The edTPA Assessment:
Analysis and Lessons of Support for Teacher Candidates

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The edTPA performance assessment came to fruition with the expectation that teacher candidates demonstrate the ability to plan, teach, assess, and reflect on practice. In an era of accreditation, assessment of those skills already take priority in teacher preparation programs, albeit using other tools. Challenges of the edTPA include finding resources; navigating directions that come in the form of lengthy handbooks; managing video equipment; and understanding a plethora of rubrics. We share our conclusions on several approaches for supporting candidates through the process while explicating the problems of succumbing to a nationalized and commercial protocol of evaluation.

Keywords: edTPA, assessment, teacher performance

INTRODUCTION

Despite the anti-assessment climate in our public school system, many states in our nation have added another standardized assessment to the line-up, but this time, pre-service teachers find themselves subjected to the examination. As a fairly recent newcomer on the list of required exams for teacher candidates throughout the United States, the Pearson administered Educative Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA), owned and developed by the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE), now serves as a condition for licensure in the majority of states. According to SCALE, roughly 800 educator preparation programs across 40 states use the performance assessment and 18 states have a policy in place making the assessment required for licensure (SCALE, 2017). The edTPA, currently at $300, requires multiple submissions of evidence on the Pearson website, or through a linked institutional portal, that demonstrate competency in the areas of planning, teaching, assessing, rapport and reflection. Fifteen to eighteen evaluative rubrics, depending on the content area, accompany the edTPA and successful completion requires an in-depth understanding of the rubrics and expectations presented in lengthy handbooks (i.e. the Elementary Education Assessment Handbook is 78 pages). The assessment, as opposed to a simple demonstration of long-standing teaching skills through observation and on-site evaluation of teaching, necessitates learning not only how to capture on video the specific teaching practices, but also a new set of vocabulary that does not always align with the language of the profession heard in local P-12 settings.

As teacher educators recently encumbered with the edTPA assessment, we have reviewed the adoption and implementation of this portfolio-type evaluation and present a practice that has served the teacher candidates profiled in this paper well. The factors by which we evaluated include our initial use of the edTPA, the impact it has on the program, the resistance faculty have toward the assessment, and the ways to support candidates while simultaneously honoring the philosophy that no one single test score or evaluation tool can adequately measure the effectiveness of a candidate or predict future teaching success. In this light, we describe support for candidates with the edTPA while reluctantly upholding the requirements therein to offer no critique on the final submission. For this paper, we offer a model that systematizes the edTPA assessment implementation across programs within educator preparation that requires minimal professor intervention beyond teaching the initial framework. Finally, we offer thoughts for future considerations surrounding this promising practice.

Background

The adoption of the edTPA has garnered support and criticism within various educator preparation programs (EPPs) at local, state, and national levels. Some EPPs have embraced the edTPA as a fair evaluation for assessing candidates' readiness for the profession since it purports to provide an authentic measure of candidates' instructional competence, knowledge, and skills in the classroom. Such activities require an intellectual level of engagement as opposed to standardized tests or multiple-choice written examinations such as the Praxis. For candidates to achieve a passing score, they must show proficiency as determined by their EPP, or state, on their in-depth understanding of varied tasks associated with rubrics in their subject area. To arrive at a score, evaluators use five rubrics measured on a five-point scale in each of the edTPA's core areas which consist of planning (Task 1), instruction (Task 2), and assessment (Task 3.) Thus, a total of 13-18 rubrics, depending on the handbook, are used to assess the portfolio. (Note that some Elementary handbooks add a Task 4 in the area of mathematics which accounts for the difference in the number of rubrics.) Total scores range from 13 to 75 points. Passing scores on the edTPA can vary by individual state and EPP; however, the edTPA recommends that candidates achieve a professional performance score of 42. Average scores from early state adopters ranged from 35-41. The latest edTPA administrative report (SCALE, 2017) revealed that the national overall score in 2016 for candidates was 45, as compared to the average score for those states that mandate the edTPA for licensure, certification, or program completion, which was slightly higher at 45.35. For states without consequential policy, the average score was a 43.

