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The 4 r's of edTPA: Rationale, roadblocks, remediation, and recommendations

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Challenge Statement: Teacher effectiveness is fundamental to current educational policies; however, the widely used program completion assessment edTPA is highly problematic. State determined pass scores remain high yet national data show a continual decline in beginning teacher performance on edTPA. Questions about its validity/reliability during a world language teacher shortage remains. Is it time to reconsider its use?

Abstract

In use in 954 educator preparation programs in 41 states and the District of Columbia (American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education, 2021), edTPA seeks to measure beginning teacher effectiveness. While used by many states to inform teacher licensure or certification decisions, this high-stakes assessment is highly problematic. In this article, the authors provide an overview of the World Language edTPA and Communicative Language Teaching approaches, on which the World Language edTPA is based, before specifically noting its shortcomings as an effective instrument to measure novice teacher prowess. Citing longitudinal national data, the authors call attention to the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity's dilemma of producing a valid and reliable assessment and promoting the corporatization of education for profit while so many teacher candidates are found to be disadvantaged by having to submit edTPA portfolios. Additionally, the authors advance several empirically grounded solutions to help teacher candidates score better when submitting their portfolio for external review—another highly controversial aspect of edTPA. Teacher accountability measures are important, but factors often excluded from discussion such as cost and local expertise must become central to the process.

The 4 Rs of edTPA: Rationale, Roadblocks, Remediation, and Recommendations

For decades in the United States (US), ideological, political, and social perspectives have influenced teacher education reform (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015). Following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, President Lyndon B. Johnson worked diligently to make Kennedy's vision of US education come to fruition. In 1965, the US Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA, 1965) as part of Johnson's War on Poverty campaign (McLaughlin, 1975). This groundbreaking legislation placed emphasis on equal access to education, setting high standards for academic performance, placing demands of accountability on school districts, and reducing the achievement gap. The legislation called for re-examination and reauthorization every five years as deemed appropriate.

At the turn of the century, ESEA was reauthorized and subsequently retitled as *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB; U.S. Department of Education, 2002) by the George W. Bush administration. This mandate (Swanson, 2012) stipulated arduous testing and accountability requirements of K-12 student learning and included world languages (WLs) as part of the core curriculum. From a philosophical standpoint, NCLB had merit as it called for a highly effective teacher in every classroom. However, researchers and policy analysts criticized NCLB because it narrowed the K-12 curriculum and prioritized reading, mathematics, and science instruction over non-tested content areas, such as WLs (Rosenbusch, 2005; Rosenbusch & Jensen, 2004; Swanson, 2008). Additionally, there was a requirement that public school teachers had to be *highly qualified*. That is, educators had to meet the following criteria: 1) possess a bachelor's degree, 2) obtain full certification or licensure in the state in which he or she was going to teach, and 3) have strong content knowledge of the subject(s) to be taught (U. S. Department of Education, 2004).

Following the Bush administration, the Obama Administration reauthorized the legislation, calling for even more scrutiny of schools and teachers. *Race to the Top* now mandated states to measure beginning and veteran teacher effectiveness in order to receive full federal funding (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). In order to be able to apply for federal funding, states started to pass legislation that focused on pre-service teacher preparation and certification standards while underscoring teacher performance and effectiveness at the state level (e.g., Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2014; Illinois State Board of Education, 2012). As part of the funding model, states that accepted federal funds "agreed to implement accountability measures that frequently begin with teacher candidates seeking licensure or certification" (Swanson & Hildebrandt, 2018, p. 11). In many states, pre-service teacher candidates had to show "the results of classroom processes, such as impact on student learning" (Goe, Bell, & Little, 2008, p. 4), often through teacher performance assessments. In December 2015, Congress reauthorized the law again as per the original legislation's mandate. Known now as the *Every Student Succeeds Act*, the legislation sought to maintain the rigor of its predecessors while leaving the majority of the details regarding teacher preparation, qualifications, and certification procedures to the states (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

During this time, The Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE) designed and pilot tested a new national beginning teacher performance portfolio assessment aligned with the federal legislation: the edTPA, or Education Teacher Performance Assessment. While immediately noted as problematic in the field of WL teaching and learning (Hildebrandt & Swanson, 2014, 2016; Russell & Davidson Devall, 2016; Troyan & Kaplan, 2015), especially in the area of assessment of learning, the use of edTPA began to grow throughout the US. In this article, the authors begin by providing a *Rationale* for edTPA in the area of WLs and frame the

discussion in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approaches. Afterward, the researchers present the *Roadblocks* of the WL edTPA in terms of disadvantaged groups, the transparency of external reviewers, its cost, and the timeframe to complete and submit a dossier for evaluation. Finally, the authors outline several best practices as *Remediation and Recommendations* that have been found empirically to improve teacher candidates' scores on this high-stakes assessment.

