Computer Adaptive Test for Reading Chinese (CATRC)
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

CATRC CAPE

General Description and Background

The Chinese reading CAPE is a joint effort of Brigham Young University's Chinese Flagship Center and its Humanities Technology and Research Support Center. The test is based on the original CATRC (Computer Adaptive Test for Reading Chinese) developed by Ted Yao and Richard Chi. The items for this version of test were calibrated by several hundred students of Chinese at universities throughout the U.S.

CATRC CAPE is intended to assist in the placement of students into college language courses from the lowest to highest levels. The BYU Chinese Flagship Center is currently doing research toward correlation of the CATRC to ACTFL guidelines and to various Chinese proficiency tests, such as the HSK——the Chinese Government's official test of Chinese as a second language. These guidelines will be included in subsequent releases.

Administration:

For this version of the software, administration and up keep of the program is left to our developers, liberating the instructors to do what they do best: teach. The site license allows an unlimited number of tests to be taken by students associated with one campus.

Please note: WebCAPE is a web-delivered service and is therefore subject to general interruptions in internet service. The BYU Humanities Technology & Research Support Center makes every effort to maintain the reliability and accessibility of the WebCAPE servers, but cannot control internet connectivity between the server and the client. Licensees should plan alternate/make-up testing times to allow for the possibility of network failures.

WebCAPE is now marketed and sold by a licensee: Perpetual Technology Group. Their website is: https://www.aetip.com (see WebCAPE under the 'Cape' link on the left). Existing WebCAPE Customers should go to creative works website, Pricing is available at that site.

 The webpages consist of a main menu page ($50) that can be set up with your school colors and logo. It provides links to the language registration pages where students input

their information before taking the test. The options for the registration page required for You will be prompted for your selections when you add this item to your shopping cart.

After the first year, an annual support fee of $75 per language per year will be assessed

Since WebCAPE requires prepayment, we have set up an online process that allows purchasers to print out a numbered invoice which they can immediately send to their purchasing department for payment. The invoice can be generated only after the order has been submitted electronically. Alternatively, you may prefer to select payment by credit card and your information will be collected and processed via our secured server.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

1. Why does exam have both simplified and traditional characters? My students only do traditional (or only simplified)

Because the CATRC is created to function as a proficiency test as well as an achievement test, it uses both types of characters by design. The lower level items have prompts in both types next to each other. As learners are pushed higher they are presented text prompts in one or the other form based on the idea that being an advanced learner means being able to handle texts where ever they are from.. Most programs expose students to both forms by the higher levels, otherwise an advanced reader might only be able to read material from one place or the other (say Mainland or Taiwan or Hong Kong. are typically pushed to read both forms by third year, which begins to align with the advanced levels as reflected in the test.

Although, it is possible to do a version of this test exclusively in one type or the other, it would measure something a little different. We are considering a version with all one type or the other as an exclusive placement tool.

2. The original test had an ACTFL (American Council for Teaching Foreign Languages) rating (Novice-Superior). Why doesn't the newer CAPE version of the CATRC have these kinds of ratings?

The original test approximated an ACTFL rating by rating each question in the test on the ACTFL scale based on published descriptors [add link]. The level of question at which the test taker consistently then represents the estimated rating. The new test was recalibrated in 2009 using a method of analysis called *Item Response* Theory (IRT) and put on continuous scale. This technique allows for greater accuracy in determining the level of proficiency or placement. We are working to correlate formally test outcomes with known reading levels, with reference to ACTFL descriptors.

3. Scoring Guidelines. What do the numbers mean?

As a placement test these numbers mean different things to different programs. Depending on institutional standards, a 400 for example, might match with the beginning of third semester or any other semester. Also, since some programs emphasis reading more or less, it is possible that a 400 score would correlated with a much higher level in a program focusing on speaking and listening. The test is meant to suggest placement, not to predict grades.

Results Explanation

As another example, based on the Beta version administrations of the test given to potential BYU Chinese Flagship candidates during the last several years, we have the following.

Administration	N	Average	Range
Entry into Advanced domestic Program (Typically around six semester of Chinese)	24	594	514-667
Entry into Overseas Capstone (Seven or more semesters of Chinese with a heavy reading/writing component)	61	700	625-720

4. What is planned for the next iteration of the test?

Plans for future updates include the following

1. Re-entry of the text to more updated fonts

2. Expanded number of items

3. Correlation to ACTFL levels

4. Possible all-traditional and all simplified version for placement only application

Sample Results and Ranges (BYU)

CATRC BYU COURSE CORRELATIONS (7/2010)			
(Corresponding to the beginning of each course)			
Course	Mean	Range	Suggested Rating for Entrance to Class
201	427	396-458	400 or better
202	437	403-472	450 or better
301	630	490-770	550 or better
302	742	713-771	700 or better

5. How can I get answers to my questions about CATRC?

➢ For technical problems please contact the WebCape team at: webcapeteam@byu.edu
➢ Questions on conceptual issues around the exam can be directed to Dr. Dana Bourgerie in the Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages.
➢ For information on sales see the BYU Creative Works Catalogue or send an email to: htrscsales@byu.edu.
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