

The Teacher Performance Assessment: What and Why?

In January, 2012, candidates in Washington teacher preparation programs began field testing a new way of assessing readiness to teach—the Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA). The TPA, a classroom-based assessment administered during the student teaching experience, focuses on core teaching skills. By 2013, the TPA will be required for graduates of Washington teacher preparation programs to earn state certification. Here's what you need to know....

✓ Key features

- The TPA is being developed in collaboration with Stanford University and Pearson Testing, and will meet psychometric standards for validity and reliability
- The TPA will assess teacher candidates *in the P-12 classroom*, not on paper or on campus
- The TPA will include written documents, video clips, samples of P-12 student work, and written reflections
- The TPA will be submitted and scored electronically
- The TPA will be scored by P-12 educators, university faculty, and others with appropriate credentials and experience in the subject being taught
- The TPA will be a national assessment, allowing the performance of Washington candidates to be benchmarked against prospective teachers in other states

✓ What the TPA will tell us

Planning. *What is the evidence that candidates can use knowledge of content and student characteristics to plan effective instruction centered on state learning goals?*

Instruction. *What is the evidence that candidates can actively engage students in learning academic content?*

Assessment. *What is the evidence that candidates can analyze student learning in order to provide feedback and plan the next steps in instruction, and change teaching practices?*

Academic language. *What is the evidence that the candidate can analyze the language demands of academic content and provide appropriate scaffolding based on students' language development?*

Student voice. *What is the evidence that candidates can engage students in understanding the learning targets and monitoring their own progress toward the goals?*

✓ Why it's important

The TPA is being developed at a time when educators and policymakers are searching for better ways of assessing teacher performance. When fully implemented, the TPA will provide a valid and reliable classroom-based assessment of key instructional skills among preservice teachers, and will serve a number of purposes:

- Helping determine readiness for certification
- Providing guidance to prospective teachers on their professional development needs
- Offering useful feedback to teacher preparation programs

The TPA is substantially aligned with state and national standards for teachers. While not a direct test of content knowledge, it supports the Common Core State Standards by emphasizing instruction that is focused, coherent, and centered on student learning aligned with state goals.

The TPA is intended to establish a national framework for assessment of preservice teachers that will inform educational reform efforts. Currently, over 20 states are considering use of this assessment. Washington is a lead state in this effort, and is on track to become the first state in the nation to fully implement it.

If you'd like more information about the assessment, go here:

<http://assessment.pesb.wa.gov/assessments/pact>