World Language edTPA: Rationale

History

Framed on the Performance Assessment for California Teachers (SCALE, n.d.), edTPA is a nationally-available "performance-based, subject-specific assessment and support system used by teacher preparation programs throughout the United States to emphasize, measure and support the skills and knowledge that all teachers need from Day 1 in the classroom" (SCALE, 2020, p. 1). At present, edTPA is available in 27 different content areas in 951 Educator Preparation Programs in 41 states and the District of Columbia in order to inform initial teacher licensure and certification decisions (American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education [AACTE], 2020). Working collaboratively with AACTE and its administrative partner, Pearson, edTPA portfolios are developed during a teacher candidate's final field placement (a.k.a. student teaching) and evaluated by external reviewers. As detailed in the *edTPA World Language Assessment Handbook* (SCALE, 2019a), edTPA can be conceptualized as a cycle of effective teaching from planning (intended teaching) to instruction (enacted teaching) to assessment (impact of teaching on student learning). Each of the 27 content areas varies with respect to these three emphases. For example, external reviewers use 18 5-point Likert-scale rubrics to evaluate elementary education teacher candidates while external reviewers use 13 5-point Likert-scale

rubrics to measure WL teacher effectiveness. It is important to note that edTPA eliminated the use of local expertise (i.e. teacher-educators) in favor of external reviewers.

Each edTPA portfolio contains three tasks for pre-service teacher candidates: (1) Planning for Instruction and Assessment, (2) Instructing and Engaging Students in Learning, and (3) Assessing Student Learning. A complete portfolio includes a Context for Learning statement, lesson plans for a learning segment of 3-5 hours of connected instruction, instructional materials, assessments, commentaries to explain and reflect on for each of the three tasks, learner work samples and reflections, and no more than 15 minutes of video in specified tasks (SCALE, 2019a). There are strict font, margin, page length, and video format (e.g., mp4) requirements that teacher candidates must obey. Additionally, teacher candidates must obtain parental permission in order to film the learners in the classroom during instruction/assessment, which was highly problematic when schools were meeting in person (Hildebrandt & Swanson, 2016). Starting in 2020, with the Covid-19 pandemic and the plethora of modes of instruction in effect (e.g., in-person, online, hybrid classes), securing parental permission has been shown to be even more difficult (Journell, 2020).

The WL edTPA seeks to measure beginning teacher candidate effectiveness by using 13 5-point Likert-scale rubrics across the three aforementioned tasks: four rubrics for Task 1, five rubrics for Task 2, and four rubrics for Task 3. The 5-point scale describes teacher candidates' knowledge and skills ranging from individuals who are not ready to teach to individuals who are very well qualified and ready to teach (SCALE, 2019a). The portfolio's total score ranges from 13 to 65 points. As edTPA is an assessment of beginning teachers' abilities, scores are not typically expected to score in the advanced range of the rubrics (Hildebrandt & Swanson, 2016).

Federal educational policies have often served as a guiding framework by which the states develop their own K-16 teacher education policies with respect to scoring and teacher certification (Hildebrandt et al., 2013). Consequently, states determine the levels to which teacher candidates must perform on edTPA and most teacher assessments (e.g. Oral Proficiency Interview, Praxis). For example, in Georgia, the WL edTPA pass score was at 29 from September 1, 2015 through August 31, 2017. From September 1, 2017 forward, the passing score was 32 for certification to teach WLs. In other states, passing scores are currently higher: 34 in Washington State and 35 in Illinois, 35 in Tennessee, but rising to 36 in 2021 (Pearson Education, 2020).