Opposition and criticism stem from the pressures and rigor associated with the completion of the required portfolio not only demanding candidates' mastery but also faculty expertise and time. While rigor has long been a priority in competitive professional education programs, the rigor associated with the edTPA comes from the detail and minutiae required in the evidence candidates must gather and submit. In this sense, we do not refer to the rigor required as a comprehensive measure of competency, but rather the time-consuming tasks in our already extensive programs. The edTPA assessment also represents a significant cost for college students who already accrue debt that has risen to epic proportions. Aside from frustration over a profit-oriented enterprise shaping the language and practice in teacher education programs, faculty need adequate tools and resources to better prepare candidates to complete the assessment.

Rather than a "one-size fits all" approach to test preparation that has been traditionally criticized in K-12 contexts, faculty across states and institutions have adopted various policy recommendations to better prepare their candidates. Thus, the edTPA national guidelines for acceptable candidate support released by SCALE provided faculty, supervisors, and cooperating teachers a fitting place to start with activities that separate appropriate and inappropriate forms of candidate support during the edTPA process (SCALE, 2016). The document, however, lacks detail and examples of these activities including how faculty or supervisors could use a more formalized structure to support candidates' compilation and submission process. Ultimately, candidates need both foundational preparation from the inception of coursework to understanding rubrics as well as explicit instruction of the edTPA's individual tasks.

Candidates also need best practices for videotaping during practicum experiences and using templates effectively to craft a well-organized portfolio for submission.

Conditions surrounding the edTPA outcomes for candidates range from formative or exploratory use to high stake consequences (Miller, Carroll, Jancic, & Markworth, 2015). Some states have adopted cut scores for which candidates must meet to qualify for a teaching license. Such policies elevated the concept of high-stakes assessment to a new level. For potential candidates in these states, a single score from a single assessment determined their ability to obtain a teaching license which lies in opposition to all in how we teach about the assessment of children in our professional programs.

LITERATURE

We foresee a plethora of edTPA based research in the coming years, but for now, the emerging literature seems limited in scope and depth. At the time of this writing, a simple search on a single popular database revealed only 78 articles ranging from the predictive value of the edTPA to those focused on implementation. To support the candidates mentioned in their transition to the edTPA and evaluate the results of integrating the assessment into the programs, we looked for research in the areas of institutional and program impact; faculty resistance to change and readiness; and candidate support. Evidence abounds that the edTPA has redefined the focus of teacher preparation by encroaching upon the foundational core belief that education exists under local control by the public it serves (Attick & Boyles, 2016). This we have experienced firsthand as we worked to integrate the assessment into an already nationally and regionally accredited and recognized educator preparation program.

Institutional and Program Impact

Following the groundbreaking report, A Nation at Risk, (1983) educator preparation, and education generally, became the receivers of much-mislaid blame for the dismal assessment results of our children. There followed the accreditation movement requiring educator preparation programs to produce data on effectiveness and continuous improvement. These organizations included the now-defunct The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) which are currently replaced by Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). The accrediting agencies had a huge impact on programs and required evidence of acceptable teacher candidate preparation. The new addition of the Pearson-based teacher performance assessment now focuses on the candidate, rather than the program, while simultaneously requiring the institutions and programs to expend resources to support candidates (Clark-Gareca, 2015; Davis, Mountjoy, & Palmer, 2016).

Current research pointed to the necessity of restructuring courses and content to implement the edTPA effectively (Clark-Gareca, 2015; Davis, Mountjoy, & Palmer, 2016). In preparation for the edTPA implementation, programs have spent time finding ways to integrate scaffolding activities in already content-heavy courses. For example, foundational courses in lesson planning and strategies have become introductions to the edTPA rubrics and expectations (Barron, 2015). Many programs have restructured their work with clinical practice partners and other institutional departments so that in-service teachers understand the demands of the candidates they agreed to mentor. For example, Barron (2015) reported that the educational technology course now requires instruction in videotaping and uploading related documents that have compromised program content.

