Chapter 50
Supporting Teacher Education Candidates through the edTPA Process

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ABSTRACT

edTPA is a performance-based, content-specific assessment process designed by educators to determine whether new teachers are ready for the job. This chapter provides a thorough description of how two departments at the University of North Carolina implemented edTPA in teacher licensure programs and how candidates were supported through the process. Elementary, Middle Grades, Secondary, Teaching English as a Second Language, and Foreign Language Education programs are described and implementation details of edTPA are provided. Formative supports for each program are presented. Finally, the chapter discusses future directions and next steps.

INTRODUCTION to edTPA

edTPA is a performance-based assessment that is used to determine the readiness of teacher candidates to enter the teaching profession. It was developed by faculty at Stanford University and staff at the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning and Equity (SCALE). edTPA consists of three tasks completed by teacher candidates. These include: Task 1, *Planning for Instruction and Assessment*, Task 2, *Instructing and Engaging Students in Learning*, and Task 3, *Assessing Student Learning*. Task 1 requires teacher candidates to identify a learning segment that they will plan, teach, and assess student learning. This task consists of the development of three to five daily lesson plans, all instructional materials and assessments that comprise the learning segment, and a written commentary that provides rationale for instructional decision making. Task 2 examines a candidate's teaching practice. This task requires teacher candidates to submit one to two videos that are 10 to 20 minutes in length, depending on the licensure area and a

written commentary that requires them to critically analyze their teaching practice and instructional decisions. Task 3 has teacher candidates select three student works samples and provide feedback for each. They must submit these three student work samples, along with a written commentary in which they discuss errors of the three students and the whole class and plans to support students in future instruction.

The use of edTPA in teacher licensure programs in the United States is expanding as the process gains validity and reliability in determining the whether or not new teachers are ready to enter the classroom. Presently, 35 states and the District of Columbia utilize edTPA as a performance-based assessment at different levels ("About edTPA", 2014). Many states require teacher candidates to pass a performance-based assessment like edTPA to be rewarded licensure. edTPA is the first standards-based assessment to become nationally available, and according to data from field tests, is a rigorous, valid and reliable assessment ("About edTPA", 2014).

BACKGROUND

Three years ago, teacher education programs in North Carolina were offered the opportunity to participate in a pilot of edTPA. Seven institutions decided to take this opportunity to learn more about edTPA and how it would work in their teacher education programs. By participating in the pilot, institutions received support from the state department of public instruction. The University of North Carolina at Charlotte was one of seven institutions that made the decision to become involved in the pilot of edTPA. UNC Charlotte was interested in learning more about this research-based, performance-based assessment and was looking to implement such an assessment to determine readiness of its teacher candidates. Other appealing features of edTPA included its direct alignment with state and national standards, including Common Core State Standards and Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium as well as its reliability and validity.

While this was a pilot, Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) had flexibility in how they would integrate edTPA and how they would offer various edTPA supports throughout their academic programs. Initially faculty began planning for integration of edTPA tasks in early coursework to introduce teacher candidates to the edTPA process early in their academic programs.

Timeline of Implementation

Planning for edTPA began three years ago. Faculty began reviewing existing coursework to determine what types of formative supports could be offered and in which courses these formative assessments could be embedded. During the 2013-2014 academic year, several programs, including Elementary Education, Middle Grades Education, Secondary Education, Foreign Language Education, and Teaching English as a second began implementing edTPA formative supports into early coursework. This provided an opportunity to determine what worked and what did not so that any revisions to formative supports could be made. In Fall 2014, Elementary Education, Middle Grades Education, Secondary Education, Foreign Language Education, and Teaching English as a Second Language candidates completed a full edTPA portfolio during the student teaching semester. During Spring 2015, other programs such as Special Education and Early Childhood completed a full edTPA portfolio during the student teaching semester. As of Fall 2015, all teacher licensure program candidates complete an edTPA portfolio and submit it to Pearson for external scoring.

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