While there was an expectation that teacher candidates' scores would continue to increase as states mandated the WL edTPA for licensure or certification decisions, the opposite actually occurred. National WL edTPA data from 2014 through 2018 (SCALE, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019b) revealed that the number of teacher candidates who took the WL edTPA increased from 416 to 747; however, over that same period the total mean scores set a trend of decreasing scores year after year. As shown in Table 1, WL teacher candidates' total mean scores on the WL edTPA decreased 2.76 points from 40.00

Table 1

Means and standard deviations for total WL edTPA scores for both national and program data.

	M	*SD*
2014 National WL edTPA Total Score ($N = 416$)	40.00	7.73

2015 National WL edTPA Total Score (*N* = 572)	37.24	7.39
2016 National WL edTPA Total Score (*N* = 655)	35.94	6.47
2017 National WL edTPA Total Score (*N* = 747)	35.62	5.70
2018 National WL edTPA Total Score (*N* = 747)	35.62	5.70

in 2014 to 37.24 in 2015, and to 35.94 in 2016, with the means for all tasks decreasing. The following two years, 2017 and 2018, the means remained exactly the same, which may indicate an inaccuracy of reporting. Nevertheless, the standard deviations for each year decreased along with the means, indicating that the scores became more homogeneous over the years.

Such overall declines are unfortunate, but one of the rubrics, Rubric 8 (Subject-Specific Pedagogy) has been particularly problematic. The aforementioned data from SCALE show that this rubric, part of the Instruction task, decreased from 2.4 to 1.9 from 2014 to 2016. For years, Rubric 8 has been controversial (Hildebrandt & Swanson, 2016; Ruiz-Funes, 2018) as mean scores have continually declined each year (Hildebrandt & Swanson, 2019). Unfortunately, at the time of this writing, SCALE has not published recent national data regarding the number of teacher candidates who had a WL edTPA portfolio scored and their mean scores for 2019 or 2020.

Communicative Language Teaching

SCALE (2019a) states that the WL edTPA is "consistent with the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) (2014) and the ACTFL/CAEP Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers" (p. 1). Specifically, the focus of the learning

segment is intended to develop students' communicative proficiency in the target language (TL) in meaningful cultural context(s), which promotes the five goal areas of the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (The Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). These goal areas were founded on the tenets of communicative language teaching approaches.

In recent decades, there has been a distinct paradigm shift in the teaching of WLs. The field has moved definitively away from teaching *about* the language toward an approach that advocates *use of* the language by learners at all levels. No longer is teaching the four skills (i.e., reading, writing, listening, and speaking) as individual units in the TL sufficient. Indeed, WL instruction and assessment are now conceptualized in CLT approaches that place the emphasis on language function rather than form (Nunan, 1991). Learners want to be able to *use* the language rather than merely learn *about* the language. They need and want to engage in activities that involve significant TL communication and real-life interaction (Shrum & Glisan, 2016). CLT focuses on advancing learner proficiency in all TL skill areas concomitantly, rather than merely learning about the language, one skill at a time.

The current prevalence of the CLT approach has definite and immediate ramifications for WL teacher education. In 2002, professional standards for US WL teachers were published by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC), working in conjunction with the National Council for Accreditation in Teacher Education (NCATE) and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) in the design of guidelines for FL teacher preparation (ACTFL, 2002). These guidelines are in harmony with the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (2015)—developed by ACTFL and a host of other WL organizations in the United States—and also the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* (2012). They are also in agreement with ACTFL's (2010) position statement on TL use in the classroom,

which calls for 90% or more TL use by both teachers and learners in the classroom. In the case of proficiency-oriented instruction, these guidelines emphasize using the L2 to the *maximum* extent. The InTASC (2002) standards are explicit in their attempt to promote extensive teacher use of the L2. Principle 1 (Content Knowledge), for example, asserts that "They [the candidates] can effectively conduct classes in the target language at all levels of instruction" (p. 8). Principle 4 (Instructional Strategies) openly presents the ability to effectively maximize messages in the L2. These standards also address the need to establish positive learning environments through the L2. InTASC Principle 5 stresses that "language teachers understand that an environment in which communicative interactions occur in the target language is essential for effective language learning" (p. 24). Principle 6 (Communication) asserts that this commitment to use the L2 extends well beyond the immediate classroom environment. Finally, InTASC Principle 9 (Reflective Practice) underscores research on teacher discourse as a vital tool for professional development: "They reflect on various aspects of their teaching, such as target language use during instruction" (INTASC, 2002, p. 38).

