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Ethical, Legal, and Pedagogical Issues in edTPA

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to address ethical, legal, and pedagogical issues in the use of edTPA, a mandatory and consequential assessment required for teacher candidates in the United States (and elsewhere for consideration). We discuss issues such as the cost of edTPA, implicit bias in scoring teacher candidates, marginalization in K-12 settings, property rights, privacy, and disconnections between the real classroom and what teacher candidates are asked to do in edTPA. At the end of the paper we make three suggestions. First, edTPA is not useful as a high-stakes assessment. Second, private publishers should play an assistive role, not a dominant role, in teacher education. Third, educators should examine the rubrics of edTPA within and across disciplines to reduce inappropriate practices.



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Beginning with the 1983 report *A Nation at Risk*, the United States has subscribed to a narrative that public schools are failing and in need of reform (Au & Hollar, 2016; Metha, 2015; Russell & Davidson Devall, 2016). This discourse of school failure, perpetuated in the *Every Student Succeeds Act*, continues to buoy distrust in public schools' ability to prepare students adequately (Ravitch, 2012). Warnings of low graduation rates, failing test scores, incompetent teachers, and dangerous school climates create a culture ripe for education reform (Timar & Maxwell-Jolly, 2012). Along with this discourse are political assaults, such as the creation of charter schools, vouchers, and alternative pathways to become a certified teacher—all designed to undermine education (Ravitch, 2016). This consistent reinforcement of the longstanding belief that schools are a failing venture and need to be privatized contributes to what Fashing-Varner and his colleagues (2014) refer to as the *educational reform industrial-complex*—an opportunity for corporate profit anchored in school failure. Codified by *No Child Left Behind*, “U.S. education is now a \$1 trillion enterprise, funded in large part by public money, with billions in services and products being outsourced, and with political lobbying groups funding education looking to increase outsourcing” (Kumashiro, 2012 as cited in O'Brien & Robb, 2017). This neoliberalized approach to education improvement gives private market industries tremendous influence and renders them a prominent lever in directing reform (Au & Hollar, 2016; Croft et al., 2016; Dover & Schulz, 2016; Reagan, Schram, McCurdy, Chang, & Evans, 2016). It also makes them more powerful than those in the education field—professors, teachers, and students. As Au (2013) points out, such an approach “falls right in line with the privatization of public education through the increased contracting of services to private industry” (p. 26). Although it is state governments which decide their teacher candidates' edTPA passing scores, because edTPA scorers are selected, hired, trained, and paid by Pearson, the use of edTPA as a gatekeeper of who enters the teaching profession still gives power to the private, for-profit market vested in money making as a bottom line. To support the enterprise of public education as imagined in the United States, the bottom line of reform must focus on the education of all children and the preparation of teachers to rise to that task. edTPA does the opposite, ultimately limiting who enters the profession, undermining free public education, and creating a host of ethical, legal, and pedagogical concerns.

edTPA, published by Pearson, is an assessment tool designed by the Stanford Center for Learning, Assessment, and Equity (SCALE). It derives its legitimacy from longstanding teacher performance assessments such as those developed in California and those used for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (Meuwissen & Choppin, 2015). The original intent of edTPA was to assess pre-service teachers' performance and evaluate candidates' readiness by ensuring they have a base set of skills that would adequately support their success in the profession (Russell & Davidson Devall, 2016). At present, 18 states make edTPA mandatory for all of their universities with teacher education programs. This for-profit approach to ensuring teacher quality is fraught with challenges that extend beyond the obvious—empowerment of private enterprises to decide who can become certified teachers (e.g., Au 2013, Cochran-Smith, Piazza, & Power, 2013; Croft, Roberts, & Stenhouse, 2016; Greenblatt, 2016; Margolis & Doring, 2013; Bergstrand Othman, Robinson, & Molfenter, 2017; Parkes & Powell, 2015). Thus, the purpose of this paper is to examine ethical, legal, and pedagogical issues in the use of edTPA. While these concerns have been raised by other scholars, we found no article, to date, that uses these lenses to discuss the detriment of education reform driven by for-profit corporations. At the end of the paper we make three suggestions. First, edTPA can be used as a learning progression assessment, but not a high-stakes assessment. Second, for-profit organizations could play an

assistive role, but should play not a dominant one, in teacher education. Third, educators should examine the rubrics of edTPA within and across disciplines to reduce inappropriate practices.

