English A2 School, telc Français B1 Ecole, telc Español A2 Escuela, telc English C1, telc Deutsch C1

2008 telc Français A2 Ecole, telc Español B1 Escuela

2009 German test for immigrants A2/B1*, telc Deutsch B1+ Beruf, telc Türkçe B1 Okul, telc Türkçe B2 Okul, telc Español B2 Escuela, telc Deutsch A2+ Beruf

2006 BAMF commissions WBT GmbH and the Goethe-Institut with the development of the dual-level "German Test for Immigrants"

2007 the WBT GmbH changes its name to telc GmbH
Set-up of the regional telc offices; first telc examinations for pupils
A Department for Communication and Distribution is set up

2008 BAMF commissions telc GmbH with the implementation of the German Test for Immigrants

2009 from July 1, 2009 centralised organisation and implementation of the German Test for Immigrants A2/B1 through telc GmbH; telc certificates are officially recognised as proof of evidence of language skills required for migrants joining their spouses in Germany; setting-up of a liaison office in Istanbul

2010

First licensed partners in South Korea and Greece

Cooperation with Spotlight Publishing for online assessment test, sprachtest.de

telc Türkçe A2 Okul
telc Deutsch B2+ Beruf
telc Español B2

telc headquarters move to downtown Frankfurt

Department for Training and Qualification is established

telc starts communication campaign "Ambassadors for Multilingualism and Integration"

telc English – Successful Communication, Worldwide

From the outset, the decision by Germany's Adult Education Centres to develop an English Language Certificate was not taken at random.

**Levels:
Competence in English
from 'elementary' to 'proficient'**

**Dual-level tests:
One examination, two levels**

**Content:
Special exams for professional purposes**

**Target Groups:
Young and old**

40 years ago, English was – as it is now – the most widely used international language, and not merely within Germany. Thus, in late 1969, work started on a qualification that would reach as many adult foreign language learners as possible. Further development of the certificates centred not only on the lesser-learned languages such as Dutch and Danish, but also on more specialised tests in English. While several of these projects were not ultimately successful, others flourished and have withstood the test of time.

In the early days of the language certificates, the focus was placed on what is known today as competence level B1. This defined the so-called 'threshold level', at which learners who passed the test were able to use the language independently and self-sufficiently in the country where it was spoken. The spectrum was later widened to include level A1 (often used as a further educational measure for lesser qualified employees), up to level C1 (suitable for university students and those wishing to climb the career ladder).

Learners who are interested in taking an examination are often not sure whether their language skills are sufficient for the level they wish – or need – to pass. For those who are uncertain about taking an examination, telc has something new to offer – the dual-level test. The dual-level test measures and certifies – in accordance with the standards of modern test theory – which of the two possible competence levels being tested has been reached. Thus, all participants have the chance to successfully complete the examination, which is especially useful in heterogeneous groups of learners.

Differentiation within the English programme led to the introduction of the English for Business examinations. These are a selection of tests for professionals who wish to certify their English language competence within the context of their field of work. Tests like English B1 Hotel and Restaurant and English B2 Technical offer even more specialised professional content.

The European Language Certificates were originally aimed exclusively at adults. This conformed to the public mandate of the Adult Education Centres, which had also evolved over decades. Over time the educational landscape has changed dramatically, and telc now also offers special exams for school pupils also. The demand for standardised certification among young people in the period between leaving school and starting a career has increased significantly and this is another area where *telc – language tests* are keeping pace with development.



The telc Map

telc examinations can be taken in these countries:



Impressions from telc Partners

Innovation, quality and international recognition

As Europe grows together, foreign language skills are increasingly becoming one of the basic competences people need in order to take part in economic and social life. Hence, high-quality language teaching and certification of language competency are more and more important in both school and adult education. For over 40 years, telc. GmbH has been making a significant contribution to the principles of foreign language teaching through their innovations in certificate and test design.

As a longstanding co-operating partner of telc, the Federal Association of Private Schools in Germany (VDP) supports the implementation of new approaches in language learning. We trust the high quality standard of *telc – language tests* as well as in the international recognition of their certificates. The Federal Association of German Private Schools would like to congratulate telc on their 40th anniversary. We look forward to a continued successful cooperation.

Michael Büchler
President of the Federal Association of Private Schools in Germany (VDP)

The European Spirit

Some fifteen years ago with the awareness of the united Europe, came the State of Spirit to one of the first non-state schools of higher education in Poland. Many languages, many levels of the language examinations, now known as The European Language Certificates, focused in our university. It made the students prove European curriculum accomplishment. The telc system spread across the country, many institutions making it their own. The State of Spirit in languages is well worth the effort with The European Language Certificates.

Czas na telc

Wraz ze świadomością Polaków, że nadchodzi czas zjednoczonej Europy, nadszedł czas budowy tożsamości jednej z pierwszych niepaństwowych szkół wyższych w Polsce. Wiele języków - tyleż samo poziomów egzaminów językowych, teraz pod nazwą The European Language Certificates, zaistniało w naszej uczelni. Studenci potwierdzali egzaminami swoje kompetencje językowe. System egzaminów telc przyjął się w Polsce zakorzeniając w wielu uczelniach. Inwestowanie w języki obce to godne przedsięwzięcie wraz z The European Language Certificates.

Jerzy Czyżowski
Centre for Modern Languages, University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszów

In the early 90s, telc examinations found wide acceptance among foreign language learners in Poland. It would be hard to assess how many supporters of Poland's accession to the EU had their approval of European unity formed during their foreign language classes. Europe's multiculturalism and multilingualism have become a challenge for both politicians and schools, as well as for all educational establishments whose task it has been to prepare Europeans for this multifaceted house they share. The multilingual system of certificates offered by *telc – language tests* provides our best assurance that the basic efforts to equip citizens for life in a multicultural and multilingual Europe will be successful.

**For a multicultural
and multilingual Europe**

Na początku lat dziewięćdziesiątych egzaminy telc spotkały się z dużym zainteresowaniem nauczycieli języków obcych w Polsce. Dzisiaj trudno byłoby obliczyć, ilu zwolenników wstąpienia Polski do Unii Europejskiej zawdzięcza swoje pozytywne stanowisko wobec jedności europejskiej właśnie nauce języków obcych. Wielokulturowość Europy i jej wielojęzyczność stały się wyzwaniem zarówno dla polityków jak i dla szkół i wszystkich placówek oświatowych, które są odpowiedzialne za przygotowanie Europejczyków do życia w różnorodnym lecz wspólnym domu. Wielojęzyczny system certyfikatów *telc – language tests* daje najpełniejszą gwarancję przygotowania obywateli do życia w wielokulturowej i wielojęzycznej Europie.

**Dla wielokulturowej
i wielojęzycznej Europy**

*Stanisław Hibner
Director of the Department of Foreign Languages of the University of Łódź*

**telc exams at Migros Club School
Zurich, Switzerland**

Migros Club Schools have been administering telc examinations (formerly ICC exams) for some 20 years. During this time, we have not only seen a steady rise in the number of candidates, but also a change in our customer base.

Originally, most Club Schools offered only one exam date per year. Eventually, this was raised to two dates. While in 1990 just 55 people sat a telc exam in our Zurich school, ten years later the number had climbed to 295. To-date, 3,872 candidates have taken a telc exam at the Migros Club School, Zurich – with a 89% pass rate.

Since 2003, Migros Club School, Zurich, has been particularly stressing the importance of “German as a Foreign Language” tests. In recent years, it has become increasingly necessary for many candidates to show proof of German language ability via certification – either to obtain a residence permit or to help their chances on the job market. Experience has shown that candidates who have taken a course at a Club School and who thereby seriously prepared for their examination, have passed at a far higher success rate than those who walk into a test without prior preparation. The German examinations are taken by a very diverse body of candidates and therefore present quite a challenge to the examiners.

This history of success serves as an endorsement to our Club School in its work as a major adult education institution and as a telc examination centre, and this in turn encourages us to continue in the same vein.

*Ursula Riedinger
Head of telc examinations, Migros Club School, Zurich*

Európai nyelvvizsgák – kommunikáció és többszempvűség Európában

A jelenleg telc vizsgaként, korábban VHS-vizsgaként ismert európai nyelvvizsga-bizonyítvány a felnötkképzésben négy évtizede járul hozzá jelentősen az idegennyelv-oktatás fejlesztéséhez. A vizsgák elsősorban az idegennyelv tanítására gyakorolt hatásukban és a nemzetköziségükben iránymutatóak.