Other programs have also had to add technology support as many students have reported issues with video editing (Paine, Beal-Alvarez, & Scheetz, 2016). Workshops, peer-editing, and edTPA seminars were incorporated into programs to ensure candidate preparation for the assessment. In addition, several educators in teacher preparation programs attending the 2017 National edTPA Conference reported program and course changes related to the language used on the assessment. Conference attendees noted their experience teaching in programs that pointed to a disconnect between the edTPA language and professional lexicon used in various regions (Anonymous, personal communication, November 2017).

Changes in the allocation of educator preparation program resources and course content have supported the notion that the mercenary edTPA favored the removal of local accountability for high stakes assessment to the extent that teacher education became focused on an instrument with a very narrow definition of good teaching (Dover & Schultz, 2016). From interfering with learning in the clinical practice (Heil & Berg, 2017) to enabling the "Pearson monopoly" (Attick & Boyles, 2016), the edTPA has infiltrated and shaped institutions and programs in far-reaching ways causing preparation providers to consider how to integrate a high-stakes assessment while balancing mission and a strong educational foundation (Clark-Gareca, 2015).

Faculty Resistance to Change

As a high-stakes assessment, the edTPA has posed unique challenges for teacher educators. Faculty morale and the lack of interest in broadening teacher learning goals within preparation programs were some concerns. Peck, Gallucci, and Sloan (2010) suggested that prescriptive state mandates and regulations created demoralizing effects with a loss to faculty autonomy, whereas non-compliance practices resulted in loss of accreditation. The authors described how teacher education programs often negotiated these dilemmas in response to local expectations and state requirements. Faculty members in several programs have navigated and managed the negative effects of new policies without compromising local commitments or values (Peck, Gallucci, & Sloan, 2010).

However, in other cases, adopting the edTPA as the teacher performance assessment was not an easy transition. The slow process of institutional change (Tagg, 2012) as well as systemic problems that persisted in higher education in terms of institutional change complicated faculty attitudes for adopting new assessment methods. These issues coupled with intrinsic and ingrained values and dynamics that existed within an organization were problematic in creating foundational and cultural change (Williams, Berger, & McClendon, 2005). Past research has also confirmed the occurrence of micro-political issues within higher education as significant barriers for transitioning to new practices (Kezar, 2001). Some of these challenges included education programs that were undergoing a restructuring of faculty and staff into different departments and levels which heavily impacted readiness in terms of the edTPA implementation. Moreover, state-mandated licensure portfolios required faculty to devote considerable time and effort to program revisions with existing assessment protocols rather than replacing them with the edTPA. Other significant micro-political issues included faculty members with dissenting views of the philosophy of the edTPA and concerns with Pearson as an operational partner (Lys et al., 2014).

Apart from these informed issues based on large-scale implementation research of the edTPA, anecdotal evidence has also been collected from interactions with various institutions at the state level to support several micro-political issues. These included the mismatch of senior faculty and newer faculty who brought varied knowledge, skills, and dispositions regarding the edTPA. Lack of faculty knowledge and understanding of the edTPA as a valid and reliable measure has remained critical conversations with programs seeking local, regional, and national accreditation. Different views and expectations for candidate preparation have exacerbated problems among faculty as well as readiness between experienced and newer faculty. Some newer faculty members who played a role during the roll-out process of the edTPA at their institution, from doctoral program matriculation before transitioning as a faculty member, were early adopters and better prepared as compared to their faculty counterparts. Moreover, these faculty members assisted their previous institutions in creating policies or procedures of the edTPA, making them more adept to change. (Anonymous, personal communication at edTPA National Conference, November 2017).