Ethical Issues in edTPA

Categories of ethical concerns presented the greatest types of critiques found in the review of the literature. The discourse in the literature included the topics of financial burdens, scoring and feedback, flight from schools that serve underrepresented or traditionally marginalized populations, gatekeeping, the creation of artificial learning environments with a narrowed focus on what quality teaching means, essentially charging students twice for portions of their degree, and the usurping of university faculty's job and authority over teacher quality and development (e.g., Bartlett, Otis-Wilborn, & Peters, 2017; Chiu, 2014; Coloma, 2015; Croft, et al., 2016; Greenblatt, 2016; Greenblatt & O'Hara, 2015; O'Brien & Robb, 2017). We view these issues as not merely as ethical dilemmas created by corporate for-profit gain, but rather as promoting a systematic dismantling of the equity we strive to create in the education field.

As initially conceived, edTPA was created to serve both as a formative and summative assessment (Meuwissen & Choppin, 2015; Reagan et al., 2016) and is labeled as "an assessment of, for, and as learning" in document entitled *Educative Uses of Candidate edTPA materials* (www.edTPA). In essence, this implies that students should be able to enhance their teaching skills by participating in the edTPA process. However, as it is currently executed with only numerical scoring, the assessment is not instructive (Reagan et al., 2016). This possibility, on its own, may not be enough to give pause to educator preparation programs but when coupled with the myriad ways in which the current execution of edTPA appears to increase inequities among minorities (Tuck & Gorlewski, 2016), we see a movement contrary to the missions of many of colleges and schools of education in particular. As with many accountability initiatives, edTPA, is intended to reduce inequities by ensuring access to highly qualified teachers for all students (Cochran et al., 2016). However, like several scholars, Cochran-Smith and her colleagues argue that edTPA does the opposite. We highlight those most frequently discussed (cost of edTPA, implicit bias teacher candidates, and marginalization in k-12 settings) to raise awareness for those contemplating adoption of edTPA.

The "Cost" of edTPA

edTPA increases financial burden for students. Many who raise this concern focus on the cost of the test, \$300 for initial submission, which does not include retaking edTPA, electronic portfolio support, and videotaping equipment (e.g., Bergstrand Othman et al., 2017; Greenblatt, 2016; O'Brien & Robb, 2017; Parkes & Powell, 2015). Already, students have paid tuition fees assumed to cover the cost of completing a program, yet in their final semester, more fees are levied. While this may be compared to the cost of licensure in other fields, such as a bar exam or medical board exams, we contend that this additional fee is not justifiable when considering who cannot afford to pay for edTPA. Because edTPA adds more barriers to those who struggle financially (Greenblatt, 2016; Tuck & Gorlewski, 2016), those excluded are most frequently likely to be minorities such as African Americans or Latinx students (Douglas-Gabriel, 2015). Additionally, as Greenblatt points out, the cost of edTPA often is not limited to this base cost of \$300. Fees are also levied on students "to pay for support workshops, edTPA coordinators, and online portfolio management systems" (Greenblat, 2016, p. 53). Even if other fees are not levied

and workshops are not mandatory, as Greenblatt states, many students are compelled to attend and must miss work to do so, creating even more financial strain. Even more financial strain is created if students fail the first attempt, or if they move to another state that requires additional tasks. These additional fees may also apply to students who come from states with different cut scores. Given that this reduction of financial stability is most likely with minority students, this process contributes to the systemic oppression common in the United States (Berliner, 2006). While it may be true that some universities provide access to scholarships for edTPA, as Baum and Lapovsky (2006) indicate, scholarships are increasingly awarded based on merit and not need, and thus exacerbate the issue we discuss here.

Particularly given that studies suggest edTPA is not universally predictive of teacher quality (Goldhaber, Cowan, & Theobald, 2017), any charge for this assessment serves as an unnecessary tax shown to exacerbate existing inequities. Drops in both enrollment in teacher preparation programs and increased dropout rates in the final semester of these programs have been observed since the implementation of these fees in City Universities in New York (Greenblatt, 2016). While there is no data showing a causal relationship as of yet, at a time when the federal government is significantly reducing financial support to low income college students via programs such as Pell Grants (U.S. Department of Management and Budget, 2017; Roble, 2017), this approach creates serious ethical dilemmas for universities which desire to produce teacher candidates ready for the complex task of teaching in the 21st century.