A nyelvvizsga az idegennyelv-oktatásban az 1960-as évek végén lezajlott kommunikációs változások egyik úttörője volt. Az akkoriban frissen kifejlesztett vizsgaformák az oktatásra új irányként hatottak. A német népfőiskolák így a fejlődés csúcsára kerültek az általános és szakmai nyelvtudás terjesztésében, mivel az iskolákba ezek a változások csak késve érkeztek meg.

Ennek a fejlődésnek mindig voltak európai dimenziói. Szembetűnő, hogy a VHS nyelvvizsgákat kezdettől fogva több európai nyelvből kínálták, amivel már korán a többszempvűség felé nyitottak a fejlesztők. Ezzel egyidejűleg egy a mai napig érvényes kölcsönhatás jött létre: a német ötletek előmozdították a kommunikatív oktatásra és a korrekt tesztelésre irányuló európai törekvéseket, ugyanakkor az európai minőségi követelmények mindig visszahatottak a német nyelvvizsgák további fejlesztésére is, döntően a más európai tesztfejlesztőkkel létrehozott társulásokon keresztül.

A megbízható és korrekt teljesítménymérésnek köszönhetően a telc vizsgák európai nyelvvizsgaként máig komoly esélyt nyújtanak mobilitással teli világunkban a szakmai és gazdasági lehetőségek kiaknázására vagy akár egy új állampolgárság megszerzésére.

Multilingualism and Integration

“Multilingualism and Integration” are key to a successful mastery of the future. Anyone who can speak foreign languages will find doors wide open in tomorrow’s Europe. Equally important is having the will to integrate into society. Both issues are especially important for people whose family roots lie beyond the borders of the country that has accommodated them, should they and their families wish to set up permanent residence there.

As a non-profit-making organization, telc is committed to these educational and social objectives. Apart from securing peace, these goals may well present the most important political challenges of today. As an internationally well-positioned enterprise offering language examinations in nine European languages and issuing proof of competency important to career advancement and degree programmes, we have recently started a poster campaign featuring outstanding public figures as “Ambassadors for Multilingualism and Integration.”

Language is the Key

The position of the first “Ambassador for Multilingualism and Integration” for the telc poster series was accepted by Professor Dr. Rita Süßmuth, President of the German Adult Education Association. As Federal Minister for Youth, Family, and Health from 1985 to 1988, and subsequently as President of the German Bundestag (Federal Parliament) for ten years, she became Germany’s most popular politician of that time. Through her fervent commitment to Adult Education Centres over the past decade, she has become the “Mother of Further Education”, and this not just in Germany, but also in many European countries.

Rita Süßmuth was born in Wuppertal. After earning her degree in Romance and German Studies in Münster, Tübingen, and Paris, she taught as a professor in Bochum and Dortmund. From 1979 to 1991 she was a member of the Central Committee of German Catholics. From 1982 – the same year in which she joined the Christian Democratic Union political party (CDU) – until her appointment to Federal Minister, she served as Director of the ‘Women and Society’ Institute in Hanover. In 1986, she became Federal Chairwoman of the Women’s Union of the CDU. She was a member of the German parliament from 1987 until 2002, serving from 1988 until 1998 as president.

She is recognized world-wide as the forerunner in the ever-increasingly important political area of integration. In 2002, under the red-green federal government of that time, led by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, she was appointed chairwoman of the nonpartisan Commission for Immigration. In 2004 she belonged to the Global Commission for Migration, which presented her report to UN General Secretary Kofi Annan. From 2005 to 2009 she was president of the private SRH-School for Economics in Berlin.

Two countries are especially dear to her, Poland and Turkey. Since 2005, Professor Süßmuth has been president of the German-Polish Institute, and since 2008 chairwoman of the German-Polish Scholarship Foundation. In February, 2010 she was voted president of the German University Consortium for the German-Turkish University. Furthermore, she is a member of the board of trustees for the Technical University of Berlin and on the board of directors of the Genshagen Foundation.

Rita Süßmuth’s slogan of encouragement as Ambassador for Multilingualism and Integration: “Language is the key to appreciating a land and its people, and to experiencing their culture.”



Learning a new Foreign Language opens the Door to a Wonderful, Enriched Life

Ioannis Ikonomou, a translator for the European Commission, speaks 32 foreign languages and understands about as many more. On the way to work he listens to Chinese on his iPod, on the Internet he reads the Turkish news, he watches satellite-TV programs in Russian, Polish or German. He speaks Spanish or Arabic with his friends, and in his free time he reads Middle Persian literature in the original text.

Mr. Ikonomou discovered his passion for languages when he was just a child: to be able to understand the “secrets” that the many tourists on his home island of Crete were talking about, he learned English. A short time later he learned Turkish to be able to judge for himself if the prejudices his fellow countrymen held against the neighboring people were legitimate. And he discovered: they were not.

For Ioannis Ikonomou, learning a foreign language does not happen as a result of pressure, but rather out of passion: “One must fall in love with a language. A language does not merely consist of weak verbs and modal verbs, a language is history, the present, the entire culture. Emotional contact to language and culture is the key.”

That is why speaking foreign languages is to Mr. Ikonomou like building bridges between peoples and nations, and for him multilingualism is a prerequisite for successful integration: “Many of my friends in Brussels are immigrants, like me. Those who have made progress personally and professionally have learned French or Dutch – or, even better, both. The others, who lead the majority of their lives in their small Turkish, Brazilian, Greek, Arabic or other ghetto, can hardly progress. And this reduces their children’s prospects even more.”

This is exactly why Ioannis Ikonomou has chosen to be involved in the telc publicity campaign “Multilingualism and Integration”. And thus a language genius has become a life-long ambassador for integration.



Certificats de langues européens – Communication et plurilinguisme en Europe

Les certificats de langues européens – aujourd'hui examens telc, auparavant certificats VHS – contribuent, depuis plus de quatre décennies, de façon significative à l'évolution de la didactique des langues étrangères dans le domaine de la formation des adultes. Ils constituent une initiative majeure notamment grâce à leur répercussion sur l'enseignement des langues étrangères ainsi qu'à leur internationalité.

Les certificats d'examens ont joué un rôle précurseur quant au tournant communicatif dans l'enseignement des langues étrangères engagé à la fin des années 1960. Une vision moderne de l'enseignement se répercutant dans la pratique est née des nouvelles formes d'examen développées durant cette période. Les « Volkshochschule » allemandes se sont ainsi placées à la pointe d'une évolution menant à la transmission d'un savoir langagier adapté au quotidien privé et professionnel des apprenants. Une telle approche n'apparut que plus tard dans les écoles.

Cette évolution s'est toujours insérée dans une dimension européenne. Cette approche dépassant le cadre des frontières nationales est illustrée par la diversité de langues européennes dans lesquelles furent proposés, dès le début, les certificats de langues VHS, ce faisant l'attention fut très tôt portée sur le plurilinguisme. Il en résulta en même temps une interaction persistant encore aujourd'hui entre des idées allemandes promouvant les efforts européens visant un enseignement communicatif et de justes évaluations, et des critères de qualité européens se répercutant sur le développement des certificats de langues allemands – grâce aussi à la coopération avec d'autres développeurs de tests à l'échelle européenne.

Aujourd'hui, les examens telc offrent, en tant que certificats européens de langue, de réelles chances dans un monde marqué par la mobilité grâce à leur évaluation fiable et juste. Ces opportunités peuvent être d'ordre professionnel mais s'étendent aussi à la possibilité de participation à la vie publique et jusqu'à l'obtention de la nationalité.



Botschafter für Mehrsprachigkeit
und Integration.



„Fußballspielen ist mein Beruf. Doch das Leben verlangt
mehr. Deutsch zu lernen hat mir große Freude gemacht.“
Cacau, Deutscher Nationalspieler

Learning German brought me great Satisfaction

A prime example of successful integration is that of the Brazilian-born member of the German National Soccer team, Claudemir Jeronimo Barreto – or Cacau for short – along with his family. Even before it became clear that he would be a candidate for the national team, Germany had become dear to him as a second home, and he chose to become a naturalized citizen. The telc test for immigrants, the “Zertifikat Deutsch”, was no problem for him and he passed it with flying colors. Cacau is a personable, humble father with a strong faith, and a fair player who is personally and financially committed to the German Foundation for Assistance to Children of Addicts.

