

Language teacher preparation in a pandemic: An international comparison of responses to COVID-19

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Abstract

The unprecedented challenges posed by the global COVID-19 pandemic risked seriously disrupting the continuous supply and preparation of new teachers that are desperately needed to fill world language teacher vacancies. To better understand how world language teacher preparation programs around the globe supported aspiring teachers in the successful completion of their teacher training, the researchers conducted a case study that investigated how world language teacher preparation programs on three different continents responded to the global pandemic. Results suggested that the programs were not equally prepared to navigate the pandemic and had similar, yet different responses to it. Contextual factors, such as national wealth, the prevalence of online instruction pre-pandemic, and the shortage of world language teachers influenced both program preparedness and the accommodations offered to teacher candidates. The results of the study should be considered when developing contingency plans to address future disruptions to program delivery and speak to the need for additional research investigating the impact of COVID-19 on teacher candidate performance and the performance of their future K-12 students.

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Introduction

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2016; Kyriacou and Kobori, 1998; Lin et al., 2012; Nuffield Foundation, 2000; Richards et al., 2012; Spiegel, 2016; Weldon, 2015). In the United States, a study initiated by the federal government found that 44 of 50 states could not fill all world language teacher vacancies (Commission on Language Learning, 2017, p. ix). In Germany, the latest figures from the federal statistical office suggest that, by 2025, there will be a shortage of over 26,000 primary school teachers (BertelsmannStiftung, 2019). In Colombia, the need for English teachers has increased due to a 10-year initiative launched in 2015 to increase the number of high school graduates with proficiency in English by more than 2000% (Cassard, 2018).

World language teacher preparation programs provide a pipeline of new teachers, and thus help address this shortage (ACTFL, 2021; Kissau, 2020; Kissau et al., 2019). The pandemic caused K-12 schools to stop, or at least limit, all in-person instruction. In cases where schools permitted face-to-face instruction, visitors, including teacher candidates in need of clinical experiences, were often denied entry to limit the spread of the virus. Likewise, starting in spring 2020, and lasting for at least a year, in most countries, many universities that prepare future teachers resorted to 100% online instruction.

These unprecedented challenges risked disrupting the continuous supply of new world language instructors that are needed to fill world language teacher vacancies. World language teacher educators began to grapple with questions related to how to teach their teacher candidates, in an online environment, the interactive teaching strategies that are critical to developing communicative competence among K-12 language learners. They also had to consider how to model techniques to make the target language comprehensible and infuse cultural practices and perspectives into instruction, promote oral proficiency of teacher candidates, provide candidates with opportunities to practice teaching skills (e.g., lesson planning, classroom management), and offer them feedback to improve their instruction. Such questions were particularly daunting for those working in contexts with inconsistent access to the internet and with little to no access to K-12 classrooms.

To that end, the researchers used a comparative case study design (Merriam, 1998) to analyze how a total of three world language teacher training programs on three different continents (South America, Europe, and North America) responded to the pandemic. Findings illustrate how context shaped responses and point toward future implications, suggesting ways in which the field can complement existing teaching practices “to take full advantage of what the digital era puts at our disposal so that students have a more comprehensive learning experience” (Cárdenas et al., 2021, p. 7).

Review of Literature

Due to the recent and ongoing nature of the pandemic, there is presently only emerging research on the impact of the pandemic on teacher preparation programs, and even less focusing on language teacher preparation. The limited research that exists has focused on four main topics: (1) the increasing demands placed on teacher preparation programs by the pandemic; (2) strategies that teacher preparation programs have employed to support teacher candidates; (3) unanticipated successes that teacher training programs experienced during the pandemic; and (4) recommendations for the future.

Increased Demands

Research has raised concerns related to the increasing demands placed on already overburdened teachers due to the pandemic (Barnes et al., 2020; Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020; MacIntyre et al., 2020).

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A survey of over 600 language teachers from across the globe revealed that language teachers felt additional stress during the pandemic due to factors such as increased workload, concern over family health, blurred lines between home and work, and the challenges of online teaching (MacIntyre et al., 2020). These stressors will likely have a ripple effect that lasts for many years. Following the pandemic, more than ever, teachers will be asked to meet the social and emotional needs of students, many of whom may have suffered trauma during the pandemic (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020). Teachers will be tasked with making up for learning loss that occurred and preparing for the unpredictability of the coming semesters as the virus continues to loom large over schools. As Darling-Hammond and Hyler (2020) concluded, “the unbelievably complex scenario would challenge even the most well-prepared, stable, and experienced teacher workforce (p. 457).”