Implicit Bias against Teacher Candidates

Just as financial burdens contribute to increased inequities, so too does potential bias from scorers. In a forty-page report commissioned by both SCALE and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), Pullin (2014) forewarned of “disparate results for protected groups” (p. 205). This has come to pass as race, gender, and other minority designations have been shown to play a role in who receives a passing edTPA score (Bergstrand Othman et al., 2017; Tuck & Gorlewski, 2016). Dover and Schulz (2016) point out that despite SCALE’s efforts to appropriately train their scorers, the training module fails to “eliminate the pervasive and tenacious issues of bias that decades of scholarship and policy have yet to shift” (p. 98). Black students appear to suffer the most as they tend to score consistently below the recommended pass rate as a group (Garland, 2016; Russell & Davidson Devall, 2016). Even though reports are not consistent regarding non-native English speakers, some have shown a disparate impact on this group as well (Ledwell & Oiler, 2016). These data may suggest that because scorers can see and hear candidates while scoring them, they are not impartial raters. Despite intentions and training of scorers to not discriminate, this is often an unconscious act. As such, it is likely that edTPA perpetuates implicit biases that are having a negative impact on the teacher candidate pool. Not only does this contribute to already existing inequities in education by further narrowing the diversity of teacher candidates, it also promises to exacerbate teacher shortages. Even those scholars who show that only black students are affected warn that because the pool of candidates who submit edTPA is so disproportionate (i.e., with relatively few minorities such as non-native English speaking teacher candidates submitting), these claims should be viewed cautiously (Russell & Davidson Devall, 2016).

These implicit biases further the systemic corporatized oppression of traditionally marginalized populations with little hope of recourse. Despite the acknowledgment of these biases and a claim by the executive director of SCALE “to launch an investigation” (Garland,

2016, para.7), if concern for equity weighed more than profit, one might predict the test would be suspended until the problem were rectified. In this case, edTPA as a summative assessment has still become a mandatory policy in many state. As is the case with many forms of oppression, if a particular group of students do worse than their counterparts, then in reality, private corporations are presented with an opportunity to make and sell another product—such as a new test or more likely an opportunity for the oppressed to buy test-prep products.

Marginalization in K-12 Settings

Increases in equity gaps are also perpetuated by access to schools. Those who are placed in suburbs generally score better than those placed in rural or urban schools (Garland, 2016), which means that placement matters for increased likelihood of passing edTPA (Greenblatt, 2016; Bergstrand Othman et al., 2017). “[S]tudent teachers, of course, do not want to be ‘held back’ by students who are struggling to comprehend (or show their comprehension of) the given material” (O’Brien & Robb, 2017, p.10). Understandably, universities and students concerned with their passing rates of edTPA would be wise to avoid placement in schools with students who are particularly challenging, have high-poverty rates, and are resource poor. In fact, the nature of edTPA tasks encourages flight from these schools and “disincentivizes teacher candidates from seeking student teacher placements in high-needs schools. Even worse, it may communicate to teacher candidates that they cannot get certification if they work in classrooms with students of color, English language learners, and/or students living in poverty” (Tuck & Gorlewski, 2016, pp. 201-202). edTPA positions candidates and universities such that if they avoid partnerships with, and placements in, these types of schools, their pass rates are boosted. Similarly, cooperating teachers resist placements of students with edTPA requirements as it co-opts learning (Au, 2013; Ratner & Kolman, 2016) of both the teacher candidates and the classroom students. This has the unintended consequence of simultaneously ensuring that schools most in need are not chosen as partner schools for placement of their student teacher candidates. Unfortunately, pushing aside of these schools does not end with the student-teacher placement. Reagan and her colleagues (2016) caution that student teachers may be less likely to apply for positions in challenging schools due to their edTPA experiences, perpetuating cycles of inequity. Reagan and her colleagues also point out that this “position[s] teacher candidates in a less powerful position to make conscientious decisions about where they teach” (p.10). Lessons learned from other high-stakes testing initiatives provide us with a high degree of foreseeability of systemic oppression of those already marginalized and suggest we seek different solutions to ensuring teacher candidate quality.