Integration for Cacau means fitting into a foreign culture. At first, this was difficult for him in Germany, but a friend advised him, “Cacau, you need to quickly learn to speak German.” This proved to be a pivotal statement for Cacau and his integration into the foreign country. “As soon as I was reasonably able to communicate, I discovered the German culture. I could understand more and more, and ask questions. When I was then able to read books in German, it became even more fascinating. Learning was increasingly more enjoyable, I could educate myself and satisfy my growing thirst for knowledge; I wanted to understand just what makes Germany what it is.”

A person from a foreign culture who masters the national language, learns to think like a local, and can understand things to the same measure; to Cacau this is an example of successful integration. He himself exemplifies how it can be done, and he is now contemplating staying in Germany after his soccer career is over. “We have many friends here. My wife has also learned to speak German. For the children it is easier. We are already looking forward to the time when both of them will attend a regular German school.”

Европейские Языковые Сертификаты — коммуникация и многоязычие в Европе

Европейские Языковые Сертификаты - представленные в настоящее время сертификатами фирмы telc (дочерним предприятием Немецкой Ассоциации народных университетов), а до недавнего времени сертификатами народных университетов - вносят уже в течение четырёх десятилетий значительный вклад в развитие дидактики обучения взрослой аудитории иностранным языкам. Они задают ориентиры прежде всего в области разработки методов и стратегий обучения иностранным языкам, а также в сфере развития многоязычия и межкультурного общения.

Разработчики сертификационных экзаменов явились в свое время инициаторами развития коммуникативного направления в методике преподавания иностранных языков, сформировавшегося в конце 1960-х годов. Новаторские идеи, заложенные в основу вновь разработанных ими в то время форм проведения и оценки экзаменов, получили впоследствии отражение и дальнейшее развитие в практике преподавания иностранных языков. Таким образом, немецкие народные университеты выступили ведущими специалистами в сфере разработки методики формирования и развития умений повседневного и профессионального иноязычного общения, нашедшей применение в системе школьного образования только с некоторым опозданием.

Эта разработка всегда носила общеевропейский характер. Выход за национальные рамки проявляется в первую очередь в том, что сертификаты народных университетов с самого начала были разработаны для нескольких европейских языков и, таким образом, уже на ранних этапах открывали перспективы развития многоязычия. Наряду с формированием интернационального подхода к деятельности по разработке языковых сертификатов наметилась и другая, существующая и по настоящее время тенденция, заключавшаяся в тесном взаимодействии с европейскими образовательными центрами: немецкие идеи способствовали развитию европейских усилий в области применения коммуникативного подхода к обучению иностранным языкам и обеспечения объективности тестирования, а разрабатываемые европейскими организациями стандарты оказывали воздействие на дальнейшее развитие немецких языковых сертификатов — также посредством совместной работы с разработчиками других европейских языковых сертификатов.

Сегодня языковые сертификаты telc, имеющие статус Общеευропейских Языковых Сертификатов благодаря своим международно признанным нормам определения уровня языковой компетенции экзаменуемых и объективным оценкам, предоставляют их обладателям возможность, не испытывая больших затруднений, решать возникающие в связи с возрастающей в мире свободой передвижения населения задачи; дают дополнительные шансы реализовать себя в профессиональной сфере; а также обеспечивают возможность принятия участия в общественной жизни вплоть до реализации.

Botschafterin für Integration.



„Gute Sprachkenntnisse schaffen Selbstbewusstsein,
Sicherheit und Unabhängigkeit.“

Petra Roth, Oberbürgermeisterin

Good Language Skills Enhance one's Self-Confidence, Sense of Security and Independence

This is the message of encouragement from Dr. (h.c.) Petra Roth, long-standing mayor of the city of Frankfurt, one of Germany's most popular politicians across party lines, to dedicated language trainers and further education teachers.

The German Adult Education Association and its subsidiary, telc GmbH, value these words not only as support but also as recognition of their multi-faceted efforts to promote education among immigrants as well as among Germans from social classes that up until now have not valued education very highly.

Petra Roth was born and raised in Bremen. She did vocational training as a physician's assistant and then spent a year in London to learn the language. Shortly after their wedding, her husband took a job in Frankfurt. In 1972, she joined Frankfurt's Christian Democratic Union political party. Working for the interests of this cosmopolitan city on the river Main proved to be quite a challenge. In 1995 she was elected mayor for a first term. Presently, she is serving in her third term as head of Frankfurt city hall. During the current legislative period, she is also serving as Federal President of the Parliament of German Cities, a highly respected and influential national post.

Mayor Roth, who has occasionally been viewed as a possible candidate for the German Presidency, holds a number of distinguished awards, including an honorary doctorate from the University of Tel Aviv, one of Frankfurt's partner cities. During Ms. Roth's tenures, the city of Frankfurt has made large leaps forward, especially in the area of integration of immigrants, and she has tirelessly pushed through special programmes to support this cause.

Europäische Sprachenzertifikate – Kommunikation und Mehrsprachigkeit in Europa

Die Europäischen Sprachenzertifikate leisten seit über vier Jahrzehnten einen prägenden Beitrag zur Entwicklung der Fremdsprachendidaktik in der Erwachsenenbildung. Richtungweisend sind sie vor allem in ihrer Rückwirkung auf den Fremdsprachenunterricht und in ihrer Internationalität.

Die Zertifikatsprüfungen waren Vorreiter für die kommunikative Wende im Fremdsprachenunterricht, die Ende der 1960er Jahre eingeleitet wurde. Von den damals neu entwickelten Prüfungsformen wirkten moderne Ideen zurück in den Unterricht. Damit setzten sich die deutschen Volkshochschulen an die Spitze der Entwicklung hin zu Vermittlung von alltags- und berufstauglicher Sprachvermittlung, wie sie in den Schulen erst mit einiger Verzögerung ankam.

Diese Entwicklung hatte immer eine europäische Dimension. Der Blick über nationale Grenzen hinaus zeigt sich zunächst darin, dass die VHS-Sprachenzertifikate von Anfang an in mehreren europäischen Sprachen angeboten wurden und damit schon früh den Blick auf Mehrsprachigkeit hin öffneten. Gleichzeitig ergab sich eine bis heute lebendige Wechselwirkung: Deutsche Ideen beförderten europäische Bemühungen um kommunikatives Unterrichten und faires Testen, und europäische Qualitätsmaßstäbe wirkten immer wieder zurück auf die Weiterentwicklung der deutschen Sprachenzertifikate – auch durch die Partnerschaft zu anderen europäischen Testentwicklern.

Heute bieten telc Prüfungen als europäische Sprachenzertifikate durch ihre zuverlässige und faire Leistungsmessung Chancen in einer durch Mobilität geprägten Welt, berufliche Chancen, aber auch die Möglichkeit auf gesellschaftliche Teilhabe bis hin zum Erwerb von Staatsbürgerschaft.

telc in Turkey:

European Perspectives – Overcoming Language Barriers and Prejudices

Through a commitment to the promotion of multilingualism and an internationally accepted certification of language competence, telc GmbH strives to break through language barriers, both within Europe and beyond. Building such bridges gains further importance in light of current relations between Turkey and Germany and the people of these two nations. Providing tangible support to people in Europe with migratory backgrounds and making the continent more accessible are two sides of the same coin in the process toward peaceful coexistence within our multicultural populace. A two-sided 'change through rapprochement' approach makes an indispensable contribution to intellectual freedom, economic growth and social democracy. This should be Europe's offer to people of Islamic cultures.

The people of Europe are more mobile today than ever before. When planning their careers and lives, they orientate themselves more and more toward European standards. The number of people who live, study and work outside their home country is steadily increasing. A hurdle to this mobility is the language barrier, which can also adversely affect a company's economic success. According to one EU study, up to a quarter of those surveyed in multinational companies found that limited competence in foreign languages posed a real problem for their business activities. Although English language skills are adequate for initial entry into international markets, long-term partnerships depend upon the development and maintenance of inter-personal relationships.

Cultural awareness and local language skills are essential for consistent business success. The European Language Certificates exist in nine major European languages and examinations can be taken in 20 different countries, including Turkey since 2009. A fundamental aspect of the effective international cooperation between telc GmbH and its licensed foreign partners is that the relationships are based on equality. telc views this as a contribution to the EU accession process, as well as a unique opportunity to improve the professionally, culturally and economically motivated mobility of individuals and institutions.

