



## Being Cool with Assessment



Jennifer Patterson, Ph.D.  
Chair, Learning Assessment Committee  
Professor of Management

On behalf of the Learning Assessment Committee, I'm excited to introduce this issue of DataVersed. I am sure that you will all be very interested in reading the thought-provoking article, "Evaluating Language in Action: Implementing Integrated Performance Assessments in World-Languages Classrooms" written by one of our committee members, Dr. Philip Allen. In addition, this issue includes an opportunity to learn more about the work of the Effectiveness Team through the personal insights provided by an interview with Effectiveness Coordinator, Tina Churchill. As with this year's previous issues of DataVersed, this issue was developed and designed by fellow committee member, Meghan Carlson.

Special thanks and sincere appreciation to Philip Allen, Tina Churchill, and Meghan Carlson for their contributions to this issue.



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# Being Cool with Assessment Cont.

On behalf of the Learning Assessment Committee, as we wrap up another term and reflect on the numerous challenges we've faced, I want to express our heartfelt gratitude for the dedication of our faculty in continually improving assessments and for all your hard work. Happy Holidays and best wishes for a restful break and an excellent beginning to the upcoming New Year!

Enjoy the remainder of the term!  
Jenny



# Evaluating Language in Action: Implementing Integrated Performance Assessments in World-Languages Classrooms

Traditional second-language testing involves giving students the opportunity to show how much they know about the languages they are studying, giving them little to no possibilities of demonstrating what they can do with the linguistic skills they acquire in our courses. Moving towards evaluative formats that allow students to be assessed using language in action is hardly a novel concept nowadays; world-language educators have spent the last two decades revamping their assessment instruments to better reflect the communicative and performance-based nature of instruction. Many project-based models organically provide for an evaluation of how students consume and react to a multitude of cultural products, practices, and perspectives. Likewise, the Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA), first introduced by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) in 2003, also offers educators and learners the opportunity to extend the communicative approach to language coursework to the language examination.



Philip Allen, Ph.D.  
Professor of Spanish

An IPA is defined by ACTFL as a “cluster assessment featuring three tasks, each of which reflects one of the three modes of communication, namely interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational” (Adair-Hauck et al., 2015, p. 22). Essentially, authentic materials (periodicals published for speakers of the target language, short films, excerpts from literary texts, to name a few) are compiled with which students interact in three real-world scenarios. All three of the chosen tasks must necessarily be closely related and centered on a common topic, often designed in such a way so that the three tasks are in dialogue with one another as students progress through the three communicative activities. As such, IPAs have been considered a more faithful way to gauge students’ use of the language because they see students use the language to complete real-world tasks in such a way that parallels their use of their dominant language in their everyday life. Although the tasks can vary greatly in format and type, one example is that students can watch a video created for an audience that speaks the target language or read an informational article written for the same demographic before discussing it with a partner, then presenting their ideas and reactions either orally or in writing.

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# Evaluating Language in Action Cont.

Such assessment instruments allow language learners to practice the receptive modes of communication (listening and/or reading), then demonstrate their skills with linguistic production (speaking and/or writing) in a way that allows both the participants and the instructors to monitor progress in specific areas of language acquisition. More importantly, the customizable nature of the IPA allows for a wide variety of topics to be explored and evaluated, thus making it immediately responsive and adaptable to student interests and needs over time. Furthermore, the thematic correlation of the tasks allows students to make meaningful connections to the material and, as a result, permits a firmer grasp on both lexicon and mechanics in the target language.



Philip Allen, Ph.D.  
Professor of Spanish

Implementing the IPA as an integral part of world language instruction also facilitates backward design, since a clear set of interpretative, interpersonal, and presentational communication objectives are established whilst the assessments are being compiled. As such, concrete and concise learning objectives are often easily identifiable, and modules and lessons can be created with these linguistic goals in mind. For example, an IPA that requires students to be able to address contemporary family challenges and discuss them in the context of family issues from around the world informs modules on family and lifestyle vocabulary, conjunctions that are best suited to making comparisons and contrasts, and past tenses of verbs to allow for a discussion of personal experiences to inform the thoughts and opinions expressed about contemporary issues.

Given the authenticity of the resources used in preparing these assessments, perhaps the most appealing aspect of the IPA is its ability to provide a space in which language students continue to learn by immersion in real-world scenarios while simultaneously being evaluated on their language skills. In other words, not only are students being examined in ways that allow for a personalized and meaningful interaction with the target language, but they are also actively learning more about important issues while doing so. Consequently, language learners also grow in their independent use of the target language, as they are placed into situations in which they must rely on skills such as key word recognition, inferring meaning from context, isolating key pieces of information to gain an understanding of main ideas, and circumlocution of terms to express personal reactions to the material.

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# Evaluating Language in Action Cont.

A transition from more traditional language assessment methods to the IPA format could, naturally, be a shock to the system for many language learners and instructors. As such, educators and institutions wishing to adopt a more performance-based method of assessment will need to make some slight alterations to their lessons and overall delivery of second-language instruction. These changes need not—and should not—constitute abrupt paradigm shifts in pedagogical methodology, but rather gradual implementation of more performance-based activities in the classroom. Given that performance-based assessments are increasingly used as the global standard in second-language proficiency examinations (e.g., The Cambridge Language



Philip Allen, Ph.D.  
Professor of Spanish

Assessment, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the Diplôme d'Etudes en Langue Française (DELF), the Diploma de Español como Lengua Extranjera (DELE), and the Certificato di Conoscenza della Lingua Italiana (CELI)), current trends indicate that a shift towards these types of teaching and assessing are vital to providing students with a world-class language education.