Teacher preparation programs now regularly encourage candidates to develop lessons and units that put into practice CLT principles. Indeed, contemporary language methods classes need to embrace the paradigm of CLT as it recognizes students' need for significant levels of meaningful TL communication; CLT must be included as pedagogical content knowledge in these programs (Larson-Freeman & Tedick, 2016). Thus, these methods courses need a more intensive focus on how to plan lessons that will increase a learner's communicative proficiency in the TL. In addition, language educators of WL pre-service teachers must focus on developing the language skills of these future instructors, through courses taught in the TL (Garcia et al., 2019). The language teaching profession now advocates using the TL for purposes that are as

real-life and authentic to the learner as possible. Designing lessons with tasks that have students actively use the TL to engage in communicative situations with real people is of the utmost importance. Such a focus is a call to maximize the development of communicative proficiency and expand TL use to 90% or more in the classroom (Hlas, 2016; Shrum & Glisan, 2016; Swanson & Hildebrandt, 2017). It is important to note that the WL edTPA is grounded in the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (2015), which clearly supports CLT and teaching for proficiency in the TL.

The Unintentionally Disadvantaged: Roadblocks

Given the intense emphasis on TL use in the classroom and, concomitantly, the TL proficiency of WL educators, it would follow that recruitment of teacher candidates with high levels of TL proficiency would be extremely important. Thus, native speakers (NSs) and even heritage speakers of the TL would appear to have a distinct advantage over many if not most of their fellow pre-service teachers in that they already have a high level of language proficiency (not to equate with pedagogical knowledge) they can readily employ in the classroom (Hildebrandt & Swanson, 2016). The extreme demand on the skills of a classroom teacher every minute of every lesson becomes even more complicated for non-native speakers (NNSs) of the language because they need to include their proficiency level as yet another tool to be used in their lessons. Hence, heritage and NSs should rise to the top of the pool of teacher candidates preparing to enter the profession because these individuals have exceptional TL proficiency, deep cultural experiences, and now solid pedagogical knowledge from having completed a teacher preparation program. Nevertheless, it is precisely this pool of candidates that seems to be disadvantaged by the requirement of passing the edTPA in order to obtain teacher certification in many states (Jourdain, 2018; Okraski & Kissau, 2018; Russell & Davidson, 2018).

Several researchers have questioned whether the edTPA battery of evaluations is indeed an accurate assessment of the knowledge and skills of WL pre-service teachers in general and, in particular, of those candidates who are either NNSs of English or heritage / NSs of the TL in which they are seeking certification. There seems to be a disparity between the results on the edTPA and other measures of teacher readiness and preparedness, and this disparity is most apparent with NNSs of English (Coloma, 2015; Cox et al., 2018; Russell & Davidson, 2018; Russell & Davidson Devall, 2016). Teacher candidates who are NNSs of English, NSs or heritage speakers of the TL in question for certification are either not passing the edTPA cut score or, worse, are not even submitting a portfolio because they have become daunted by the entire process (Jourdain, 2018). This is a clear case of disenfranchisement of a group of teacher candidates who could readily remediate the shortage in WL educators presently faced across the nation (Cross, 2016; Hildebrandt & Swanson, 2014; Jourdain, 2018; Russell & Davidson, 2018). One possible solution to this issue is to allow teacher candidates to answer the prompts either in English or the TL.