Effective change involves a community of stakeholders ready to adopt new practices while simultaneously shifting attitudes from the self to a collective understanding of the practicality and need for change (Schien, 1990; Kezar & Eckel, 2002). Faculty members must be willing to use the edTPA as the assessment model with a clear conceptual understanding of the process. As faculty invest in developing candidates' performance and evidence collection for the edTPA, it is imperative that institutions provide leadership for appropriate implementation. Ginsberg and Bernstein (2011) noted that the leader for any institutional change effort should possess a clear vision and articulate that vision to lead

the organization successfully. Leaders are supported by key roles from change agents who possess passion and content expertise, whereas facilitators should possess institutional clout. Lys, L'Esperance, Dobson, & Bullock (2014) recommended a distributed model of leadership that leverages the role of leader, change agents, and facilitators to influence and enact change. A positive school culture and climate must exist. Often, the leader develops the organizational structure communicating clearly to change agents and facilitators with realistic mechanisms in place for proper faculty buy-in, support, and training.

Candidate Support

With the bulk of teacher preparation situated in the clinical practice experience, (NCATE Blue Ribbon Report, 2010) the clinical placement classroom no longer supports gradual and incremental development, but now requires immediate and consequential activities for edTPA success (Dover & Schultz, 2015). Candidate support during the edTPA process remains critical as many of these developing educators reported feeling overwhelmed with the task (Paine, Beal-Alvarez, & Scheetz, 2016) which occurred during the teaching portion of the educator preparation programs. Heil and Berg (2017) discovered that candidates felt unsupported during the writing of the edTPA tasks and pointed to the ethical limitations as a possible cause. In addition to feeling lost in the process, candidates have also reported fear associated with the edTPA (Clark-Garcia, 2015) which pointed to the need for scaffolding throughout the process from revising curriculum to providing workshops (Barron, 2015).

Support in the areas of both academic language and the language of the edTPA has appeared as topics of significant frustration for candidates. Notwithstanding research questioning the efficacy of teaching and measuring academic language acquisition occurring in classrooms (Krashen & Brown, 2007) this concept remains central to the edTPA. Not only does the concept of academic language reign within the assessment but candidates must also now receive explicit instruction in this area (Lim, Moseley, Son, & Seelke 2014; Davis, Mountjoy & Palmer, 2016). Furthermore, Kuranishi and Oyler (2017) questioned the priority in teaching academic language over more salient content by reducing the curriculum to the minimum. This created formulaic approaches to teaching rather than instilling in candidates creative pedagogies for deeper concepts such as critical thinking and social justice. In addition to teaching *about* academic language, education preparation providers must teach the language of the edTPA since candidates found the prompts and handbooks confusing (Heil & Berg, 2017). As evident in the work of Kuranishi and Oyler (2017), candidates must understand a language that has transitioned to the national language of the edTPA as opposed to regional practices and accompanying language recommended in the framework and principles provided in the National Center of Universal Design and Learning (2017).

While educators have long eschewed the practices of "teaching to the test," educator preparation programs have found themselves in the position of needing to institute structures such as workshops, introductory courses, and seminars to specifically address the demands of the edTPA through explicit instruction on how to address rubric prompts (Barron, 2015; Paine, Beal-Alvarez, & Scheetz, 2016) in contrast to teaching about methods, learning theory, and high leverage practices. Dover and Schultz (2015) asserted that the edTPA structure and process required "teaching to the test" through practicing elements of the assessment. The demands for support through the edTPA process have moved beyond the university classroom emerging as websites devoted to the successful completion of the edTPA, online examples, YouTube videos, and Pinterest ideas, (Dover & Schultz, 2015) elevating educational experiences as consumer activities rather than authentic teaching and learning (Attick & Boyles, 2016).

ONE EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM'S (EPP) APPROACH

In the process of enhancing candidates' experience and success for the edTPA assessment, SCALE gathers stakeholders from all educational levels including administrators, state education agencies, higher education faculty, and supervisors into regional and national conferences. These meetings help to disseminate information regarding the edTPA assessment, provide opportunities to collaborate on varied program models, or discuss issues related to sustainability. From our participation in the national edTPA

implementation conference, we concluded that stakeholders closest to preparing candidates for the edTPA still lean on communities of shared practice and resources to strengthen candidates' preparation and performance. We engaged in these communities of practice to determine the best framework to support candidates for the edTPA. Thus, in this paper, we present a promising practice currently in place at one institution related to its implementation of the edTPA. In the following section, we explain this practice further and outline key considerations from a developed model through collaborative work across departmental and program faculty.