This marginalization extends to students in the classroom. Teacher candidates learn very quickly that focusing on target learners who have emotional behavioral disturbances prove more challenging in trying to complete the tasks of edTPA, and as such, should be avoided. The hidden curriculum of the edTPA process is not only detrimental to how prospective teachers see their jobs (O’Brien & Robb, 2017), but also reinforces messages of who is deserving in the classroom and who is not.

Legal Concerns with the edTPA

As edTPA is relatively new, currently legal challenges are limited although there exist many possible legal issues. Regardless of the use of edTPA as the only one assessment tool

among several or as the instrument for consequential licensure purposes, anticipated claims fall into two categories. The first is traditional legal claims such as privacy issues, and the second is legal challenges of a nature not yet seen in court (Pullin, 2014). For example, Pullin includes a list of several potential lawsuits such as: constitutional issues, civil rights and discrimination, the quality of the assessment, privacy, business considerations and intellectual property rights. She also provides a checklist for reducing the potential of lawsuits in each of these areas. In this section we discuss the issues of privacy, intellectual property, and educational malpractice.

Teacher Candidates' Privacy

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) allows higher education students to exercise their rights over the disclosures of educational records that contain personally identifiable information (Giley & Giley, 2006). FERPA pertains to edTPA for obvious reasons as students must waive these rights to privacy when participating. As such, in states where edTPA is consequential, and because it takes place in the final semester of teacher candidates' education, these students are faced with untenable decisions regarding their participation in edTPA. When submitting their edTPA for review, teacher candidates are asked first if they agree to allow outside reviewers to see their work, and then, if their work can be used for instructional purposes with both faculty and future students. If teacher candidates sign these waivers, they agree to share their thoroughly-written lesson plans, commentaries, assessments, and videos that readily reveal their identity. For this reason, the edTPA provides several forms to universities to use when guiding teacher candidates in their assessment submission. This includes templates of forms regarding teacher candidates' rights. Guidance on confidentiality and security includes statements for "opting out" such as an explanation that "[t]hese forms, intended to ensure that students' privacy rights are not violated, allow university faculty to show former students' completed edTPA for educative purposes to both faculty and future students" (see <https://www.edtpa.com/confidentialityandsecurity>, n.d., p. 4); and, there can only be discussion of "samples of previously completed edTPA portfolio materials (where appropriate permissions have been granted)" (see <https://www.edtpa.com>, n.d., p. 2). While it is an accepted practice for professors outside of students' courses to review identified program assessments for efficacy or accreditation purposes (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2010), it is less common for students' *identifiable* assessments to be shared with outside reviewers and with future students as an example of passing or failing work. Although it is clear that teacher candidates do have the right to "opt out" to avoid their work being shared for instructional purposes, "permissions" become questionable when these candidates are told they must participate in edTPA as a requirement of becoming certified teachers. For example, several states require either submission of, or receipt of a passing score in edTPA (edTPA, n.d.). This necessitates that teacher candidates grant permission, at very least, to outside reviewers. These requirements for participation, and desire to pass edTPA, effectively compel teacher candidates to sign the form if they wish to complete the program in which they enrolled several years previously. Such compulsion arguably creates a risk of violating FERPA by compromising the legality of these waivers. Pullin (2015) notes that remedies for FERPA violations ultimately include loss of federal funding through monetary sanctions, which would be unlikely if given the federal support for such accountability measures. This leaves the student voiceless in pushing against the system and ensures that for-profit companies are held harmless should a student sue.