Turkish society has undergone extraordinarily dynamic development in recent years. Half the population is now under 32 years of age. The rapidly growing, European-oriented middle class is clearly geared towards education and advancement, and parents and young people alike show a strong interest in European educational standards. An indication of these social developments can be found in the thriving private school sector and the founding of English and other foreign language universities.



The desire to study abroad is also increasing. In 2010, 19% of Turkish students studying abroad chose the USA and Canada; 43% chose European universities. Among these students, approximately 4,000 were admitted to German universities.

With these considerations in mind, telc GmbH made the groundbreaking decision in 2009 to open a subsidiary in Istanbul. Here, efforts focus on preparing information for distribution to potential Turkish licenced partners, raising awareness and interest in foreign language competence within the country and, ultimately, ensuring test fairness and reliability.

Following a visit to Germany at telc's invitation in 2008, Representatives of the Turkish Ministry of Education observed that significantly more language courses were being held at the German Adult Education Centres (VHS) than at Turkey's equivalent institution of further education, the Halk Eğitim Merkezleri (HEM). 40% of the programmes offered at the VHS were language courses, compared to only 5% with the HEM. In the context of Turkey's aspirations for entry to the EU, the Ministry of Education has identified some shortcomings and is therefore extremely interested in European standards in language education, the Common European Framework of Reference and the European Language Certificates.

This approach has had an impact on the observations contained in the 'National Strategy and Action Plan for Life Long Learning 2009-2013', published by the Turkish Ministry of Education in coordination with the National Planning Commission. In future, HEM tasks will therefore be formulated according to the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training, extending foreign language courses to include German, English and French at A1 to B1 levels. This will enable candidates to successfully prepare for the demands of the European Language Certificates. In general, it is intended that foreign language education in Turkey will receive a major boost. These parameters are an excellent starting point for the development of a future-oriented strategy through the formation of a widespread network of license partnerships with schools, universities, language institutions and companies. The CEF provides an unprecedented chance for the continuing development of hands-on language instruction.

Peter Scholz
telc Chief Consultant for Turkey

Encouraging multilingualism: The telc Turkish Programme for School Pupils

Many young people with migratory backgrounds speak their native language predominately with their family and friends, leaving a great deal of potential untapped. High-level multilingualism is set to become increasingly important in the world of work, particularly within the context of EU enlargement. In order to provide proof of their abilities – in a job application, for example – young adults of Turkish decent now have the possibility of taking a standardized, internationally recognized telc examination in Turkish, thereby enhancing their career possibilities.

Supporting young people's job perspectives is a central focus for the non-profit-oriented telc GmbH. In 2009, with the impetus and support of the Ministry of Education in the States of Hesse and Bremen, telc was able to extend its testing programme to include Turkish examinations appropriate for pupils at levels A2, B1 and B2, based on the guidelines of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF). "In offering these tests, we are improving the long-term employment prospects of young people in Germany upon whom our whole society will depend", says Jürgen Keicher, Managing Director of telc GmbH.

The certification of Turkish language skills at German schools will also give new momentum to Turkish lessons. Although native language lessons are now offered at schools in most German states, the grades achieved often have no bearing on academic progress or matriculation, nor does their evaluation of language competence reflect the communicative aims included in the 2001 CEF descriptors. The adoption of internationally recognised Turkish examinations that consider all forms of language competence and track overall communication skills will have a positive influence on the quality and teaching methodology of this native language tuition.

Avrupa Dil Sertifikaları – Avrupa’da Bildirişim ve Çokdillilik

Avrupa Dil Sertifikaları – eski adıyla VHS-Sertifikaları (Volkshochschulen, Alman Halk Eđitim Merkezleri), bugünkü adıyla telc Sınavları – kırk yılı aşkın bir süredir yetişkinlere yönelik yabancı dil eđitiminin gelişiminde etkin bir rol oynamaktadır. Uluslararası düzeyde olmaları ve özellikle yabancı dil eđitimine olan etkilerinden dolayı yön belirleyici bir özelliđe sahiptirler.

Sertifika sınavları, yabancı dil eđitiminde 60'ların sonunda başlayan bildirişimsel deđişimin öncüsüdür. O dönemde geliştirilen yeni sınav modelleri, yabancı dil eđitiminin modernleşmesini sağlamıştır. Böylelikle Alman Halk Eđitim Merkezleri bu modernleşmenin zirvesinde yer almış ve bunun yanı sıra okullarda nispeten daha yavaş yaygınlaşan günlük ve mesleki kullanım amaçlı yabancı dil eđitimini uygulamıştır.

Bu gelişim her zaman bir Avrupa boyutu taşımıştır. Ulusal sınırların ötesine taşan bu bakış açısı öncelikle VHS-Dil Sertifikalarının başından itibaren birçok Avrupa dillerinde sunulmasında kendini göstermiş ve böylece daha ilk zamanlarda bu bakış açısı çokdilliliđe kapılarını açmıştır. Bu, aynı zamanda bugüne kadar süre gelen canlı bir etkileşim yaratmıştır: Avrupa'nın, bildirişim odaklı bir eđitim ve adil bir sınav sistemine ilişkin çabaları Almanya'dan çıkan fikirlerle ileriye taşınmış ve Avrupa kalite ölçütlerinin yanı sıra diđer Avrupalı test sunucularıyla yapılan ortak çalışmaların da Alman dil sertifikalarının gelişimine katkısı olmuştur.

Bugün Avrupa dil sertifikaları olarak telc sınavları güvenilir ve adil deđerlendirmeleri sayesinde hareketliliđin büyük bir rol oynadıđı dünyamızda, kariyer şansı ve sosyalleşme alanından vatandaşlık hakkı edinme olanađına kadar, birçok fırsat sunmaktadır.

Impressions from telc Partners

Transparency and Comparability

The Austrian Adult Education Centres can look back on a long cooperation with telc. Right from the 1970s Austrian language experts were actively involved in the development of what was then named the “Deutsche Zertifikatsprüfungen” system of testing.

Today, interest in such certificates is on the rise once again, also in Austria, mainly due to career interests and migration policy reasons. The testing facilities of the Austrian Adult Education Centres offer telc tests in the five most common languages of instruction (except German as a Second Language.) Especially appreciated is how the certificates rest on scientifically based and communicatively oriented standards; how they are suited for adults, and how they make language competency (also in a variety of languages) transparent and comparable.

*Wilhelm Filla
General Secretary of the Austrian Adult Education Association*

Qualifications for Internships Abroad

Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences has been working closely with telc ever since the introduction of its Certificates, and we have been an accredited testing centre since 2005. In our view, the certificates provide students with real surplus value. Our engineers, architects, designers, journalists and media specialists are able to document their language proficiency through the additional qualification of a telc test, and are thereby well equipped for an international work environment. The telc certificate English B2 Business is part of the curriculum in a number of our study programmes.

Last but not least, the certificates have enabled us to qualify large numbers of our students for stays abroad. The ratio of such foreign internships has gone way up since the introduction of the certificates. We particularly like the way the telc language certificates support the European idea. Many of our students feel so happy with the format that, after their mandatory certification in English, they have gone on to do certificates in French, Spanish and also Portuguese.

*Dr. Ruth Tobias
Head of the Language Centre, Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences*

The telc (ICC) test was introduced in Hungary in the 1990s by the Association for the Distribution of Scientific Knowledge (TIT), becoming the first such test in Hungary to receive national accreditation. According to law, a successfully completed language test is now a prerequisite for receiving a university diploma as well as for any position within the civil service, and it is even recognised in lieu of a high school diploma. The 200,000 candidates who participated in the tests from 2000 through 2010, and the nearly 90 testing centres, have served to make telc one of the leading testing systems in Hungary and the largest foreign provider.

A Tudományos Ismeretterjesztő Társulat által Magyarországon bevezetett TELC (ICC) vizsga már az 1990-es években megjelent és 2000-ben az elsők között kapott állami elismertséget. A jogszabályok alapján éveken keresztül kiváltotta a magyarországi érettségit, a felsőoktatási oklevél megszerzésének vagy az állami alkalmazásnak máig feltétele a vizsga teljesítése. A 2000-tól 2010-ig végéig levizsgáztatott több mint 200 ezer vizsgázó, az ország egészére kiterjedő közel 90 vizsgahely Magyarország egyik vezető vizsgarendszerévé és a legnagyobb külföldi szereplővé tette a TELC-et.