These findings underscore the heightened demand placed on teacher preparation programs. Amidst these challenges of workload, health concerns, and learning to teach online (MacIntyre et al., 2020), preparation programs must ensure that candidates are able to complete their programs to maintain a consistent pipeline of new teachers. The current body of research stressed the potential negative impact of the virus on the teacher shortage, particularly in high-needs areas, including world language instruction (Barnes et al., 2020; Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020). One report indicated that as many as one in every five teachers in the U.S. was unlikely to return to their jobs if schools were to open physically in the near future (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020, p. 458). Such a high rate of attrition would exacerbate pre-existing teacher shortages and place additional pressure on teacher preparation programs to ensure their teacher candidates successfully complete their programs and enter the teaching workforce. In Germany, where teachers enjoy many benefits as civil servants (e.g., job security, state pension), the limited existing body of research suggests that many teachers feel burdened in their everyday work life at schools. One study found that one out of four teachers had shown symptoms of burnout directly connected to the pandemic (IFT Nord, 2020).

Strategies

A second topic prevalent in the related research pertains to how teacher preparation programs responded to the disruption in clinical experiences that were caused by the pandemic. Clinical experiences in teacher preparation, widely reported in the literature to be the most influential component of teacher preparation programs (Anderson & Stillman, 2013; Caires & Almeida, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Ferber & Nillas, 2010; Metcalf, 1991), were perhaps most impacted by the transition to remote instruction caused by the pandemic. Clinical experiences are especially critical in language classrooms where the first language culture and background of the teacher and students may be different (Cho & Clark-Gareca, 2020). In a study investigating the challenges and opportunities presented by COVID-19 to 27 English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher candidates in Chile, participants reported that a lack of regular contact with their students prevented them from building strong relationships and getting to know their students. As a result, they felt less able to plan lessons and adapt materials to meet their students' specific learning needs (Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020). Research suggests that, in such disruptive scenarios, teachers often draw heavily on their own educational experiences and personal background to plan and deliver instruction (Cho & Clark-Gareca, 2020; Donato & Davin, 2018). For

example, overwhelmed by the changes that came with the pandemic, teachers might revert to a more traditional, teacher-centered type of instruction that they experienced as learners, and might only incorporate instructional resources that are more readily accessible and that only reflect their own personal or cultural background. Their instruction may, as a result, be less meaningful or relevant to students who do not share those experiences (Cho & Clark-Gareca, 2020).

Some programs responded to the challenge of providing clinical experiences in creative ways. For clinical experiences that take place before the student teaching internship, some preparation programs turned to teaching approximations (Cho & Clark-Gareco, 2020). Rather than in-person experiences in schools, candidates observed videos of instruction and were asked to practice teaching with more flexible groups of children, such as their own children (Barnes et al., 2020). To provide feedback on their instruction, some programs paired candidates with aspiring school principals in educational leadership programs who reviewed their instruction and provided feedback (Barnes et al., 2020). With respect to internships, programs implemented a variety of strategies that allowed candidates to progress in their programs and become licensed teachers. Some programs waived requirements, such as mandatory assessments. For example, programs that prepared English as a second language teachers in the state of New York “called off” a mandatory certification examination which required teacher candidates to collect artifacts and to create instructional videos (Cho & Clark-Gareco, 2020, p. 4). Other programs no longer required candidates to complete a minimum number of hours in a K-12 classroom (Barnes et al., 2020), and in some cases, allowed students to complete program requirements by replicating whatever was expected of the mentoring classroom teacher (Barnes et al., 2020; Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020). For example, in the previously mentioned study by Sepulveda-Escobar and Morrison (2020) involving EFL teacher candidates in Chile, approximately half of the 27 candidates worked with their mentor teacher to deliver synchronous instruction using online platforms, like Zoom, and the other half created short videos of their instruction and prepared homework assignments that were delivered to students via email or uploaded to an online platform. On rare occasions, when it was found that districts were not able to deliver remote instruction online, teacher preparation programs moved students from one district to another (Barnes et al., 2020; Cho & Clark-Gareco, 2020; Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020). An EFL program in Turkey developed an “e-practicum” in which teacher candidates delivered micro-lessons via Zoom to their classmates (Ersin et al., 2020). The candidates shared teaching materials, conducted warm-up activities, arranged group work activities, and had students demonstrate their knowledge using digital tools. Immediately following the lessons, the pre-service teachers received detailed feedback from their peers on their performance, and in separate Zoom sessions, the university faculty member assigned to supervise the candidates provided each with personalized feedback.

Opportunities

These pivots performed by teacher preparation programs also created opportunities. A common thread in the research pertained to enhanced online teaching skills that emerged from the pandemic (Barnes et al., 2020; Cho & Clark-Gareca, 2020; Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020). In an investigation of EFL teachers in China, participants reported that they became more familiar with a variety of technology-based resources, more adept at using these resources in their classrooms, and in the process, developed more positive attitudes about online language instruction (Gao & Zhang, 2020). Similarly, EFL teachers in Turkey reported that the digital tools

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incorporated into their teacher preparation program during the pandemic helped better prepare them to better integrate technology in their future instruction (Ersin et al., 2020). Beyond classroom use, research also suggested that teachers found creative ways to offer one-on-one support to students via individual meetings using online platforms, such as Zoom, or through the use of individual breakout rooms during group meetings (Cho & Clark-Gareca, 2020; Darling-Hammond & Hylar, 2020).