The problems with edTPA are numerous and do not just affect the NSs / heritage speaker pool of candidates. Overall, researchers have found that in general, there is simply too little attention paid to assisting pre-service teachers in preparing to undertake the edTPA assessments. Because this is such a high stakes assessment, it is incumbent upon teacher preparation programs to include sufficient concentration on edTPA practices during pre-student teaching coursework. Candidates who are familiar with what edTPA requires will naturally be able to perform at a higher level than those for whom the assessments are completely new territory (Okraski & Kissau, 2018; Russell & Davidson, 2018). Indeed, some studies have indicated that teacher candidates felt they were spending too much time trying to fit their teaching into the edTPA

mold rather than being able to produce original and engaging lessons for their students (Jourdain, 2018; Russell & Davidson, 2018). Candidates found edTPA too prescriptive, forcing them to develop lessons that fly in the face of the dynamic nature of the learning process in the WL classroom (Coloma, 2015; Russell & Davidson, 2018). In other words, they were spending a considerable amount of time structuring lessons that would hopefully meet the edTPA stipulations but were not coming from what they knew to be sound second language acquisition pedagogy and solid WL teaching practices. Nor did they have the time to spend in conversation and reflection with WL colleagues, from whom they could have benefited greatly. Still others ran into conflict with their cooperating teachers over TL use in the classroom, despite ACTFL's 90% mandate (Russell & Davidson, 2018).

Also, raters of the edTPA portfolios only see a fraction of the teacher candidate's abilities in the classroom, yet they hold the key to important decisions affecting the candidates' lives. However, the rater qualifications are rather vague and not at all clearly defined, particularly regarding raters for WL portfolios. As noted by Hildebrandt and Swanson (2016), it remains unclear how potential reviewers are evaluated and selected. They reported:

> [Two external reviewers] both noted that they were not required or asked to present a demonstration of their planning, instructional, or assessment abilities. They were not asked about their planning for instruction regimen, their ability to teach in the target language 90% of the time at all levels, or their knowledge of assessment in general or integrated performance assessments in particular (2016, p. 175).

A rater who is under or poorly qualified could cause an inaccurate evaluation of the candidate being rated. In the end, for some of these candidates it was not worth the effort and they simply did not complete the process (Jourdain, 2018; Russell & Davidson, 2018).

Such issues have clearly led many to doubt if edTPA is a valid and reliable instrument to measure beginning teacher effectiveness. While it is difficult not to advocate in favor of high standards for new teachers, "it's by no means clear that the edTPA encourages better teaching or merely rewards teachers who are good at the demands made by Pearson" (Ravitch, 2020, p. 1). Critics question the cost ($300), time involved, its reliability and the corporatization of education by Pearson (Hildebrandt & Swanson, 2016; Jacobson, 2020). To that end, Gitomer et al. (2019) examined SCALE's administrative reports and concluded there is not enough evidence to determine whether edTPA scores are reliable and recommend a moratorium on its use. Others, like Kate Walsh, president of the National Council on Teacher Quality, concur (Jacobson, 2020). Such reports and research have clearly led states to re-examine using edTPA for licensure and certification. The state of Georgia decided in 2020 to no longer require novice educators to pass edTPA, noting that it is a barrier to entry (Will, 2020). Lawmakers in Illinois introduced House Bill 4059 with the intention of removing edTPA as a teacher certification requirement (Illinois General Assembly, 2020). Legislators in Connecticut introduced House Bill 5376 for the same purpose (Connecticut General Assembly, 2020). At present, the legislation in both states is in committee. Research on states' action indicates that in addition to common criticisms surrounding edTPA (e.g., cost, validity), the teacher shortage appears to be impacting legislative action (National Public Radio, 2019). At present, teacher preparation program enrollment across the country has declined dramatically. For example, in Oklahoma, teacher preparation programs witnessed an 80% drop in enrollment since 2010. It is just "one of nine states where enrollment has nose-dived by more than half" (Camera, 2019, p. 1). Since the 1950s, there has been a shortage of world language teachers in the US (Swanson, 2008, 2012; Swanson & Mason, 2018)

and such high-stakes testing seems to exacerbate the situation. However, there are certain strategies that teacher candidates can employ that will help improve their WL edTPA scores.