Similar to many EPPs, the institution highlighted prepares teacher candidates by way of several unique programs and formats. In this paper, we present the experiences of the traditional undergraduate program and the 10-month Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program. These practices have been successfully implemented since 2015 at a regional and national accredited institution located in the Pacific Northwest.

Given the existing focus in preparing candidates for planning, teaching, and assessing, the programs highlighted have moved to implement supports that specifically address these demands as written in the edTPA handbook. Due to the varied formats in undergraduate and graduate programs, the structure for edTPA support may naturally differ slightly from one another, however; all programs have targeted learning outcomes aligned to the edTPA rubrics using signature course assignments to familiarize candidates with the edTPA performance tasks. In addition, boot-camp sessions are scheduled for candidates the semester preceding their portfolio submission to provide additional support from faculty or supervisors while reviewing the edTPA content. Moreover, candidates are placed in small groups to reap the benefits of peer encouragement, support, and editing. Table 1 following outlines the alignment of the edTPA content covered with the goals and outcomes of the boot-camp sessions across the undergraduate and graduate programs.

TABLE 1
ALIGNMENT OF edTPA TASKS WITH BOOT-CAMP SESSIONS

Boot-camp Sessions	edTPA Content Covered	Goals and Outcomes
Undergrad Sessions (2 session/two hours each) Graduate (1 session/four hours each)	Task 1: Planning	• Analyze edTPA rubrics 1-5 and develop checklists • Develop unit plan with student data • Identify focus students • Develop central focus for learning segment • Develop 3-5 consecutive lessons that relate to central focus • Identify and select key instructional materials and assessments that align to the lessons • Record yourself teaching all the lessons in the segment Review academic language definitions
Undergrad Sessions (2 sessions/two hours each) Graduate Session (1 session/four hours each)	Task 2: Instruction	• Analyze rubrics 6-10 and develop checklists • Review video expectations and guidelines • Review recordings (if you have taught lessons) • Extract footage from videos that show how teaching facilitates student learning aligned to central focus (needs to be continuous and unedited) • Finalize to 2 video clips (no more than 20 minutes total) • Include lesson number(s) in video clip file names • Reflect and analyze your teaching and your students' learning in the video clips by responding to commentary prompts • Analyze a teaching lesson and score using the checklists
Undergrad Sessions (2 sessions/two hours each) Graduate Session (1 session/four hours each)	Task 3: Assessment Literacy	• Analyze rubrics 11-14 and develop checklists • Analyze student learning based on the one evaluative criteria selected • Describe how the evaluative criteria used are aligned with the objectives of the learning segment • Describe and analyze evidence in how students succeeded in academic language • Describe in detail next steps and recommendations based on data analyzed from student work including specifics from the three focus students
Undergrad Sessions (2 sessions/two hours each) Graduate Session (1 session/four hours each)	Task 4: Assessment Math	• Analyze rubrics 15-18 and develop checklists • Analyze student learning based on the one evaluative criteria selected • Describe how the evaluative criteria used are aligned with the objectives of the learning segment • Reteach the lesson and re-assess using a second evaluative criteria • Describe in detail next steps and recommendations based on data analyzed from student work including specifics from the three focus students

Undergraduate Teacher Education

In phase one of the program, candidates are given the handbook appropriate to their desired level of licensure, examine its content, and discuss clarity of expectations throughout the edTPA process. Candidates in this phase also have an observational practicum experience that is aligned to a required foundation course in education. The course includes content on environmental conditions, diversity implications, and theoretical principles that influence how students learn. Thus, a signature assignment was designed to measure components of the rubric along a similar 5-point scale so that candidates are introduced to the academic language of the corresponding edTPA rubric.