A common theme across these studies was a desire for greater technology integration to become a permanent component of the teacher training program post-pandemic (Ersin et al., 2020; Gao & Zhang, 2020; Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020). For example, Cho and Clark-Gareca (2020) found that candidates' analysis and reflection on videos of instruction led to enhanced analytic and reflective skills among teacher candidates. Similarly, Hassani (2021) showed how COVID-19 forced an EFL teacher training program in Iran to reflect on its practices, then identify and make numerous improvements. The researcher argued that the pandemic put a spotlight on weaknesses in teacher preparation programs in the country, including lack of infrastructure and theory-driven instruction, and provided the opportunity to make a number of meaningful changes, including the integration of digital tools and resources and a more practice-based approach to teacher education (Hassani, 2021).

Recommendations

A final topic noted in the literature pertained to recommendations for the future. Research studies found that teacher candidate preparation to integrate digital tools into their instruction varied greatly both within the United States and internationally (Cho & Clark-Gareca, 2020; Darling-Hammond & Hylar, 2020). Cho and Clark-Gareca (2020) recommended that teacher preparation programs align their learning management systems (e.g., Canvas) with those used by their partnering school districts to allow for a seamless transition once their teacher candidates become practicing teachers. On a related note, research published during the pandemic shed light on the paucity of research on teacher professional development and online language learning. Paesani (2020) argued that while publications related to the use of various online resources in language classrooms, such as wikis and blogs, were plentiful during the pandemic, "relatively few studies explore teachers' cognition, conceptual development...and the like as they learn how to teach language online" (p. 294). As a result, the profession does not know the best approach to take when preparing teachers to teach online. Paesani (2020) went on to encourage the language teaching community to take the time, "now that we are no longer in triage mode" (p. 294) to gather as much information as possible to develop and implement research-based professional development that is tailored to the specific needs of a variety of different language teachers (e.g., level of instruction, language, familiarity with technology-based resources). Finally, because online and competency-based programs were found to be less impacted by the pandemic, teacher preparation programs were encouraged in the related research to consider adopting some components of such programs. Western Governors University, the largest teacher preparation program in the United States (based on enrollment), reported that its online, asynchronous instruction was able to weather the pandemic without significant disruption (Barnes et al., 2020, p. 529).

Synthesis of Literature Review

In summary, several studies have underscored the heightened demands that COVID-19 placed on teacher preparation programs, described strategies aimed at mitigating its impact, noted some unanticipated opportunities that emerged during the pandemic, and

offered recommendations for future practice. That said, little research focused specifically on the preparation of world language teachers, and no studies were located that involved the preparation of teachers of languages other than English. This omission is noteworthy given the critical shortage of world language teachers, and supports urgent calls for further research (Cárdenas et al., 2021; Gao & Zhang, 2020). Further, a thorough review of the literature found even less research that explored how teacher preparation programs across the world responded to the global pandemic. To address this gap, the researchers compared how world language teacher preparation programs in three different countries responded to COVID-19.

Methodology

The researchers used a Comparative Case Study Design (Merriam, 1998), collecting data from three language teacher preparation programs in three different countries, to investigate the extent their responses to the global pandemic were similar/different. Merriam (1998) defines a case study as “an intense, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit” (p. 27). The case could be a person, program, or community, and is often selected because it involves an area of concern (Merriam, 1998).

Setting and Participants

The study involved licensure programs for current and aspiring world language teachers in three different countries (Colombia, Germany, and the United States). Data collection was facilitated by a longstanding research partnership between the German and U.S. institutions and previous research collaborations between one of the U.S. researchers and the Colombian institution. While the participants represent a convenience sample, their involvement is nevertheless strategic. All three countries were significantly impacted by the pandemic and were already experiencing a critical shortage of world language teachers. Further, offering South American, European, and North American perspectives allows for cultural comparison and researchers and practitioners to apply the findings to their own contexts and studies as appropriate.

Colombia

The Colombian university, a public institution located in a large city in the northern part of the country, offered both a 5-year undergraduate and 2-year graduate program that led to a primary, middle, and secondary school license to teach English and either French or Portuguese. The undergraduate program included approximately 400 students and involved a year-long internship in an English classroom where the teacher candidate was partnered with a mentor teacher. The graduate program enrolled approximately 50 students per year, was intended for practicing teachers, and had a strong research component, in addition to its attention to pedagogy.

Germany

The German university focused exclusively on the preparation of teachers. Located in the southern part of the country, the public institution had more than 6,500 degree-seeking students; about 1,400 of them were enrolled in world (i.e., English and French) or second (i.e., German as a second language) language programs. The university offered a bachelor's degree (6 semesters) and a one-year Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree for aspiring primary school teachers and a two-year Master of Education degree for aspiring secondary school teachers. In both programs, the students have to choose at least two teaching subjects of which English (TESOL) is one available option. The programs prepared world language teachers to teach in all school types except vocational schools (*Berufsschule*) and high schools for the most academically advanced students (*Gymnasium*).