Eszter Piróth
Director Tudományos Ismeretterjesztő Társulat (TIT)

In an age of electronically driven forms of communication, direct dialogue and personal exchanges take on growing significance. In the process, it has become an absolute 'must' to be able to make oneself understood in at least one additional language beyond one's mother tongue. *telc – language tests* provide a quality standard one can rely upon – today, just like 40 years ago.

I congratulate telc GmbH on this, their milestone birthday. They have written a vital part of history in the area of further education.

Siegfried Schmauder
Chairman of the Bundesverband der Träger beruflicher Bildung (Bildungsverband) e.V.
(National Association of Supporters of Career Education)

telc in Hungary

A TELC Magyarországon

Reliable Quality Standards

The Quality of telc Examinations

For many candidates, the telc examination is decisive for their future: pass or fail determines whether they receive a visa, whether their application for naturalization is accepted or whether they are admitted to university.

Therefore, telc examinations must be subject to highest quality standards and, most of all, be objective: the same conditions for all candidates, no matter where they take the test.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEF)

telc language examinations are consistently based on the CEF. But what is behind the CEF, a framework of reference which has established itself in all of Europe and beyond?

The Council of Europe framework was the first to define a universal standard for language competence and ability, replacing ambiguous terms like 'beginner level', 'fluent in word and script' and 'advanced' with a clearly structured scale ranging from A1 to C2. The CEF emphasizes competence over shortcomings on the journey towards attaining 'perfect' language skills. The CEF 'can do' principle enables both learners and teachers to positively evaluate linguistic achievement.

A few forerunners to the CEF were present as early as the 1970s. The framework in its current form is based on earlier academic work that established three distinct levels of ability: Waystage, Threshold and Vantage. Professional discussions had already been underway for decades and contributed enormously to the formal introduction of the framework in 2001. Thus, this new system was not simply the product of a small, isolated panel of experts.

Although the CEF may bring to mind assessment, the framework itself delivers no easy recipe for the construction of tests to determine the competence levels. The completion of the framework saw the beginning of an intensive period of activity for language test providers, such as the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE). Ten years later, a comprehensive 'toolbox' is available containing methods and guidelines to ensure that tests are aligned to the framework criteria. The Council of Europe also issued an accompanying manual, together with sample test items and examples of candidate performance.

telc examinations do not refer to the CEF levels by name alone; the tests are also consciously developed according to the principles of the relevant framework descriptors. Many well-known providers aim to link their examinations to the CEF in order to produce test results that are fair and mutually comparable. Since their inception, *telc – language tests* have been aligned to the appropriate CEF level using methodology contained in the Council of Europe handbook: 'Relating Language Examinations to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment'. This text was published in 2008 following years of revision and testing, some of which was carried out by telc test developers. Today this handbook represents a reliable tool for all language examination providers and a means of answering the classic question regarding the comparability of assessments: 'How do I know that my B1 is your B1?'



Scope

Development

Language Tests

telc and the CEF

Common Reference Levels: Global Scale

Basic User

A1

Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

A2

Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

Independent User

B1

Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, leisure, school, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

B2

Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

Proficient User

C1

Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

C2

Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.

ALTE: Setting Quality Standards in International Language Assessment

telc is an active member of the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE). Hence, telc examinations are subject to strict quality standards.

ALTE Manager Dr. Michael Milanovic describes how ALTE works.

The Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) is an association of providers of foreign language examinations, established in 1990 with eight founding members. The association now has 34 members, representing the testing of 27 languages. One of ALTE's principal objectives is to maintain common standards for all stages of the language-testing process: that is, for test development, task and item writing, test administration, marking and grading, reporting of test results, test analysis and the reporting of findings.

ALTE began working towards establishing standards in test development in 1994 with the publication of the ALTE Code of Practice. The Code of Practice is an ethical framework which sets common standards for all tests. It addresses two kinds of public: stakeholders and test users, and focuses on the roles and responsibilities of both. At around the same time, ALTE also published the ALTE Principles of Good Practice which provides practical, detailed guidance on setting standards and implementing them.

Between 2000 and 2005 ALTE produced detailed documentation which updated the Principles of Good Practice, proposed minimum professional standards for the assessment of languages, and provided appropriate checklists and procedures for monitoring those standards. The most recent work, starting in 2006, has focused on the development of the ALTE auditing system.

The aim of the auditing system is to allow testing organisations to reflect on their examination system and to make a formal claim that a particular test or suite of tests has an adequate quality profile. ALTE members offer very different tests, ranging from high stakes to low stakes tests, and from tests which are taken by many candidates all over the world to tests which are taken by a small number of candidates in one country. Since the tests offered by ALTE members are used in such different contexts, the auditing system does not intend to impose a set of uniform standards for all its members. Instead, the audited organisation is asked to build an argument that the quality standards for their test or suite of tests are sufficient and appropriate for their context and their candidates. It is this argument which is the subject of the audit, rather than the test or the organisation itself.

The audit has a quality control and a consultancy role. It ensures that 17 minimum quality standards are being met and offers recommendations to the audited organisation when there is some need for improvement. The membership as a whole is the arbiter of decisions arising from the audit process; this takes place through the Council of Members as a whole and in particular through the smaller, elected Standing Committee which has delegated responsibility to oversee the auditing process. All applicant members are required to undertake an audit before membership of the association can be approved.

The ALTE quality management system and the auditing procedures provide a dynamic system which forms the necessary basis for action in establishing and monitoring standards. Amongst other things, it is useful for clarifying the quality demands of examinations in relation to their functions and purposes, and for accounting for the validity of the examinations to stakeholders.

*Dr. Michael Milanovic
ALTE Manager*

I certificati europei di lingua – oggi esami telc, in passato VHS-Zertifikate (certificati delle Università Popolari Tedesche) – da più di quarant'anni contribuiscono in modo determinante allo sviluppo della didattica delle lingue straniere nell'ambito dell'educazione degli adulti. Essi hanno un ruolo guida soprattutto per il loro influsso sull'insegnamento delle lingue straniere e per la loro internazionalità.

Gli esami per i certificati di lingua sono stati i precursori della svolta comunicativa nell'insegnamento delle lingue straniere che ha avuto inizio alla fine degli anni Sessanta. Dalle nuove forme d'esame allora appena sviluppate emergevano idee moderne che hanno avuto effetti diretti sull'insegnamento. In tal modo le Università Popolari Tedesche hanno assunto una posizione leader nello sviluppo dell'insegnamento di una lingua adeguata a situazioni concrete della vita quotidiana e dell'ambito lavorativo, un cambiamento che nelle scuole è stato messo in atto solo con un certo ritardo.

Questo sviluppo ha sempre avuto una dimensione europea. I certificati di lingua delle Università Popolari Tedesche, infatti, offerti sin dal principio per diverse lingue europee, hanno guardato da subito oltre i confini nazionali volgendo così molto presto la loro attenzione al plurilinguismo. Allo stesso tempo si è instaurata un'interazione tuttora molto proficua: le idee tedesche hanno sostenuto l'impegno europeo a promuovere un insegnamento di stampo comunicativo e procedimenti d'esame equi, i parametri di qualità europei, a loro volta, hanno sempre influito sull'ulteriore sviluppo dei certificati tedeschi di lingua – anche tramite l'associazione con altri enti certificatori europei.

Grazie ad un sistema di valutazione oggettivo, equo ed affidabile oggi gli esami telc con i loro certificati di lingua offrono nuove opportunità in un mondo caratterizzato dalla mobilità: opportunità lavorative ma anche la possibilità di prendere parte alla vita sociale di un paese straniero per poi poterne acquisire la cittadinanza.

