Chapter 77

edTPA Local Evaluation:
Engaging Our Partners, Improving Our Practice

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ABSTRACT

Numerous teacher preparation programs now require teacher candidates to complete teacher performance assessments (TPA) to determine their readiness for the classroom. One of the newest assessments, edTPA, has been used by over 700 teacher preparation programs, with 12 states setting policy tying the successful completion of edTPA to teacher licensure. While edTPA is considered an educative tool for teacher candidates, it has also become a tool for teacher preparation programs to improve and change, as well as engage with their district partners on teacher practice. This chapter will describe one university's story of edTPA local evaluation, including its decisions to use local mentor teachers and local National Board Certified (NBC) teachers to assess the edTPA. It will reveal how bringing partners together through local evaluation can create a common language for teacher preparation, empower actors (mentors, supervisors) to share their voices with university faculty, and help bridge the gap between a pre-service candidate's student teaching year and the first year of induction.

INTRODUCTION

For decades, education policy makers and teacher educators have worked to find a viable manner to determine if a pre-service teacher leaving a teacher preparation program is truly ready for the classroom. In a Center for American Progress report, Linda Darling Hammond (2010) called for a continuum of teacher performance assessments (TPA) that would culminate with veteran teachers striving for National Board Certification.

Around the same time as Darling Hammond's report, teacher educators at the Stanford Center for Assessment Learning and Equity (SCALE) were working on a nationally available TPA for pre-service teachers modeled after the National Board and the Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT)[1]. That assessment would eventually become *edTPA*. *edTPA* is currently being used in 41 states, with more than 700 teacher preparation programs participating in the assessment. Twelve states have policy connecting the successful completion of *edTPA* (or other teacher performance assessments) to teacher licensure and/or program review. In these cases,, the assessments are officially scored by a national scoring pool in a platform provided by edTPA's operational partner - Pearson[2]. Teacher preparation programs in non-mandated states that participate in *edTPA* must decide not only the role *edTPA* will play in their programs (i.e., for program improvement, for assessing candidate performance), but also the logistics behind assessing each *edTPA*. Additionally, programs in non-mandated states may want to try out *edTPA* with their pre-service teachers without having their candidates spend the $300 for official scoring. Local evaluation materials were developed by SCALE to serve this purpose.

The University of Maryland (UMD) is one of those programs. UMD first piloted *edTPA* in 2010 with four students and now requires each teacher candidate (approximately 300 per year) to successfully complete *edTPA*. At UMD, *edTPA* satisfies a state requirement that all teacher candidates in approved teacher preparation programs successfully complete a teaching portfolio. As UMD phased in *edTPA* and as the number of participants grew, teacher preparation faculty and administrators recognized the need to create a robust local evaluation process. Furthermore, UMD envisioned local evaluation as a potential pathway to connect the university with its local districts around teacher preparation.

This chapter will describe one university's local evaluation story. It will first share existing literature discussing how local evaluation at some institutions led to positive changes within teacher preparation programs. It will then detail the steps UMD took in creating its local evaluation protocol, including some of the decisions the university made in reaching out to its partners as evaluators. The next section will offer evidence from some local evaluators on how participating in the process has impacted their own practice. Finally, it will offer some possibilities for local evaluation and how the process can become a tool to support teachers in their induction year.

LITERATURE REVIEW

While many scholars have studied the impact teacher performance assessments such National Board Certification, the InTASC portfolio/BEST, PACT or *edTPA* have had on pre-service or practicing teachers (Tracz, S.M, Sienty, S, Todorov, K, Snyder, J, Takashima, B, Pensabene, R, Olson, B, Pauls, L & Sork, J, 1995; Pechone and Stansbury, 1996; Chung, 2005; Pecheone and Chung, 2006; Chung, 2008, Newton, 2010; Peck, Singer-Gabella, Sloan & Lin, 2014), others have begun to note how the data gained from TPA evaluation could impact teacher preparation programs and their partners. This section touches on some of that literature and the role TPA have already played at some universities.

TPA as a Common Language

Oftentimes in discussions, educators may state the same ideas but do so in different ways. Assessments like *edTPA* help bring different stakeholders together in conversation around common practices. Peck, Singer-Gabella, Sloan and Lin (2014) write that for many years teacher preparation programs have been

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