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Candidates in these programs completed a semester-long internship that involved four days a week spent at a school working under the supervision of a mentor teacher, and one day per week completing coursework on campus.

United States

The U.S. institution, located in a large city on the east coast, enrolled over 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students each year. The public institution offered both a four-year undergraduate and a one-year (three semesters) graduate program for aspiring world language teachers of 17 different languages, ranging from Arabic to Spanish, with an average enrollment of approximately 50 teacher candidates. The programs at this university were tailored to individuals seeking initial licensure. Since coursework in the U.S. programs contained teacher candidates seeking a license to teach a variety of different languages, the common language of instruction was English. Despite the large number of languages served, the majority of candidates were aspiring Chinese or Spanish teachers.

Distinct from the Colombian and German programs, and distinct from many other programs in the U.S., this teacher preparation program was already primarily offered online. Because of the world language teacher shortage in the country, and particularly in this state, the program had transitioned to fully online instruction in 2019 to recruit candidates from a larger geographical area, reduce program costs, and improve accessibility (Kissau, 2020). Also distinct from the other two contexts and due to the teacher shortage, most candidates were residency teachers, meaning that they were already working as full-time teachers of record, and given a provisional license with the requirement that they had to complete all licensure requirements within three years to maintain their employment.

Procedures and Data Collection

During the pandemic, the researchers met on multiple occasions via a web-conferencing platform to plan the study and develop the questionnaire that was compiled in a shared document. The Colombian institution was represented by a faculty member who taught in the world language teacher preparation program, and the German and American institutions each had both a faculty member and administrator contributing to the shared Google Doc. The five participants typed in their individual responses in a table that organized responses by country of origin (see Appendix A).

Data Analysis

Once the responses from the questionnaires were collected, the researchers analyzed them using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). For this type of analysis, responses from each country were grouped by question and an inductive coding scheme was used to identify themes within each case. For example, codes that emerged included modified clinical experiences, use of video conferencing software, and postponement of the semester. One researcher initially coded all cases and compared the codes across the different cases, looking for patterns. These codes were then grouped into larger themes that included (1) variations in readiness for the transition to remote instruction; (2) variations in accommodations; and (3) unanticipated successes. The results of this analysis were shared with the other researchers, who were asked to member check the findings and provide additional clarification when necessary.

Results

The intent of the questionnaire was to better understand how the world language teacher preparation programs responded to the global pandemic to support their teacher candidates. Analysis of the questionnaire generated three common themes: (1) variations in readiness for the transition to remote instruction, (2) variations in accommodations, and (3) unanticipated successes.

Readiness for Transition

Differences between the teacher preparation programs in the three countries are summarized in Table 1 below. As indicated in the table, candidate access to the internet had a pervasive influence on the extent to which the teacher preparation programs were prepared for the pandemic as well as how they responded to it. World language teacher candidates in Germany and the United States largely had consistent access to the internet and devices which permitted a smoother transition. This was not the case in the Colombian context, where programs had to search for more creative solutions to address the technological divide. As a result, teacher educators and their candidates made use of the resources that they had, often working from cellular phones. In the Colombian program, individuals communicated and submitted assignments using a free instant messaging and voice-over-internet protocol service called WhatsApp.

The availability and use of technology-based infrastructure on campus, and the prevalence of online instruction also impacted program readiness. Before the pandemic, most faculty in the Colombian program did not regularly use a learning management system (LMS), such as Moodle, where faculty can house course content for students to access online. In Germany, however, Moodle had been used campus-wide to provide students with course material. During the pandemic the use of this platform expanded greatly, with many instructors and students taking advantage of the interactive options provided by that platform. Faculty and students in Germany also rarely used video-conferencing applications (e.g., Microsoft Teams or WebEx). This lack of familiarity made the transition to online interaction more difficult. For example, when the realities of the pandemic became evident in mid-March 2020, German faculty had only three weeks to prepare for their upcoming semester. Without any pre-existing campus-wide video-conferencing software, the German faculty and administrators had to quickly choose and adopt a tool. On the other hand, the U.S. program was already offered completely online, and thus already had the necessary infrastructure and access to a variety of online resources. Students and instructors were familiar with and consistently used/were using an online learning management system (i.e., Canvas). Most had already been using WebEx to deliver synchronous online instruction, and many courses, prior to the pandemic, required students to view and reflect upon videos of classroom instruction. Given that the U.S. program enrolled many practicing residency teachers from across the state, it also had a system in place for the remote observation of teacher candidates during their internship. That said, prior to the pandemic, remote observation had not been used for all candidates, and as result, some faculty who observed and evaluated world language teacher candidates had to quickly learn not only how to use the new digital platform themselves, but also had to teach their interns how to use it.