***I certificati europei di lingua –
Comunicazione e plurilinguismo
in Europa.***

List of ALTE Members

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Basque | Basque Government |
| Bulgarian | University of Sofia "St Kliment Ohridski" Department for Language Teaching and International Students (DLTIS) |
| Catalan | Generalitat de Catalunya |
| Czech | Charles University, Prague |
| Danish | Danish Language Testing Consortium |
| Dutch | CITO Certificaat Nederlands als Vreemde Taal (CNaVT) |
| English | Trinity College London University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations |
| Estonian | National Examination and Qualification Centre |
| Finnish | University of Jyväskylä and the National Board of Education |
| French | Alliance Française Centre international d'études pédagogiques Chambre de Commerce et d'industrie de Paris |
| Galician | Xunta de Galicia |
| German | Goethe-Institut telc GmbH TestDaF-Institut |

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| University of Athens | Greek |
| Institute of the Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) | Hungarian |
| National University of Ireland, Maynooth Language Centre | Irish |
| Università per Stranieri di Perugia | Italian |
| Naturalisation Board of Latvia | Latvian |
| Department of Lithuanian Studies, Faculty of Philology, University of Vilnius, Lithuania | Lithuanian |
| Centre de Langues Luxembourg | Luxembourgish |
| Studieforbundet Folkeuniversitetet Universitetet i Bergen | Norwegian |
| Jagellonian University | Polish |
| Universidade de Lisboa | Portuguese |
| Russian Language Testing Consortium | Russian |
| Univerza v Ljubljani | Slovenian |
| Instituto Cervantes and Universidad de Salamanca | Spanish |
| Stockholms Universitet Centre for Research on Bilingualism & Department of Scandinavian Languages | Swedish |
| Cyd-Bwyllgor Addysg Cymru (CBAC) Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC) | Welsh |

telc on Quality-Oriented Testing

Objectivity, reliability and validity are listed as the main criteria for quality testing. What meanings lie behind these words, and how does a test become as objective, reliable and valid as possible?

Objectivity means, simply, that all candidates are to be treated in the same way in a testing situation. But what do these terms mean individually?

How do language testers get around this difficulty?

Firstly, there is the concept of 'Objectivity of Execution'. Even if candidates of different backgrounds take the tests in Examination Centres in completely different places or countries, similar answer patterns should be elicited everywhere, thus making the results universally comparable. A standardised test guarantees this through its composition: all candidates receive the same test items and complete them in the same fixed amount of time, with the assurance that the same external conditions (physical space, lack of disturbance) are offered. The oral examination is also standardised, and candidates are given confidence by practicing the test format in class. The same external conditions are provided for all participants.

The rating scale and evaluation criteria must also be objective; this is the 'Objectivity of Evaluation'. For closed test items, where correct answers are chosen from a pre-defined list of multiple-choice options, electronic readers and IT-supported evaluation systems ensure objectivity. Of course, for the evaluation of productive skills where candidates must create the appropriate answers or responses themselves, complete objectivity cannot be guaranteed. This is reached as closely as possible through the periodic training of all telc raters and examiners, standardised sample evaluation sessions, independent evaluation of a candidate's work by several raters, as well as a pyramid rating system, whereby test input from all candidates is randomly sampled by one or a select few final examiners on an international basis.

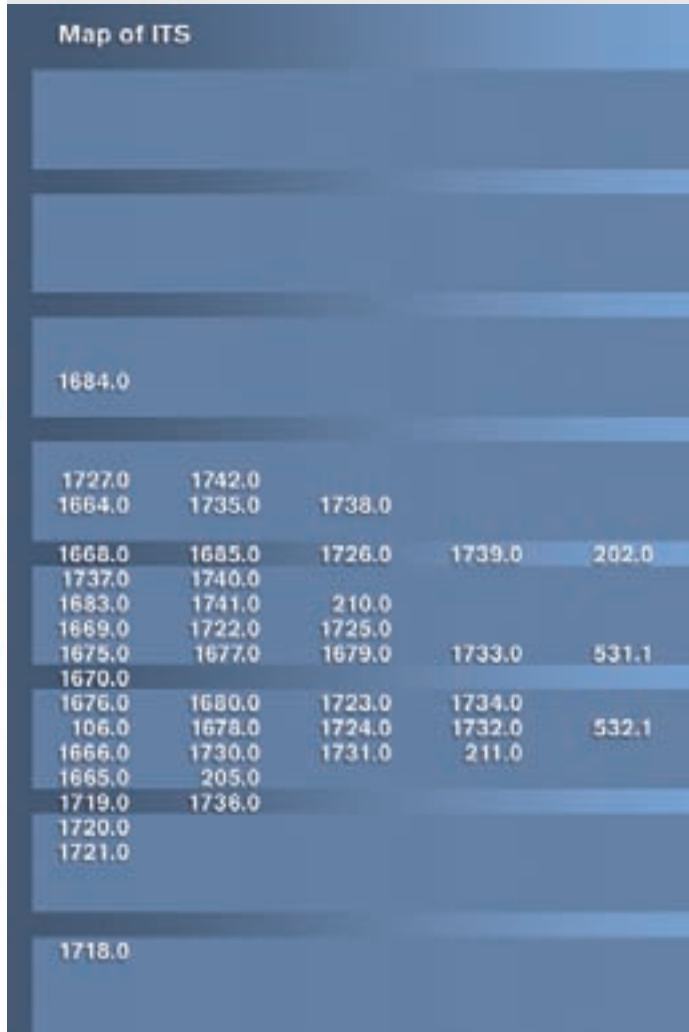
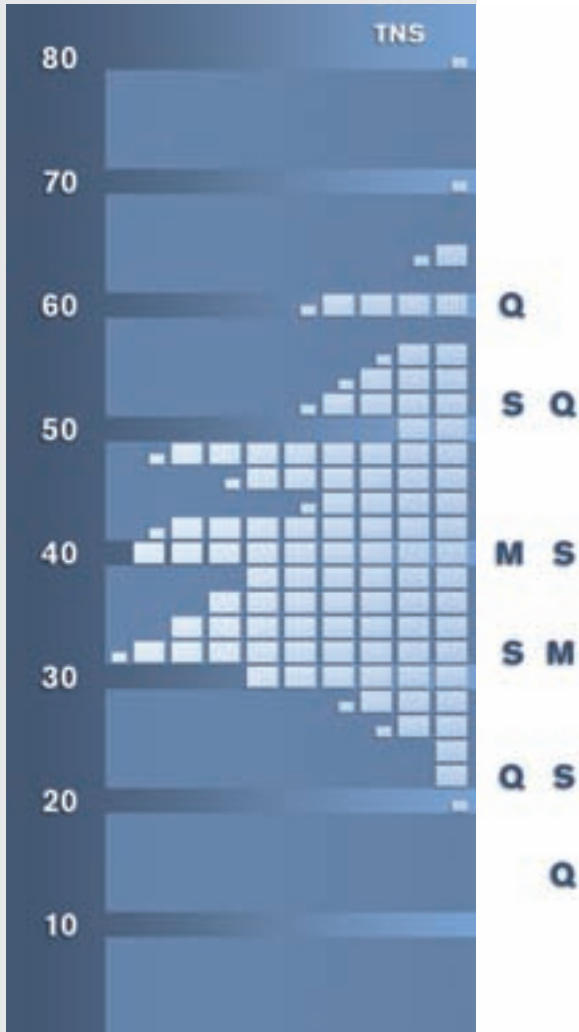
In order to ensure the objectivity of an examination system with several test versions such as the one offered by *telc – language tests*, comparability among all test versions is also important. Standardisation of the testing format guarantees that every exam contains the same type and quantity of test items. Are all the items at the same level of difficulty? In order to determine this independently from the abilities of the group being tested, pre-testing with control items is a necessary measure. Items that do not conform to the pre-determined level of difficulty are identified and removed at this stage.

Once the objectivity of a test has been established, it is still not certain that the test is also reliable; meaning, the results are replicable and the tests repeatedly produce the same results. This is not easy to monitor, because very few people enjoy taking a test even once, let alone three or four times. Furthermore, with each repeated examination, the candidates' prior knowledge of that test broadens so that a true, unbiased replication cannot take place.


When evaluating the reliability of a test we need to work with an alternative approach. This method allows us to regard the test not as a complete entity, but as several test components consisting of individual items.

203 TNS 45 ITS

ANALYZED: 202 TNS 45 ITS 2 CATEGORIES



Candidates' ability

(depicted as , left) and the difficulty of items (right) in a pre-selection.

Within this spectrum, one item has been identified as too difficult (1684.0) and one as too simple (1718.0).

Objectivity and reliability are necessary, but not sufficient in themselves to guarantee a valid test. Which considerations are important for telc in terms of test validity?

Why are telc – language tests linked to the CEF?

And is the test ready when all these criteria have been applied?