K-12 Students' Privacy

edTPA is plagued with privacy issues such as big data storage, where it is housed, who owns and is responsible for it (Cochran-Smith et al., 2013; Pullin, 2015). This adds to the confusion of who is responsible should FERPA or the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) be breached. Because edTPA submissions not only reveal the identity of former teacher candidates but also of their target learners, both FERPA and the (COPPA) are implicated in K-12 students' privacy. FERPA, while applying to students in higher education, also pertains to K-12 students in that their parents must consent to disclosure of their children's educational records prior to release. COPPA also applies, with the intent to protect children ages 13 and under from the online collection and tracking of personal information without parental consent (Pullin, 2015). Even though the Federal Trade Commission has worked to exclude school data from falling under this act, little is understood as to how this act might apply to future teacher candidates who are not covered by this exemption (Pullin, 2015). To address potential violations, the edTPA provides forms for parents and guardians to sign (edTPA, n.d.). These forms can be found on the edTPA website (<https://www.edtpa.com/Content/Docs/SampleReleaseForm.pdf>) and include language such as “[t]he video recordings and student work I submit will not be made public in any way” and that “no student’s name will appear on any materials that are submitted” (edTPA, n.d., para, 3). The student release form does go on to explain that the materials will be reviewed by the university’s program, used at Stanford University, and by Pearson. However, nowhere in the document is it made clear to the parent or guardian that future teacher candidates may watch videos that clearly identify their child(ren). In small towns, it is likely that children will be recognizable to a wide audience. As Parkes and Powell (2015) suggest “asking marginalized populations to waive privacy rights and permit video-recording of their children may prevent institutions and schools who work with these populations from participating in teacher education” (p. 108). Moreover, parents and guardians, particularly those who have children with disabilities, suffer coercive pressures. First there is minimal understanding on the part of parents and guardians as to what they are agreeing to. Second, by signing the form, their children will be able to receive 1:1 tailored, intensive, and rigorous instruction from special education teacher candidates throughout a semester. It is difficult for parents to decline this kind of service offered to their children. This again raises concerns that circle back to promotion of inequities and contribution to systemic oppression.

Intellectual Property

The requirement to use edTPA for certification necessitates that teacher candidates sign over their intellectual property rights. The edTPA publisher and those who have access to teacher candidates' thoroughly-written edTPA tasks benefit from the wealth of information and knowledge that teacher candidates write into their lesson plans and commentaries. There is a risk that these people can easily use these data and lesson ideas to create their own materials, make policies, and secure grants for personal and organizational benefits without teacher candidates' agreement.

Educational Malpractice

A final unlikely, but potential legal consideration is presented in states where edTPA has been adopted as consequential. Educational malpractice is a process by which students can make

states accountable for the education they are required to provide; however, very few cases have been found in favor of defendants, although, they are on the rise (Henry, 2004; Standler, 2013).

As previously indicated, edTPA is consequential in 18 states (edTPA, 2017). New York and Washington were the first two states to have the “successful completion of the edTPA in its entirety as a certification requirement” (Ratner & Kolman, 2016, p. 4). As was found in studies conducted in New York and Washington, it is possible for students to complete successfully every program assessment and course requirement of their respective university and fail to gain entrance into the teaching profession if they do not pass the edTPA assessment (Meuwissen, Chopping, Shang-Butler, & Cloonan, 2015). To date, courts have been reticent to prosecute educational malpractice (Essex, 2016). While this may not readily invite potential lawsuits of educational malpractice given the prominence of licensing exams in many fields and the myriad factors that might affect a student’s success on an exam, it could be problematic if a university or EPP failed to prepare most of their students over several years. This would establish an obvious pattern of inadequate preparation and may be the legal thread that forces courts to consider educational malpractice.

Pedagogical Concerns with the edTPA

Time Spent on edTPA

Time spent on preparation for edTPA includes time taken away from teaching and time to prepare and upload tasks into the edTPA platform. Preparing an edTPA portfolio is a lengthy process. Table 1 shows the length of edTPA portfolios in special education.

With asking teacher candidates to write and prepare so much for edTPA portfolios but only providing them with abstract numbers as feedback, there is inconsistency between what edTPA scorers expect teacher candidates to do for students and what edTPA scorers do to teacher candidates. Moreover, if teacher candidates fail a task, they cannot go back to revise the section which they did not do well. They have to start over with a new task which means that they will need to register for a course to maintain their student status, attend more writing boot camps, find a placement to conduct the edTPA task which they did not pass, and pay additional fees for the edTPA re-take test. This either demonstrates the lack of understanding of research-based pedagogy or a cynical confirmation of the *educational reform industrial-complex*. Unfortunately, teacher candidates’ university supervisors and classroom teachers are restricted to provide critical feedback on candidates edTPA tasks (Bergstrand Othman et al., 2017) further undermining the expertise of those who know students’ needs for scaffolding. This encourages students to err on the side of maximums and not minimums. These challenges may explain why teacher candidates in “New York and Washington, the first two states where the edTPA was required for licensure, reported that the assessment was unfair, unclear, and time consuming and that their programs did not prepare them well” (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016, p.14). Descriptive feedback is needed to inform teacher candidates where they need to improve and could aid in minimizing negative perceptions about the edTPA process. In assigning only “numbers” as feedback, teacher candidates are left with no understanding of their performance and are not given opportunities to revise what they did not do well making the lengthy process even more arduous and less acceptable. This is inconsistent with best practices in writing and teaching, which calls for more formative feedback rather than summative for better student outcomes.

