TITLE: Oral Testing of Driver's License Applicants

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REPORT NUMBER: Unnumbered through an Office of Traffic Safety grant to the Division of Drivers
Licenses (Sam Marchi, project administrator) - (NRN006)

NTIS NUMBER: None

FUNDING SOURCE: Under contract to DMV

PROJECT OBTECTIVE:
    To gather information about several potential test modes which could be used with illiterate
applicants and which would serve an instructional purpose without putting a premium on verbal ability.

SUMMARY:
    A pilot study tested five modes of presentation and found no differences in fail rates. Black-and-
white picture books coupled with audio cassettes in English or Spanish were used for the main study.
Nine hundred twenty-nine applicants participated, 540 being illiterate (all those available) and the
remainder literate volunteers. Passing score was set at 64% (86% being required on the standard test).
The passing rates were 35% for illiterate and 72% for literate. It was found that illiterates were mainly
male, tended to be older, had less education, and reported driving more miles per year than literate
drivers.
    The author concluded that the test used had face validity and was fair to illiterates. She felt that the
contents were in line with those tested for literate applicants and that learning was produced by the
procedure. Report recommendations included continuing development, a large-scale field test,
development of equipment similar to that used for voting, use of the test to train drivers, setting high
passing scores, and use of the test for all applicants--literate and illiterate alike.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:
    The Department decided not to implement these recommendations, due to concerns with the test's
high level of difficulty and logistical considerations.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:
    None.