Cultural differences in the three countries also shaped program readiness. A world language faculty member in Colombia explained that Caribbean cultures value socializing and in-person interactions. As a result, many Colombian instructors had negative perceptions of online learning that presented additional obstacles when preparing to deliver their programs remotely. On the other hand, while the German world language faculty and candidates were all familiar with technology-based communication resources, they were more accustomed to using them for personal communication outside of work than for classroom application. Due to their existing online course structure, many faculty members in the U.S. teacher preparation program preferred both the convenience and variety of instructional resources that came with online instruction.

Despite the above-mentioned variations in readiness for the transition to fully remote instruction, each program reported challenges to overcome, although they differed in

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scope and magnitude. The Colombian program faced a major concern (i.e., students' lack of internet access) that caused administrators to change the university's vacation schedule and delay the start of the semester by several months to prepare. At the university-level, the German program wrestled with which web-conferencing platform offered the greatest privacy protections. At the programmatic level, faculty debated how master's degree students would collect data for their capstone projects when schools were closed to in-person instruction. The biggest challenge for the U.S. program related to its size and geographical outreach. Because candidates taught in many school districts with varying COVID-19 plans across the state (e.g., 100% remote, hybrid), the university had to exercise flexibility with policies related to student teaching requirements and expectations. Similar to the Colombian program, the U.S. program also modified its academic schedule, but only by two weeks, and not to provide time to prepare, but rather to avoid a possible surge in COVID-19 cases due to an influx of visitors to the city for a major political event.

Table 1. *Factors Influencing Readiness for Transition*

Colombia	Germany	USA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates lacked internet access • Lack of LMS • Negative perception of online learning • Modification of academic calendar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates had access to internet • Familiarity with and access to online instructional resources (e.g., WebEx) • Purchased additional software • Some Master's students struggled to collect data for theses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to internet and online instructional resources (e.g., WebEx) • Online courses already developed • Previous experience with online instruction • Procedure in place for remote observations • Modification of academic calendar • No consistent plan across school districts

Accommodations

Data analysis also revealed similarities and differences in accommodations offered by each program to support students and faculty during the pandemic (see Table 2, next page). With respect to student accommodations, each program allowed for greater flexibility in assignments and program requirements. In Colombia, administrators modified the year-long internship required of all world language teacher candidates so that the first semester focused on the creation of teaching materials and the second on virtual instruction. For example, candidates spent the first semester creating online workshops and lesson materials, and in the second, they implemented these resources, often sending them to their primary and secondary school students via WhatsApp. The creation of online instructional resources, in

lieu of in-person instruction, was also a common practice in Germany, as were video analysis projects. In the U.S., accommodations varied based on types of clinical experiences — early (i.e., clinical experiences before the student teaching internship) versus full-time student teaching. Since most districts did not allow U.S. teacher candidates in

Table 2. University and Program Accommodations

Colombia	Germany	USA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modified year-long internship • Provided online teaching workshops • Reduced number and hours of meetings • Provided greater assessment flexibility • Suspended undergraduate and discounted graduate tuition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modified internship • Provided online teaching workshops • Hired e-learning specialists • Permitted more flexible deadlines • Extended withdrawal windows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modified internship • Provided online teaching workshops • Conducted online rehearsals • Created alternatives for early clinical experiences • Waived performance-based student teaching assessment • Extended withdrawal windows

schools to complete early clinical experiences, faculty created alternative assignments that often involved observing and analyzing videos of instruction from a library of classroom videos or completing a checklist of classroom experiences that could be conducted remotely (e.g., interviewing a classroom teacher about classroom management strategies). The U.S. program, while online in nature, did offer clinical experiences in which candidates met on campus to rehearse teaching strategies and receive instructor feedback. Faculty modified this expectation, instead requiring candidates to videotape rehearsals and submit the video so that instructors could provide feedback. Similarly, for the full-time student teaching internship, instead of university supervisors visiting teacher candidates at their respective schools, U.S. candidates recorded their instruction, whether it be in-person or remote. They submitted the video through a program called GoReact and the university supervisor provided feedback through the digital platform. GoReact allows candidates to upload their instructional videos to an online platform, where candidates can pause the video to add annotated comments to justify instructional moves and decisions and where supervisors can provide candidates with embedded feedback. Following analysis of the video, the supervisor, teacher candidate, and the mentor teacher would meet via Zoom to discuss the candidate’s performance on the video and on other assignments that were housed in a shared Google folder.

In each context, accommodations involved waiving certain requirements. Representatives of both the German and Colombian programs waived the number and length of required meetings. Administrators in the U.S. program also waived the requirement that candidates pass the edTPA before program completion. Developed by the **American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education** and the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE), edTPA is a nationally-validated assessment that measures teacher candidates’ ability to plan, instruct, and assess student learning in a variety of content areas, including world languages (SCALE, 2014). In the state where the U.S. program resides, all teacher candidates must pass edTPA as part of the requirements for earning a permanent teaching license. Waiving this program modification allowed candidates to take the edTPA during the initial three years of their career rather than requiring it before program completion.