Thus, the design of the edTPA is not consistent with best practices within the field it aims to assess.

Table 1
edTPA Special Education Portfolio Components

edTPA Components	Length
Task 1 Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Up to 4 single-spaced pages in length for context information - Up to 4 single-spaced pages in length per lesson (up to 5 lessons.) - Up to 5 pages for instructional materials per lesson (up to 5 lessons.) - Up to 12 single-spaced pages in length for Task 1 commentaries - No page limit for baseline assessment data <p>Maximum pages for Task 1: <i>61 pages</i> plus baseline assessment data</p>
Task 2 Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Up to two 20-minute video clips. Videos have to be compressed and converted. - Up to 8 single-spaced pages in length for Task 2 commentaries - Up to 2 pages for supporting documents <p>Maximum pages for Task 2: <i>10 pages</i> plus video clips</p>
Task 3 Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No page limits on student work samples - Up to 5 pages for supporting documents - Up to 8 pages for Task 3 commentaries <p>Maximum pages for Task 3: <i>13 pages</i> plus student work samples</p>
<p>Maximum pages: up to <i>84 pages</i> plus videos and unlimited pages for relevant data</p>	

Furthermore, because passing edTPA is crucial for both universities and teacher candidates, many universities host different activities such as edTPA writing boot camps to ensure that their teacher candidates are well-prepared (Greenblatt, 2016). Take fall semester as an example, the writing boot camp for edTPA Task 1 (planning) may be hosted in August with candidates turning in Task 1 to their university faculty either that same month or in September. This type of tight scheduling forces their teacher candidates to focus on edTPA tasks before “being fully integrated into their classrooms and without having sufficient formative evaluation experiences to hone their skills” (Russell & Davidson Devall, 2016, p. 492). The writing boot camp for edTPA Task 2 (instruction) is then scheduled in September and candidates turn in Task 2 to their university faculty in October. The writing boot camp for edTPA Task 3 (assessment) follows unrelentingly in October and candidates turn in Task 3, and in some cases also Task 4, to their university faculty in November. When candidates receive an “okay” from their university faculty, they can submit their entire edTPA portfolios to Pearson. Table 2 shows a flow of edTPA writing boot camp schedules in two state universities mandated to adopt edTPA. In addition to edTPA rubrics that are already embedded throughout coursework in each teacher

education program, the final semester (i.e. student teaching) is totally dedicated to edTPA preparation.

Table 2
edTPA Writing Boot Camp Schedules

University A	University B
August-September: Task 1 Preparation	August: Task 1 Preparation
September-October: Task 2 Preparation	September: Task 2 Preparation
October-November: Tasks 3 & 4 Preparation	October: Task 3 Preparation
November: University faculty gives an “okay” for teacher candidates to submit their portfolios to Pearson Education Incorporation through <i>Chalk & Wire</i>	November: Task 4 preparation for Elementary teacher candidates and University faculty gives an “okay” for teacher candidates to submit their portfolios to Pearson Education Incorporation through <i>Tk20</i>
December: Pearson Education Incorporation sends scores (only the numbers) to the university and teacher candidates	December: Pearson Education Incorporation sends scores (only the numbers) to the university and teacher candidates