In phase two of the program, candidates have opportunities to practice more related content from the edTPA with course assignments that align with edTPA tasks. Courses in this phase embed the edTPA rubrics more strategically than in phase one and candidates are measured according to scores and proficiency on assignments.

Finally, in phase three of the program, candidates participate in practicum experiences which require them to implement lessons related to their edTPA. Boot-camp sessions are offered for in-depth instruction on each edTPA task. This promotes candidates' understanding while helping them make connections for student analysis and feedback; improves their interpretations with quantitative and qualitative evidence; increases their critical thinking about instruction; and develops authentic conversations about teaching and learning with students which are associated in Tasks 3 and 4.

Graduate Teacher Education

As opposed to a multi-phased undergraduate program, candidates in the 10-month Masters of Teaching (MAT) program proceed through course work at a rapid pace starting in the summer. In the first foundational course in June, candidates receive an introduction to the edTPA in broad terms. In a subsequent course in July, they learn to write a context section similar to that in the edTPA, while studying student learning as related to diversity. The course on structures for teaching and learning follows in August with an emphasis on lesson plans and teaching strategies. In this particular course, candidates receive the edTPA handbooks with the expectation that they are read thoroughly and marked up with questions. Then, in September, candidates attend weekly and successional boot-camp sessions, each lasting four hours long, designed to examine the tasks individually as well as analyzing the accompanying rubrics. This course represents 16 hours of face-to-face instruction on how to meet the requirements of the assessment. Students work in small groups to unpack each rubric and faculty provide instruction and hints on topics related to language demands and translating the language of the edTPA.

The candidates begin planning for the edTPA and discuss possible learning segments with the cooperating teacher following the boot-camps. Given that some partnership districts have a tightly scripted and scheduled curriculum that they must follow, all cooperating teachers receive a letter from faculty requesting their support in allowing the candidate to teach three literacy lessons sometime during the school day and it may be outside the regular literacy block. We found that the scripted lessons do not lend themselves to successful edTPA completion. Hence, clear communication with school district partners regarding the edTPA process is critical and necessary. Candidates must also gather permission slips from parents for video recording which grows increasingly more difficult as parents in some communities forbid digital images of their children. Candidates complete the teaching of the learning segment in January in preparation for a February submission.

NEW WISDOM WITH IMPLEMENTATION AND EXPERIENCE

In our attempt to implement the edTPA assessment with fidelity, we learned a variety of useful practices to include specific courses, signature assessments, videotaping, boot-camp style workshops, and rubric analysis to help candidates examine expectations for performances evaluated by the edTPA with opportunities for candidates to demonstrate an understanding of those expectations. We explore these practices further and provide recommendations from our experience working with teacher candidates across the programs.

Course Infrastructure

We learned that coursework across programs should help candidates examine the expectations in the edTPA with formative opportunities to practice those expectations. Programs should evaluate their courses and determine when and where introductory edTPA content are introduced, practiced, and mastered given that teaching and learning is a developmental process (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Candidates need access to handbooks earlier rather than later so that they have adequate time to review criteria and expectations while gaining confidence and efficacy in knowledge and skills. We have found that the integration of the handbook requirements within foundational instructional and assessment courses made the tasks more accessible for candidates; and therefore, some programs might need to let go of some course content to work in time for edTPA instruction. This is where faculty can become quite reluctant and for good reason. The edTPA can control the curriculum and time. Regardless of the individual choice that an EPP makes for the arrangement of the coursework, we believe a course(s) or seminar must exist to function as a form of edTPA preparation in which faculty specifically teach related edTPA content, rubric expectations, and academic language. This type of course is essential so that candidates review applicable edTPA handbook(s), rubrics, templates, and successful examples of past portfolios as well as seek additional information or clarity of the edTPA process and its requirements.

Signature Assessments

Many maintain that education programs should develop course-embedded signature assignments aligned to learning outcomes; hence, the edTPA portfolio should be used as one measurement for program assessment. If used, these signature assessments should be purposefully created by collaborative faculty to collect evidence for specific learning outcomes (Miller et al., 2015). For edTPA purposes, these assessments and assignments need to facilitate learning outcomes identified in the core tasks of the handbook. Ideally, assignments work best when adopting similar edTPA language.