Improving WL edTPA Scores: Remediation and Recommendations

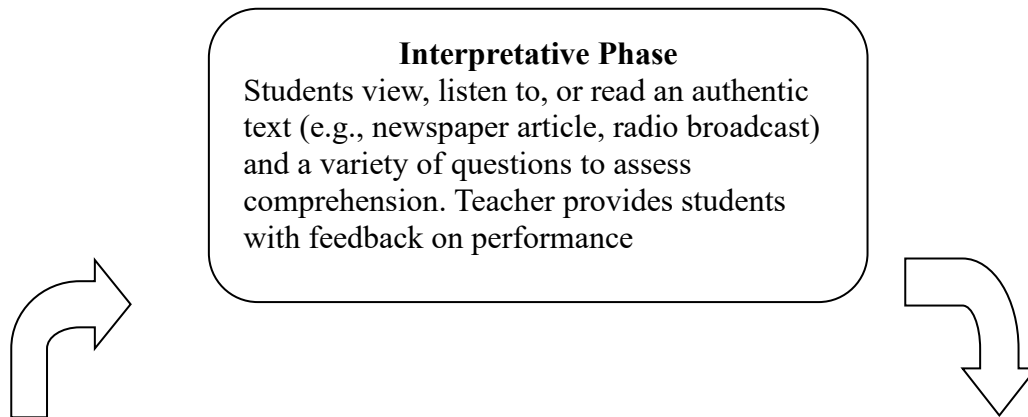**Using Performance-Based Assessments like the Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA)**

The popularity of CLT in the classroom has brought the very basic idea of communication to the forefront of WL pedagogical goals. The *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* focuses on the three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational (The Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). In other words, language learners are asked to participate in TL communication using one or more of these modes as a matter of course. Concurrent with the emphasis on the implementation of communicative language activities in the classroom, current best practices in language teaching for proficiency in the TL stress the development and demonstration of the learner's TL proficiency through performance-based assessments.

Performance-based assessments are designed to replicate the tasks and challenges language learners will face when using the TL in real world scenarios. Through such assessments, students may work either individually or collaboratively and use their collection of skills and knowledge to create a response to a prompt (e.g., complex questions or situations) or a product that can have more than one correct response (Liskin-Gasparro, 1996; Wiggins, 1998). The Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) is an excellent example of such a performance-based assessment. The IPA serves as an evaluation of student ability in the TL that employs a cluster assessment featuring several activities (Adair-Hauck et al., 2006). The IPA was inspired by social constructivist theories of learning and conceived as a standards-based practical way to assess the success of L2 learners on performance-based tasks developed to measure the outcomes
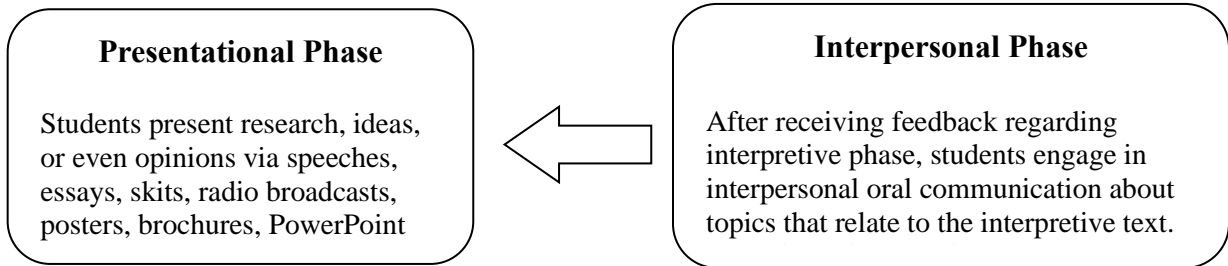
espoused by the World-Readiness Standards (Adair-Hauck et al., 2013; Kissau & Adams, 2016; Zapata, 2016).

The IPA is a multi-task assessment developed following a single thematic context. The assessment includes a series of assignments that emulate the three modes of communication and one or more other standards (e.g., cultures). The IPA is not a *one and done* paper and pencil assessment. Rather, the various tasks involved in the IPA may be carried out over several class periods (Cox et al., 2018). For example, language learners first complete an interpretive mode task (e.g., reading or watching a video). Afterwards, they employ the information from an interpersonal mode task (e.g., conversation) before they summarize their learning with a presentational mode task. In other words, language learners listen to, view, and/or read authentic texts in the TL, interact with fellow learners in the TL in written and oral form, and then present orally and/or in written form to each other or an expanded audience. Feedback along the way on each portion of the IPA can help students set new learning goals. In addition, formulating these tasks, providing step-by-step feedback to learners, and then evaluating each task can guide teachers toward more proficiency-oriented instruction (Cox et al., 2018; Kissau & Adams, 2016; Martel & Bailey, 2016).