Greenblatt (2016) highlights that this schedule becomes even tighter in the spring when many local schools are administering assessments linked to teacher evaluations. With a schedule such as this, it is easy to see how edTPA “narrows and standardizes the definition of ‘good teaching,’ equates task fidelity with competency, and artificially decontextualizes teaching and teacher education” (O’Brien & Robb, 2017, p.14). When the entire student teaching semester is centered on edTPA, it misleads teacher candidates to believe that good teaching is only about planning, instruction, and assessment. Other essential knowledge (e.g., critical thinking and creativity), dispositions (e.g., caring about students more than academic performance), and experiences (e.g., interaction with families) are overlooked. Furthermore, it leaves little to no room to create a supportive space in which teacher candidates can explore their challenges and share strengths in their student-teaching seminar courses (Chiu, 2014; Ratner & Kolman, 2016). These diminishing opportunities to learn have a disproportionate effect on those who may need more processing time and non-native language students (Ratner & Kolman, 2016). By reinforcing that learning differently cannot be accommodated in high-stakes situations, or that we don’t have time to consider the learning process, we support the status quo that teaching is not a reflective process, there is no time to slow down and examine our processes, and that special educators’ jobs are to prepare students for high stakes testing.

The Narrowed Curriculum

When the definition of good teaching is narrowed to the edTPA rubric, the curriculum is narrowed accordingly. This is a vicious cycle. States which adopt the edTPA mandate that all of their universities and alternative teacher preparations routes must work diligently to tailor their curriculum to prepare teacher candidates for passing the edTPA. Currently, edTPA has acted as the driver of the curriculum in many states (Au, 2013; Cochran-Smith et al., 2013; Croft, Roberts, & Stenhouse, 2016; Cronenberg et al., 2016; Margolis & Doring, 2013; O'Brien & Robb, 2017), with many contending that the purpose of student teaching has entirely shifted (O'Brien & Robb, 2017). Take the State of Georgia as an example, Georgia Professional Standards Commission states:

Beginning in Fall 2015, traditionally prepared teacher candidates will be required to earn a passing score on the edTPA before they can become eligible for an induction teaching certificate in Georgia; non-traditionally prepared candidates must earn a passing score prior to program completion. Across the state, Educator Program Providers (EPPs) are diligently examining their curriculum and program frameworks to ensure that their candidates are prepared to complete the assessment successfully. (GaPSC, 2014)

Regardless of university culture, faculty profession, student interest, and the needs of schools, ensuring that teacher candidates are prepared to complete and pass the edTPA is mandated by state accreditation organizations. EdTPA policy dominates the direction of all participating educator program providers. Overlooking local context is particularly perilous given that edTPA does little to support program improvement should teacher candidates consistently fail to meet cut scores. Cochran-Smith et al. (2016) argue that the edTPA policy must move beyond top-down mandates and provide more than “results that simply grade programs without information about why or how particular results occurred or what might improve them” (pp. 4-5). Moreover, the expert voices—professors in higher education - are no longer valued (Au, 2013; Reagan et al., 2016). Not only does curriculum have to be adjusted, professors’ voice in consequential grading is greatly diminished because edTPA scorers employed by a private publishers have a final say on teacher candidates’ abilities of lesson planning, instruction, and assessments. O’Brien and Robb (2017) note that professors’ roles and values have “overtly and also subtly changed now that (1) they are no longer responsible for assessing student teachers’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions, and (2) they are now responsible for ensuring “their” student teachers do well on their edTPA submission” (p. 7). This is echoed by Bartlett et al. (2017) when they state that edTPA has created a new expert in the education preparation world—Pearson. This is concerning given that some question whether scorers have the credibility needed for such a task given how scoring is executed (Parkes & Powell, 2015). Given that professors have lost control of both pedagogy and judgment about candidates’ teaching abilities, it will cause the four-year program to be replaced with faster and alternative licensing routes for educators with edTPA as the arbiter of readiness and quality.

Disconnect between Classrooms Realities and edTPA Requirements

For edTPA, special education candidates’ attention and energy go only to the focus learner. In reality, no school can afford to hire a special education teacher to work with only one

student. Therefore, edTPA provides excellent practice but it is not aligned with the real world. The teacher's time is spent writing lesson plans tied to this particular child's IEP goals, videotaping teaching the child, and keeping a daily assessment record for the child. Fearing not passing edTPA and needing to spend more time and money retaking it, teacher candidates exhaust themselves collecting extensive evidence and putting their action on paper. This not only takes away their passion and enthusiasm for education but also lead to harm for the majority of the class, especially those who are not the focused learners of teacher candidates. Because edTPA has a determining factor to deny the credential of teacher candidates and the time demand on completing edTPA tasks is daunting, many universities begin to reduce other milestone assignments, so their teacher candidates can focus solely on edTPA during the student teaching semester. Due to education coursework being paired to prepare teacher candidates for edTPA, it takes away other learning opportunities.