Each university made other campus-wide accommodations to support students that were

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not specific to teacher preparation. Each invested substantial time and resources to support faculty’s delivery of online instruction. In Germany, the university hired e-learning specialists, offered online teaching workshops, and gathered faculty monthly for online teaching forums, where they shared strategies. The German and U.S. universities eased requirements related to permissible withdrawals from courses, extending windows so that students could get tuition refunds if they decided to withdraw from study later in the semester. The Colombian university suspended undergraduate and discounted graduate tuition costs, making coursework more affordable during the pandemic.

In addition to the accommodations mentioned above, candidates in the participating world language teacher preparation programs also benefited, in varying degrees, from governmental, and in some cases, corporate accommodations (see Table 3). For example, the Colombian government authorized online instruction and provided funding to support tuition waivers. The federal governments in both Germany and the U.S. offered financial support to universities to help them address many of the financial challenges associated with the pandemic (e.g., decreased revenue, COVID-19 prevention costs) and to provide resources to support their students who were struggling financially. In the U.S., accommodations to support teacher candidates also came from the state. For example, the state where the participating world language teacher program is located waived the requirement that student teaching internships involve a minimum of 16 weeks of in-person instruction, as well as the requirement that applicants have a minimum undergraduate grade point average.

Table 3. *Government and Corporate Accommodations*

Colombia	Germany	USA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government authorized remote instruction at universities • Government provided tuition waivers • Government promoted virtual training sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government provided financial support to universities for equipment purchasing • Government provided financial aid for students • Publishing houses provided free online teaching materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government allowed remote completion of 16-week internship • Government waived some admission requirements (e.g., GPA) • Assessment corporation modified test requirements • Companies reduced costs for online instructional resources • Federal funding provided to support universities and students

Corporate support was another distinguishing accommodation among the programs in the three different countries. There was no mention of any corporate support in the Colombian context. The German program, on the other hand, reported that some publishing houses provided free online teaching materials. Similar corporate accommodations were reported by the U.S. program. The corporate assessment giant Pearson, the company that evaluates world language teacher candidate performance-based assessments (i.e., edTPA), allowed for submission of candidate teaching videos involving online synchronous instruction, which it had not done in the

past. As another example, ATLAS videos reduced subscription costs to allow greater access to its library of online classroom videos. For a subscription fee, ATLAS provides a library of classroom videos of accomplished teachers exhibiting best practices in a variety of content areas, including world languages (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2021).

Unanticipated Successes

While COVID-19 presented the world language teacher preparation programs in all three countries with unprecedented challenges, as illustrated in Table 4, there was an element of optimism and positivity in the data. While all faculty in the participating programs started at different places with respect to their preparation to teach online, the pandemic forced all to enhance their online teaching capabilities. In Colombia, this meant incorporating more online tools into instruction and discovering how some existing resources (e.g., WhatsApp) could be creatively used to support remote instruction. In Germany, the university purchased additional web-based resources (e.g., WebEx) and faculty learned a variety of new instructional strategies that they added to their instructional toolbox. In the United States, world language faculty honed their online teaching strategies and became familiar with new online resources (e.g., GoReact) that allowed them to remotely observe candidates and provide them with feedback. Students in the U.S. who lived far from campus were no longer required to drive multiple hours to campus to participate in lesson rehearsals, but could instead participate via video conferencing programs. Faculty and administrators from all three countries emphasized that following the transition to fully online instruction, both faculty and their teacher candidates became better prepared to teach online.

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Table 4. *Unanticipated Success*

Colombia	Germany	USA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced collaboration • Incorporation of technology into instruction • Online meetings and consultations with faculty and students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced student support via online office hours • Integration of digital content to prepare students to teach online • Boost in new educational approaches and teaching/learning settings • Increased flexibility for faculty and students due to online options • More efficient and frequent online meetings • Increase in international guest speakers via WebEx 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success of online rehearsals replacing in-person labs • Remote conferences less costly and time-consuming • Use of Google Drive folders to share resources and DocuSign • Elimination of barriers and enhanced equity due to temporary removal of admission requirements • Enhanced faculty online instruction • Enhanced preparedness for future transition to online learning

Participants from all three countries also described other elements of their world language teacher preparation programs that they implemented in response to COVID-19 and planned to continue post-pandemic. Meetings conducted using web-conferencing

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tools, like WebEx, were reported by participants from all three countries to increase meeting attendance, offer greater convenience, and enhance student support. A program administrator in Germany emphasized that conducting online office hours via WebEx provided students with increased convenience and instant support without having to wait for weekly office hours.