Figure 1. Integrated Performance Assessment (Hildebrandt & Swanson, 2016)

Interpretative Phase
Students view, listen to, or read an authentic text (e.g., newspaper article, radio broadcast) and a variety of questions to assess comprehension. Teacher provides students with feedback on performance

Presentational Phase	Interpersonal Phase
Students present research, ideas, or even opinions via speeches, essays, skits, radio broadcasts, posters, brochures, PowerPoint	After receiving feedback regarding interpretive phase, students engage in interpersonal oral communication about topics that relate to the interpretive text.

The IPA is a well-established model of performance-based assessment of student language proficiency. However, its adoption does represent a significant philosophical and pedagogical shift in instruction for language departments. Hence, it is incumbent upon pre-service teacher educators to incorporate knowledge, implementation of, and evaluation of IPA materials, purposes, tasks, rubrics, and their appraisal in the FL methods course (Kaplan, 2016; Okraski & Kissau, 2018). Furthermore, it has been shown that teacher candidates who implement an IPA as part of their WL edTPA portfolio score higher than those who choose to document traditional measures of learner assessment (Swanson & Goulette, 2018).

Mentoring Pre-service Candidates

Another potential way to improve edTPA scores is through intensive mentoring of pre-service candidates throughout their WL educational coursework. This mentoring needs to encompass various areas of WL instruction such as how to implement CLT, how to stay in the TL in order to reach 90% or more, how to foster TL proficiency in learners, how to create performance-based assessments, and so forth (García et al., 2019; LeLoup et al., 2013). For example, teacher candidates need to know what the components of the edTPA assessments entail, and they need to practice these elements over time, not just during their student teaching when they must produce the final product (Coloma, 2015; Jourdain, 2018; Okraski & Kissau, 2018; Russell & Davidson, 2018).

Finally, WL teacher candidates need expert guidance when preparing their edTPA videos. Many pre-service and even in-service WL teachers have never video-recorded themselves teaching in the classroom. Such videos can be quite illuminating in terms of pinpointing areas of success as well as areas targeted for improvement. Studies have shown that WL teachers typically and significantly overestimate their TL usage in the classroom. Video recordings of lessons can erase all doubt as to TL use (LeLoup et al, 2013). In addition, this is one case where the adage, "practice makes perfect," is on the mark. Candidates who practice making good quality videos that demonstrate their teaching skills and abilities will surely do better vis-à-vis this edTPA assessment than those who have not paid sufficient attention to this portion of the evaluation. Research shows that WL edTPA scores improve when teacher candidates take the time to develop high quality videos that can be opened on a variety of computers (Goulette & Swanson, 2017; Swanson & LeLoup, 2020).

Conclusion

Teacher education reform is meant to be a positive process with constructive outcomes and results. This positive process certainly can be achieved with the proper implementation and evaluation. With every change of presidential administration, subsequent reauthorizations of the ESEA continue to focus on beginning teacher accountability. However, recent state decisions regarding edTPA in general imply that legislators are considering not using edTPA for teacher licensure and certification purposes (Illinois General Assembly, 2020; Will, 2020). Nevertheless, while still in place in so many states, teacher educators and their students must continue to work within the framework set forth by such reform. Additionally, those who design and actively market high-stakes assessments must work closely with local educational stakeholders (e.g., teacher educators) in order to create and advance valid, reliable, and less

costly assessments given that it costs aspiring educators almost $1000 in testing to become

certified (Hildebrandt & Swanson, 2014).

In the meantime, the WL edTPA has issues that need to be addressed. The researchers

call for more investigation from a qualitative perspective in order to begin to understand more

about the individual teacher candidate's plight. In addition, it would be insightful to study

lawmakers' perspectives regarding edTPA. In the meantime, the aforementioned

recommendations would certainly help ameliorate some of immediate problems for teacher

candidates. The authors call for SCALE to listen to and work proactively with researchers in the

field in order to improve the assessment. By creating a more meaningful assessment, skillful and

capable pre-service WL teachers will transition to being proficient and experienced in-service

WL educators, employing best pedagogical practices in second language acquisition, and

developing language learners' communicative proficiency in the target language—the central

goal of the WL edTPA.

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