Personal and Environmental Issues

To complete work that meets edTPA rubrics, teacher candidates need to have a strong and stable support. Take edTPA in special education as an example: if the focus learner of a teacher candidate has frequent absences due to illness or moves to another school district, that teacher candidate will not be able to carry out consecutive lessons as required by edTPA. In this situation, everything has to start over which can delay the teacher candidates' submission of edTPA. In addition, because teacher candidates do not have their own classes and classroom rules, their relationship with their mentor teacher is influential to the quality and quantity of their edTPA tasks. If the mentor teacher is not flexible, there is not much a teacher candidate can do in the classroom. University faculty should question how appropriate edTPA is for student teachers (or even novice teachers) to complete such lengthy portfolios in one semester with so many personal and environmental issues beyond their control involved in this consequential assessment. Moreover, some teacher candidates can make themselves appear as high-quality educators on paper or in a few lesson plans and videos but in reality they act and teach differently. In contrast, some teacher candidates are not good at writing or performing, but are truly caring teachers of their students. Because it is hard to tell what teacher candidates write in their commentaries are true or they are giving "politically correct" answers, simply using a few lessons to approve or deny an educator is inappropriate.

Conclusions

In summary, we share three suggestions regarding edTPA in hopes of moving toward a more useful execution of assessment for teacher candidates. First, we suggest that using edTPA as a consequential assessment is inadequate. If edTPA is grounded in InTASC progress-based standards it should encourage the advancement of teacher-candidates' knowledge and skills. We suggest that instead of one-time mandatory assessment that discourages students from becoming educators, it be used as one of many assessment tools not of a mandatory nature. As such, universities could value teachers as people, not consumers who purchase an assessment product. Shifting this focus of teacher candidates as customers of an assessment product, would also eliminate a series of mandatory trainings and webinars to ensure that they know how to use edTPA and do well on it. Additionally, if edTPA were used as only one piece of evidence, professors' expertise and knowledge of their students would no longer be circumvented. This

action would rightly allow a focus on how to become better teachers who wholeheartedly devote themselves to the mission of educating all students.

Not using edTPA as a summative indication of failure would also achieve aligning the assessment closer to its intent of being a learning tool, while simultaneously providing solutions to many of the ethical concerns, associated with a for-profit approach to education reform. For example, marginalization of schools and students due to edTPA could be reduced if the test were no longer high stakes and consequential. This might allow teachers candidates to shift their focus back away from how well they can fill out commentaries and transfer their practice to paper to get a passing score to what they can learn from the process and how they can best serve their students.

Second, we suggest that partnerships with private companies can be useful to universities but only when the partnership does not result in the private company becoming the decider. In other words, privatization should act in an assistive role in public education. For example, using the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and Graduate Record Examinations (GRE), universities get to make the final decision about their students' advancement, not Educational Testing Services (ETS), the company that develops TOEFL and GRE. These are good examples of for-profit companies providing services to public education that allows the expert to retain their voice and proper judgment about local contexts, populations, and community needs.

Third, educators should take a closer look at edTPA rubrics across disciplines. For example, a teacher who has already passed edTPA in early childhood in her undergraduate program later enrolls in special education graduate program will not need to take edTPA in special education to become a certified special education teacher. This implies that edTPA rubrics might involve ambiguity across disciplines. Furthermore, teacher candidate assessments should be aligned with today's real-life classrooms. Take edTPA rubrics in special education as an example, focusing on one focus learner throughout the student teaching semester is a useful and in-depth practice, but is not aligned with what teacher candidates are supposed to do in a special education classroom or in an inclusive setting during their student teaching or when they become classroom teachers.

In closing, we suggest edTPA as a mandatory and consequential assessment be abandoned until comprehensive and sustained reform aimed at rendering edTPA a learning tool for teacher candidates. By addressing problems found in edTPA through educational forums, the issues related to ethical, legal, and pedagogical use of edTPA must be fixed to increase equity in education.

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