Participants reported that some changes implemented in response to COVID-19 were more cost-effective and time-saving. One such change was remote teaching observations using GoReact, which the U.S. program reported saved money on transportation and spared supervisors the time required to drive to and from schools. In the U.S., sharing resources and materials via Google Drive folders during web-conferences with university supervisors, teacher candidates, and mentor teachers, and collecting required signatures using DocuSign (i.e., an electronic signature application) was easier than driving to and from schools to meet and collect and disseminate required documentation.

German faculty offered yet another unanticipated success that emerged from the pandemic, also related to web-conferencing. When the pandemic struck, teacher candidates in Germany could no longer participate in international exchanges to enhance their language skills and intercultural competence. In response, faculty began inviting international guest speakers to attend their online classes. German participants reported that teachers and researchers from around the globe participated in their online classes via WebEx, where they modeled their language skills and shared ideas and cultural insights.

Discussion

This study provided documentation of the impact of the global pandemic on three world language teacher preparation programs and how these programs responded to the crisis, making accommodations to support their teacher candidates. Prevented from in-person instruction and in-person clinical experiences in K-12 classrooms, the participating world language programs made a variety of adjustments. They incorporated technology-based resources, modified assignments, waived some requirements, and allowed their candidates to analyze videos of instruction and record and submit their own recorded instruction. Many of the programmatic responses aligned to those described in the existing literature. As described in Barnes et al. (2020), the U.S. program also utilized videos of instruction for candidates' teaching observations. Also aligning with existing literature on how programs responded to the pandemic, both the German and the U.S. programs required candidates to watch videos of teaching to fulfill observation requirements (Barnes et al., 2020; Cho & Clark-Gareca, 2020). Regarding requirements for program completion, all programs made modifications. Like Cho and Clark-Gareca (2020), the U.S. program modified requirements related to when students must pass their major assessment (i.e., edTPA). Similar to Barnes and colleagues (2020), all three programs modified requirements related to the number of hours that candidates must fulfill in K-12 classrooms.

Although many of the findings supported those in the limited existing literature, the current investigation emphasized the role of context of programmatic responses, and put a spotlight on issues of educational equity that heightened the impact of the pandemic on programs and teacher candidates in one country. Teacher candidates in Germany and the U.S. largely had internet access, and their respective programs either already had the necessary infrastructure to commence remote instruction, or were able to quickly purchase and implement it. In Colombia, lack of widespread internet access and limited, web-based instructional infrastructure, at least in the region where the participating program resided, significantly impacted the transition. As was done by candidates in some Chilean programs

(Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020), many candidates prepared homework assignments that were delivered to students, typically using a widely-used messaging application called WhatsApp.

Another contextual variable that certainly shaped each program's responses to the pandemic was the existing shortage of world language teachers in each context (BertelsmannStiftung, 2019; Cassard, 2018; Commission on Language Learning, 2017). Due to this shortage, the U.S. program had already transitioned to online instruction before the pandemic to increase enrollment. Faced with the worst world language teacher shortage on record (ACTFL, 2021), the U.S. program was pressured to support all candidates in the successful completion of their program, despite COVID-19-related barriers. To maintain a continuous supply of new teachers, accommodations came from the institution (e.g., waived assignments), state (e.g., financial support), and corporations (e.g., reduced subscription costs to access online resources). Similarly, the Colombian government went so far as to waive tuition costs for undergraduate students and significantly reduce tuition costs for graduate students, a practice not currently addressed in the existing literature.

Implications and Applications

As the body of research related to programmatic responses to the pandemic grows, language teaching professionals must focus our attention on implications for the future. Despite climbing vaccination rates and declining death rates, emerging variants of the virus and threats of additional outbreaks continue to dampen hopes for a timely and full return to normalcy. As teacher preparation programs, more broadly, and world language teacher preparation programs, more specifically, continue to respond to COVID-19, they should consider the steps to support teacher candidates like those taken by the participating programs. Additionally, findings highlight ways in which world language teacher preparation programs can take better advantage of digital tools to promote teachers' development moving forward (Cárdenas et al., 2021).

This study has also taught us the importance of contingency planning. The world language teacher preparation programs in all three countries were not fully prepared for the crisis. Even though the worst of the pandemic may be behind us, there will be other events in the future that disrupt education. How will universities around the world respond to future disruptions to on campus instruction (e.g., natural disasters, fires, strikes)? On the flip-side, as programs become more technology-based, how will they respond to disruptions to online learning (e.g., hacking, loss of power due to storms)? As was made evident in this study, such planning should not take place in isolation. In the U.S. context, for example, the program would have benefitted from co-developing a clear and consistent contingency plan with its partner school districts for how to respond to disruptions to student teaching internships. In the German context, although the German institution had the resources to purchase web-based infrastructure to support online instruction (e.g., WebEx), prior to the pandemic, it had not discussed with its partners (e.g., the state government) which resource to purchase, and as a result, wasted time at the onset of the pandemic making such decisions. In the Colombian context, while multiple training opportunities were provided to university faculty to support their online instruction, they were not extended to mentor teachers who were assigned to work with teacher candidates. As a result, teacher candidates were often assigned to mentors who struggled to model best practices in online instruction. The program would have benefitted from enlisting mentor teachers in the various training opportunities offered to university faculty for dealing with remote instruction.