Adair-Hauck, B., Glisan, E. W., & Troyan, F. J. (2015). *Implementing Integrated Performance Assessment*. American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (U.S.), Education, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, Committee on Foreign Language Assessment for the U.S. Foreign Service Institute. (2020). *A Principled Approach to Language Assessment: Considerations for the U.S. Foreign Service Institute*. National Academies Press.

Troyan, F. J., Adair-Hauck, B., Glisan, E. W., & American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. (2023). *The Integrated Performance Assessment: Twenty Years and Counting (Third edition)*. American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

# Effectiveness Coordinator Spotlight

*In this section, we interview an Effectiveness Coordinator about their thoughts on what they do, as well as any suggestions they have for us in effective assessment strategies.*



Tina Churchill  
Professor of Mathematics

## **What is your favorite part about being an Effectiveness Coordinator?**

The DATA of course! I am enjoying learning so much about data retrieval and the process. It is extremely interesting to me, to have the opportunity to observe different perspectives on pedagogy, it is almost like getting an inside scoop on today's students and how to best reach them. I am thankful for the opportunity to learn from the fantastic faculty here at FSW and Team AASPIRE.

## **What do you feel is most important about assessment at FSW, and for the areas you are a coordinator for?**

The potential of assessment in the changing culture of today's students. Technology and the workplace are changing at an exponential rate; assessment can provide a connection between the impacts we have on our student's education and success and interdisciplinary studies. The school I support impacts the core curriculum.

## **What is something that you found helpful in your role as an Effectiveness Coordinator?**

The communication and support of coworkers. I have truly appreciated the open conversations and working with dedicated faculty. I have gained so much insight and knowledge in assessment and different perspectives. Communication is key to successful assessment.

## **Do you have any suggestions you would want to convey to other faculty about assessment?**

For an accredited college such as FSW, assessment is integral. The potential impact of assessment is broad, as each successful course builds a foundationally strong student.

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# Effectiveness Coordinator Spotlight cont.

Have you found yourself surprised by what you've measured so far?

Yes! On a few occasions, the process of measuring and creating great assessments has led to very surprising results, however, this is where the beauty of assessment comes in. You look at the process, did it really capture what you were seeking, were enough variables accounted for, was the creation in Canvas done correctly, directions/rubric clear... the list is evolving continually. This is all part of the process refining and developing, the exciting part.

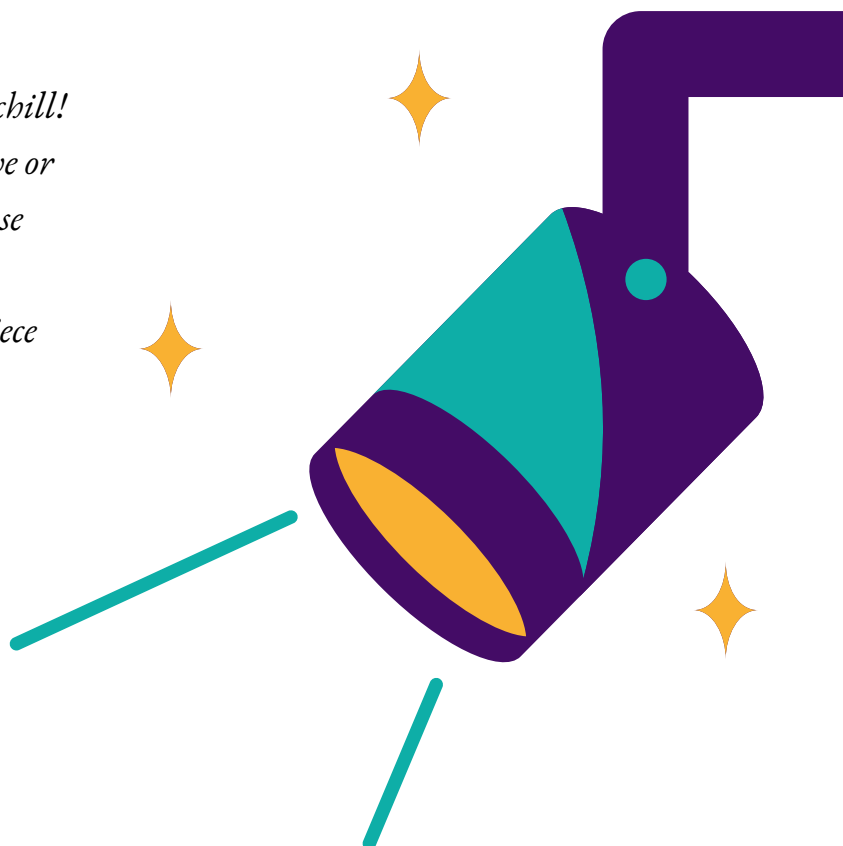


Tina Churchill  
Professor of Mathematics

**What's a fun fact about yourself?**

I am First Gen, and.... I have an AS and BS from Edison State College (yes, that's right I am old-school FSW!), and some of my coworkers were my Professors!

*Thank you so much Professor Churchill!  
If you have an interesting perspective or  
strategy to share on assessment, please  
message Meghan Carlson at  
mcarlson1@fsw.edu to have your piece  
featured.*



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