When candidates are confronted with several items with the same level of difficulty during a trial test, their responses provide a reading on how well these items actually measure the same competences. If the wording of answer options is misleading or the answer key is not definitive enough, the reliability of an examination is also compromised. Trial testing makes it possible to filter out and eliminate such difficulties before the final test can be implemented.

Validity bears witness to the fact that the components of an exam do in fact measure what was intended. For a language test, this means that the particular language competence being examined is clearly defined. In the evaluation process, telc considerations include questions like, 'is proficient language use the only skill being tested, or is testing the candidates' knowledge of the language also a goal of the test?'

The definition of competences to be measured in the examination is known as Test Construct. The individual components of the construction – vocabulary, structures, speech intention and so on – are clearly defined during this stage. Finally, the evaluation criteria must be established. These stipulate which achievements are necessary to assess the candidate's language competence at a designated level.

Test validity is measured from various perspectives. To ensure that an examination is valid in terms of content, the test items need to be clearly identified as pertaining to a specific area of competence. This includes, for example, ascertaining that the vocabulary limits of a particular language level are not overstepped. The actions required in the test need to be derived from the nature of the task items. The label 'Content Validity' is barely separable from 'Construct Validity', dictating which assumed but not directly observable ability should be measured. 'Validity of criteria' is present when the examination results correlate with an external criterion. In the area of languages in particular, the CEF and its definitions of language competence provide an external criterion of increasing importance – the criterion telc rely on to measure their success.

Not quite. Even when all the criteria have been met, isolated items that do not work can negatively influence validity and reliability. Before a telc test is published, it is thoroughly tested for 'bumps', pitfalls and potential misinterpretation. This includes editorial sessions, where conformity of the test construction is quality checked, as well as the pre-testing phase, with an indicative sample of candidates. A statistical analysis of these pre-test results allows us to determine which items meet the CEF standards and those that are ultimately too difficult or trivial for the tested level.

Of course, even when our tests are in use, we continue to make improvements. In the post analysis, we check that our expectations of the test have been met and use the information gained for the construction of new tests. telc's quality-oriented testing is a continual process of optimisation!

Los certificados europeos de idiomas: un gran avance en la formación de adultos

Los certificados europeos de idiomas, que antes se llamaban certificados de la Universidad Popular (VHS) y actualmente, exámenes telc, aportan, desde hace más de cuatro décadas, una contribución fundamental al desarrollo de la didáctica de idiomas en la formación de adultos. Además, abren nuevas perspectivas, especialmente por su repercusión en la enseñanza de idiomas y por la variedad de lenguas que abarcan.

Los exámenes de certificado fueron precursores del enfoque comunicativo introducido en la enseñanza de idiomas a finales de los sesenta. Las nuevas modalidades de examen desarrolladas entonces influyeron en la creación de ideas innovadoras para la enseñanza en el aula, con lo que las universidades populares alemanas se colocaron a la cabeza del desarrollo de la enseñanza de idiomas en los ámbitos de la vida cotidiana y profesional, tal como más tarde se aplicaría en las escuelas.

Este desarrollo estuvo siempre marcado por una dimensión europea reflejada, en primer lugar, en el hecho de que los primeros certificados de idiomas de las universidades populares se ofrecían para varias lenguas europeas. Al mismo tiempo, empezó a surgir una interacción que perdura hasta hoy: las ideas alemanas aceleraron los esfuerzos europeos a favor de una enseñanza comunicativa y de una forma de examinar más justa; y las medidas europeas de calidad, repercutieron en el desarrollo posterior de los certificados de idiomas de alemán, fomentado también por el trabajo en colaboración con otros autores de exámenes, como el instituto Goethe y los miembros europeos de ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe).

Actualmente, en sociedades caracterizadas por la movilidad, los exámenes telc (como certificados europeos de idiomas que son) ofrecen, gracias a una medición de resultados justa y fiable, oportunidades profesionales a la vez que facilitan la integración social o la obtención de la nacionalidad.

Minimum Standards for establishing Quality Profiles in ALTE Examinations

Test Construction

1. The examination is based on a theoretical construct, e.g. on a model of communicative competence.
2. You can describe the purpose and context of use of the examination, and the population for which the examination is appropriate.
3. You provide criteria for selection and training of test constructors and expert judgement is involved both in test construction, and in the review and revision of the examinations.
4. Parallel examinations are comparable across different administrations in terms of content, stability, consistency and grade boundaries.
5. If you make a claim that the examination is linked to an external reference system (e.g. Common European Framework), then you can provide evidence of alignment to this system.

Administration and Logistics

6. All centres are selected to administer your examination according to clear, transparent, established procedures, and have access to regulations about how to do so.
7. Examination papers are delivered in excellent condition and by secure means of transport to the authorized examination centres, your examination administration system provides for secure and traceable handling of all examination documents, and confidentiality of all system procedures can be guaranteed.
8. The examination administration system has appropriate support systems (e.g. phone hotline, web services etc).
9. You adequately protect the security and confidentiality of results and certificates, and data relating to them, in line with current data protection legislation, and candidates are informed of their rights to access this data.
10. The examination system provides support for candidates with special needs.

Marking and Grading

- 11. Marking is sufficiently accurate and reliable for purpose and type of examination.
- 12. You can document and explain how marking is carried out and reliability estimated, and how data regarding achievement of raters of writing and speaking performances is collected and analysed.

Test Analysis

- 13. You collect and analyse data on an adequate and representative sample of candidates and can be confident that their achievement is a result of the skills measured in the examination and not influenced by factors like L1, country of origin, gender, age and ethnic origin.
- 14. Item-level data (e.g. for computing the difficulty, discrimination, reliability and standard errors of measurement of the examination) is collected from an adequate sample of candidates and analysed.

Communication with Stakeholders

- 15. The examination administration system communicates the results of the examinations to candidates and to examination centres (e.g. schools) promptly and clearly.
- 16. You provide information to stakeholders on the appropriate context, purpose and use of the examination, on its content, and on the overall reliability of the results of the examination.
- 17. You provide suitable information to stakeholders to help them interpret results and use them appropriately.

“Zertifikat Deutsch is the most Successful German Language Exam Worldwide”

Dr. Michaela Perlmann-Balme, examination expert at the Goethe-Institut, explains the origins and continuing success of the Zertifikat Deutsch.

When and by whom was the Zertifikat Deutsch developed?

The idea for the Zertifikat Deutsch came from the German Adult Education Association, who wanted to put versions of the test on the market in more modern languages in the late 1960s. Experts from the Goethe-Institut were consulted for the development of the German version, which was known at the time as the Zertifikat Deutsch als Fremdsprache. Thanks to ongoing revisions, all of the test elements were developed on a collaborative basis. Although the tests were originally conceived solely for use within Germany, the Zertifikat Deutsch is now offered in more than 130 countries via the Goethe-Institut’s global network.

What distinguishes the Zertifikat Deutsch from other examinations?

The Zertifikat Deutsch had two significant advantages over other notable language examinations at the time. It was one of the first German examinations to be offered at a lower level of language competence. Although today we consider level B1 to be fairly demanding, the Goethe-Institut Sprachdiplome (language diploma) of the 1960s were closer in difficulty to that of the University of Munich, which was at level C2.

The Zertifikat Deutsch was also the first examination to be based on modern test theory standards. While the Sprachdiplome placed a strong emphasis on open questions requiring individual answers, the Zertifikat Deutsch worked with closed questions and standardised answer sheets. This significant innovation encountered some resistance in academic circles, since many experts were of the opinion that it was not possible to carry out the complex testing of language abilities using multiple-choice questions. Today, however, all of the recognised German tests – with the exception of the Kleines / Großes Deutsches Sprachdiplom – are constructed using standardised tasks.

What is meant by ‘tri-national cooperation’, and why was this form of teamwork chosen?

We have always collaborated in close teamwork with our Austrian and Swiss partners. When the Zertifikat Deutsch was being revised in the 1990s to reflect changes in the standards of Modern Test Theory, the Austrian Language Certificate (ÖSD) team expressed an interest in participating in the development of the new examination. The Zertifikat Deutsch in its current form was completed in 2000 and evolved in close collaboration with the Goethe-Institut, telc GmbH, ÖSD and the Swiss Conference of Canton Educational Directors (EDK). The tests have subsequently incorporated a sensitivity to the varieties of German. Austrian German, for example, is not treated as a dialect, but accepted as a linguistic variety that is implicitly examined in the listening comprehension texts.