Moving forward, teacher preparation programs must continue to make creative use of the technological tools available to promote candidates' development. Tools such as WebEx,

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GoReact, and WhatsApp, are strong supplements to face-to-face instruction for all learners, but particularly for world language learners. They allow for spontaneous interpersonal communication between students, interactions with individuals from the target cultures, and easily accessible recordings of presentational communication. Many individuals who previously may not have been well-versed with such applications may now feel prepared to incorporate these regularly in daily instruction. Moreover, use of video-conferencing programs, as used by all three programs, and as described in existing literature (Cho & Clark-Gareca, 2020; Darling-Hammond & Hylar, 2020), greatly increased students' access to one-on-one support. Rather than requiring students to come to campus for face-to-face office hours, programs should consider continued use of video-conferencing.

Beyond their ability to foster communication in the target language, software that allows for the online submission of videos and instructor feedback (e.g., GoReact), web-based platforms that offer convenient online meetings (e.g., WebEx), shared digital folders (e.g., Google Drive), and digital tools that allow for electronic signatures (e.g., Docusign) were all found in the study to be more cost-effective, convenient, and time-saving practices than what were in place prior to the pandemic. World language teacher preparation programs that traditionally involve (1) observing teacher candidates on-site in K-12 schools; (2) in-person meetings with university faculty, mentor teachers, and teacher candidates; and (3) the collection of signatures should consider these options to reduce costs, increase convenience, and save time.

Limitations

The study's results, while timely and much-needed, should be considered cautiously. Data were collected from only three institutions in three countries, and therefore cannot represent all world language teacher training programs across the globe. Additional research is needed to show how other programs, including those on smaller campuses, at private institutions, and in other countries responded to the many unforeseen challenges presented by the pandemic. Further, the study only included the perspectives of faculty and administrators. The voice of teacher candidates enrolled in the participating programs would have provided deeper insights into how the programs were prepared for the pandemic, how they accommodated candidates, and unanticipated successes.

Conclusion

As reflected in this case study, COVID-19 has had a profound and potentially lasting impact on world language teacher preparation programs. The candidates in the programs in the three participating countries were unable to meet on campus to learn about and practice language teaching strategies and receive instructor feedback on their performance. Even more troublesome, they were prevented from completing all clinical experiences in K-12 world language classrooms, including their year-long internship. In response, the programs transitioned to fully online delivery of all aspects of teacher preparation, provided faculty with professional development, modified assignments, waived requirements, and offered their candidates some financial support. Teacher training programs should consider these accommodations while continuing to respond to the ongoing pandemic and when making contingency plans for other disruptions to program delivery that may come in the future.

Offering a unique contribution to the current body of research, comparisons among the programs revealed interesting differences. The participating programs were not equally prepared for the pandemic, nor were they able to equally respond to it. Results suggested that contextual factors, such as the wealth of the nation where the program is located, the prevalence of online instruction, and the shortage of world language teachers had an influence on both the preparedness of the participating programs and the extent they accommodated their candidates.

While the study investigated how the programs in three countries were able to respond to the pandemic to support successful candidate program completion, it did not examine the extent these programs prepared the aspiring teachers for the realities of K-12 world language classrooms. Future research should explore the impact of the pandemic on both teacher candidate performance and the performance of their future K-12 students. Research that involves candidate perspectives regarding what COVID-19 accommodations were most useful and where they felt most and least prepared following completion of their programs during the pandemic would also offer an interesting contribution to the related literature.

Future research should explore the impact of the pandemic on both teacher candidate performance and the performance of their future K-12 students.

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Appendix A.
Data Collection Table

Question	Country	Response
In what ways did you alter the program as a result of the pandemic?	Colombia	
	Germany	
	U.S.	
In what ways did the structure and requirements of your student teaching experience change as a result of the pandemic?	Colombia	
	Germany	
	U.S.	
In what ways did the delivery of your language methodology courses change as a result of the pandemic?	Colombia	
	Germany	
	U.S.	
In what ways have the content of your courses changed as a result of the pandemic?	Colombia	
	Germany	
	U.S.	
What were the biggest challenges to shifting to a virtual format in the pandemic?	Colombia	
	Germany	
	U.S.	

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What were the biggest successes of shifting to a virtual format? In other words, did changes occur that you think you will keep even post-pandemic?	Colombia	
	Germany	
	U.S.	
How did your institution/college help you in your program's transition to online learning?	Colombia	
	Germany	
	U.S.	
What accommodations were made by the government or other organizations to support your students in the successful completion of their program during the pandemic?	Colombia	
	Germany	
	U.S.	

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