Both the undergraduate and graduate programs profiled in this paper have used signature course assessments to scaffold the edTPA and to measure course outcomes for accreditation and program improvement. We have found that signature assessments were quite useful for course planning and measuring student outcomes, but not necessarily helpful for the edTPA completion. They were all designed to support the edTPA, but with the detail and specific language used in rubrics, the boot-camps remained essential and paramount. For example, candidates completed a signature assessment in which they detailed research and learning theories, but that did not adequately prepare them to justify their educational choices through research or theory when writing up responses to the edTPA prompts. Additionally, when it comes to student learning, candidates may excel at finding common errors in student work and even provide excellent feedback, but the analysis may not live up to a scorer's standards. Therefore, we see enough subjectivity in the rubrics to justify our decisions on the explicit teaching of vocabulary required to earn top scores.

Videotaping

All programs would benefit from a protocol and system in preparing candidates for the edTPA required videotaping. While technology gadgets are commonplace amongst the candidates, we did not assume that candidates were tech-savvy with the correct information for completing this requirement on the edTPA. Candidates need an understanding of logistical matters such as lesson quality and quantity; camera positioning, location, and proximity to students with a focus on student interaction; sending and receiving parental permission forms early; and recording, editing, and compressing files. The varied programs had courses that embedded a videotape assignment to capture similar outcomes from the edTPA and to equip candidates with the requirements of their portfolio. We have found it tremendously valuable that candidates practiced a videotape session for a course assignment and experience first-hand the entire process from saving to uploading their video before to their actual edTPA submission.

Other recommendations for programs include having adequate and up-to-date equipment such as a set of I-pads, I-phones, cameras, mounting kits, secure disk (SD) memory cards, etc. for candidates to use with systematic check-in and out procedures. We foresee the video requirement of the edTPA growing

even more frustrating for candidates as the parents of P-12 students become increasingly conscious of their children's digital footprint and the possibility of a video made available for public access. Programs must clearly communicate with candidates and the school districts about the use of classroom video while planning for possible parent dissent.

edTPA Boot-camps

In both programs, candidates are expected to attend boot-camp sessions early in their practicum experience. Depending on the program, a total of four or eight boot-camp sessions are provided and each session lasts either two or four hours long. These boot-camp sessions provide in-depth instruction of the individual tasks based on the handbook. Candidates in both programs reported that the boot-camps provided invaluable support during the stressful time of planning and submitting the edTPA assessment.

In the undergraduate program, candidates were assigned to small groups to attend eight boot-camp sessions. Candidates relied on their small group of peers for ongoing support both during and outside the boot-camp sessions. Some groups utilized individual peer expertise for advice, mentorship, and re-teaching of tasks where appropriate. Candidates reported that the boot-camp sessions deepened their understanding of the tasks as well as fostered better lesson preparation and student engagement.

The graduate candidates attended four weekly boot-camp sessions that included an online component outlining specific timelines for completing each task as well as practicum activities to help with the completion of the edTPA. The online part of the boot-camp included due dates for a practice video lesson so that candidates are comfortable working the equipment as well as capturing specific elements required on the video for the edTPA. Candidates are expected to write lessons and teach the learning segment before the winter break. When candidates return in January for their weekly course, each session included blocks of time for candidates to work in small groups to review their responses to the prompts of the rubrics. Candidates are expected to find evidence in each other's work to support their assessment of each other. Faculty were present to answer questions about rubrics and requirements; however, they did not review the drafts or provide feedback on submission materials. By the second week of February, all candidates were required to submit their portfolios directly to Pearson.

Regardless of format or program, we have found that the most critical instruction of the edTPA occurred predominantly in the boot-camp sessions. Faculty across programs collaborated on specific content that is emphasized in the sessions with the alignment of what was covered during each session for the edTPA tasks.