I became involved in developing the examination in 1987 during my professional training. There was a noticeable difference in the way that those participating in the project perceived the target test candidates. It could be said that the members of the Adult Education Centre team were working from a 'social democratic' standpoint, while the representatives of the Goethe-Institut had a more bourgeois and elitist approach. This, of course, was not obvious to me in the beginning. At a certain point, however, I was given the task of developing a listening exercise and chose to use the real estate section from a newspaper to create a situation based on the purchase of a flat. Some other members of the test development team pointed out that a Zertifikat Deutsch candidate would rarely be in a position to buy a flat – and should consider him or herself lucky to even be able to rent one!

This interview was conducted by Julia Guess and Thomas von Keller.

When you reflect on the circumstances surrounding the development of the Zertifikat Deutsch, which of your personal experiences stand out most clearly?



Impressions from telc Partners

Switzerland – a multilingual country

With its four national languages and the many additional languages of its immigrants, Switzerland has developed an ambitious national language policy. Accordingly, the country sees itself as a multilingual and multicultural country at the heart of Europe.

The need to acquire a worldwide recognised language certificate has become an important criterion for many people. There are four primary reasons why the Swiss Adult Education Association (VSV) offers telc examinations as a licensed partner of telc GmbH Frankfurt:

1. The tests have been scientifically developed and tested. Hence, they offer a guarantee of fair and equal treatment for all examinees, with comparability within their levels and languages.
2. The exams relate to communications in everyday life. For the examinee there is clarity, because only the language is being tested – in all of its facets: grammar, sentence structure, spelling, intonation and stress.
3. The tests are based on clear, objective and transparent criteria.
4. The tests are well-known among employers and academic institutions, because they are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages of the Council of Europe.

Thus, to learn a language by means of a telc certificate leads to successful integration in a world that is full of changes.

La Suisse – pays multilingue !

Avec ses quatre langues nationales et de nombreuses langues de la migration, la Suisse a développé une politique linguistique nationale ambitieuse, mais appropriée vue sa situation de pays multilingue et multiculturel au cœur de l'Europe.

L'intérêt pour l'obtention d'une certification reconnue dans le monde entier est devenu une priorité pour toutes les personnes s'engageant dans l'apprentissage d'une langue. Quatre raisons font que l'Association des Universités Populaires Suisses (AUPS) a opté en faveur des examens organisés par telc GmbH :

1. Les tests sont basés sur des bases scientifiques et élaborés par des experts formés; ils sont donc garants de l'égalité de traitement et en cela ils sont comparables entre eux quelque soit la langue et le niveau.
2. Les tests sont centrés sur la pratique; les conversations reflètent des situations authentiques et les thèmes englobent tous les domaines de la vie courante, qu'il s'agisse de la vie privée, publique ou professionnelle. Les tests vérifient ce qu'ils sont sensés tester, c'est-à-dire la langue elle-même : sa grammaire, sa syntaxe, son orthographe, sa prononciation.
3. Les tests sont basés sur de critères clairs, objectifs, justes et transparents.
4. Les tests sont reconnus par les employeurs et les institutions académiques, car ils se basent sur le « Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues » du Conseil de l'Europe.

L'AUPS est fière d'être le seul partenaire en Suisse qui peut accorder des sous-licences aux centres de tests.

L'apprentissage des langues avec à la clé une certification « telc » permet donc à tout un chacun de s'intégrer dans un monde en pleine mutation !

*Denise Pochon
Managing Director of the Swiss Adult Education Association
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Yes, we can!

In 2008, when Barack Obama entered the election campaign with his “Yes, we can!” slogan, he wanted to get across a message of hope to his voters, he wanted them to have confidence in their own strength and to be willing to take new paths. Obama was successful, he had the message people wanted to hear, and they were willing to follow him. So, it was not by coincidence that only a few months later, telc called their preparation material that accompanied their newly developed “telc School” tests, “YES, I CAN!” In doing so, telc was consequentially implementing an idea that had long been overdue: Up until then, telc certificates had only been offered to adults, and while they were becoming increasingly popular, another target group, that of pupils, had hardly been given any notice.

However, the changes in schools’ foreign language syllabus to account for the European Framework of Reference, really called for students to be given an opportunity to get the language competencies they had acquired in class certified through an internationally recognised examination. telc’s first step has been to develop course material for the telc English A2 School exam. We look forward to seeing the materials they will be developing for other languages.

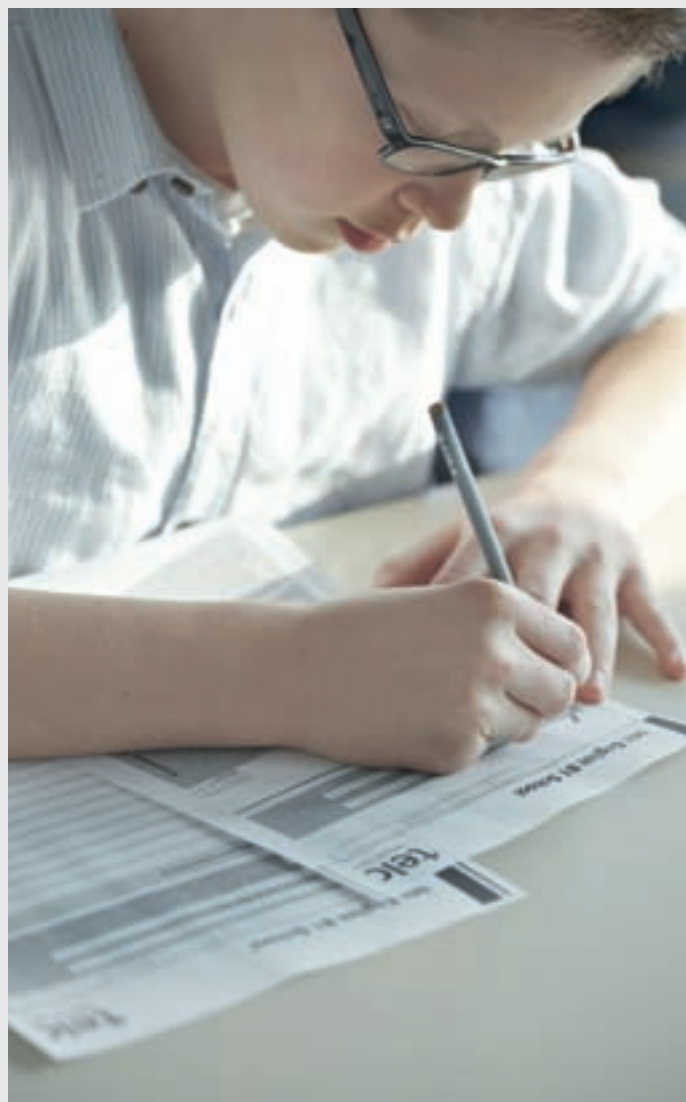
A surprisingly high number of parents polled in parent-teacher conferences say they are interested in having their children get a language certificate. Schools offering such exams in cooperation with the local Adult Education Centres show increasing numbers of applications. In a reliable partnership with the local Adult Education Centre, telc English A2 School preparation courses are offered as a regular part of schools’ extracurricular afternoon programmes.

The high regard in which telc certificates are held is reflected in the ceremonies attending the presentation of the certificates. After all, for many students this is their first official exam and often both parents show up for these awards where schoolchildren proudly receive their certificates. While the traditional language courses at Adult Education Centres are shrinking, Germany’s pupils are eager for certification of their language competencies, which they acquired in class, in electives or at an Adult Education Centre.

Adult Education Centres are well advised to meet this new challenge. Job adverts increasingly ask for language competency based on the CEF. A telc certificate increases the chance of finding good employment. Offering pupils an opportunity to get a telc certificate fits perfectly with the ever-present mission of the Adult Education Centres, which is: To equip citizens for life.

Time to act. Yes, we can.

Thomas Friedrich, Chairman of the telc advisory board



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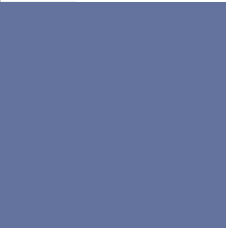

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For four decades now, the European Language Certificates have been setting milestones along the road to modern foreign language teaching, encouraging multilingualism, mobility and integration.

telc – language tests build bridges – within Europe and beyond.