Rubric Analysis

Faculty and university supervisors must make time to examine the language, structure, and progression of the edTPA rubrics during the candidates' program. One highly effective way to examine rubrics includes candidates reading them thoroughly across the individual tasks, highlighting elements, and discussing differences among the five levels. Candidates should articulate how rubrics differ across the tasks including variances when they plan for context, content, evaluative criteria, student feedback, and reflection.

Across the programs, candidates were taught to closely analyze the rubrics by highlighting the language in each rubric and rewriting the expectations for each level. Candidates also discussed prompts with peers and faculty members who assisted in clarifying any ambiguous language. In its end, candidates reported how rubric analysis eased frustration of unfamiliar language as well as improved academic writing of the varied tasks required from specific handbooks. Table 2 provides an example of how candidates were taught to unpack the language of the edTPA rubric while creating a checklist for easier navigation.

TABLE 2
EXAMPLES OF RUBRIC CHECKLIST FROM TASK 1 OF THE ELEMENTARY HANDBOOK

edTPA Rubric Number	Checklist of Elements
1: Planning for Literacy Learning	• Plans have no content inaccuracies, AND (level 1) • Standards, objectives, learning tasks and materials are aligned with each other, AND (level 2) • Plans build on each other that include essential literacy strategy (either reading comprehension or writing composition), AND (level 3) • Plans have a connection of the strategy to related skills (i.e. fluency, vocab), AND (level 4) • Plans explain some connection to reading and writing with ways that students apply the literacy strategy (level 5)
2: Planning to Support Varied Student Learning Needs	• Plans are tied to learning objectives and central focus, AND (level 1) • Address the needs of specific individuals or groups with supports, AND (level 2) • Contain specific strategies to support & address possible misconceptions and developmental levels, AND (level 3) • Attend to instructional requirements in IEPs and 504 plans, AND (level 4) • Show evidence of planned supports (level 5)

CONCLUSION

Candidates have reported that the model of boot-camps and small group collaboration with course colleagues made a significant difference for them in terms of understanding the requirements and making sure all elements of the rubrics were addressed in the prompt answers. Data from this last non-consequential year from 2017 revealed that the candidates in the programs mentioned scored an average of 52.38 on the assessment. We do believe the boot-camps were essential in the preparation experience of the candidates as we look forward to increased scores as the assessment becomes required for licensure.

Furthermore, candidates overwhelmingly reported a need for class time dedicated to writing together due to a full-time teaching schedule in addition to coursework. The model for the graduate program also relieved faculty in the program for spending precious hours reading portfolio drafts and negotiating the guidelines of ethical feedback. Given that Pearson pays scorers approximately 3 hours per portfolio, a small cohort of only 10 - 12 candidates represented a full week of work doing only reading of student submissions without time for the myriad of responsibilities that come with the professorial role. Again, this model requires faculty and programs to backward plan for the edTPA, not only for the course but the entire semester. Time devoted to the edTPA completion mandates meticulous planning for other content to support the development of well-rounded and classroom-ready teachers.

Unmistakably, the edTPA has and does impact education preparation dramatically and not by disrupting any assumed mediocrity, but by commandeering the time and topics that distinguish locality and programs. Having read our implementation process and the resulting changes to courses and the need for resources, the reluctance of faculty to embrace the edTPA is understandable. Besides the appropriation of time and curriculum to the favor of bewildering handbooks, the profession's view of using a specific

consequential assessment as a measure of competence at one place and point in time contradicts what we espouse as educators.

Finally, we encourage the ongoing conversation around the continued use of the edTPA as a hoop, (we mean assessment) that candidates must pass prior to licensure. Sato (2014), while disclosing her bias, made a strong case for the validity of the edTPA as an assessment of critical skills in the area of teaching. Yes, planning, instruction, and assessment indeed represent core competencies required of all teachers, but the validity of this single assessment cannot serve as the sole purpose for reliance on a high stakes and commercialized product to the exclusion and expense of an EPP's choice in using their measures of these skills.

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