



May 1, 2014

The faculty of Roosevelt University's College of Education, wish to express our reservations regarding edTPA, a performance-based assessment tool administered by the Pearson Corporation. The edTPA will be a requirement for teacher certification in Illinois, effective September 1, 2015, and is poised to become a national assessment, potentially generating great wealth for the company. While we recognize the importance of preparing and evaluating highly competent teachers, we strongly caution that the adoption of the edTPA as planned will be detrimental for schools and students in Illinois and nationally.

We are fully committed to the preparation of effective teachers; we are not confident that the use of the edTPA as a consequential assessment is the best way to accomplish that goal.

Our objections to this highly consequential single measure include the following:

1. Narrow Focus

Teaching is a highly complex practice, and what constitutes quality remains contested. We know that successful teaching is not the same as good teaching, and we know that terms like *success*, *effective*, and *good* are dependent on context and culture. In light of this complexity, edTPA markets itself as an authentic assessment of teacher readiness based on a 15-minute video segment and a set of responses to writing prompts on lesson context, planning, instruction, and assessment. The measurement criteria for assessors are surprisingly underdeveloped and point to an exclusively technical, rather than holistic or humanistic, understanding of education. Student teaching assessments should take into account all aspects of a teacher's practice, rather than forcing candidates to adhere to narrow, rigid rubrics that measure the one learning segment of 3-5 lessons or 3-5 sequential hours of instruction that is the focus of the assessment. In addition to this there is limited research showing the effectiveness of edTPA being an accurate indicator of teacher quality.

2. Exclusion of Key Stakeholders

Student teaching assessments should be conducted by educators who are a part of the candidate's learning community. In contrast, scorers of edTPA are trained by Pearson and are outside of the teacher candidate's preparation program. External evaluators cannot know the students and the learning contexts in which they are operating, as do the local teachers and university evaluators. State leaders were largely responsible for creating and monitoring the use of edTPA in Illinois. The high stakes nature of edTPA was signed into law without the engagement and input of key stakeholders in education. We argue that local

teacher educators, school leaders, classroom teachers, and parents and/or parent groups are key stakeholders and should also be involved in developing and monitoring the use of the assessment tool.

3. Quality of Assessors

We have concerns about both the quality of the external assessors and the transparency of the assessments. We need to more clearly understand the qualifications and preparation of the assessors and the selection process.

4. Pass/Fail High Stakes Consequence

The edTPA operates on a pass/fail basis that offers candidates only a cumulative score as feedback and no support for improvement. The only option for teacher candidates who fail the assessment is to pay an additional fee and retake the evaluation. Student teaching assessments should support growth and learning throughout the candidate's process.

This approach undermines the role of assessment as an integral part of the teaching and learning process. By reducing the feedback to a single score, the complexity of the teaching and learning process is reduced to a single, largely context-free score.

5. Vulnerable Population Insensitivity

Teacher educators who work with marginalized populations, including English language learners, disabled students, children of undocumented workers and ethnic minorities, recognize the need for sensitivity in working with vulnerable youth populations. Asking the most vulnerable families to waive their privacy rights and permit videotaping so that a student teacher can participate in edTPA is insensitive. Parents may also be concerned about what is eventually done with videos that include their child's likeness by an agency that has no public accountability. One probable byproduct of this breach of privacy is that both institutions of teacher education and the schools that work with historically marginalized populations would be discouraged from participating in reciprocally beneficial relationships. This would harm public education by significantly diminishing teacher education engagement with diverse student populations.

6. Discourage Engagement with High-Needs Schools

In addition to this, the edTPA discourages candidates from performing the assessment in high-need schools, where challenging classrooms or students with special needs may reflect poorly on the teacher candidate. There is no mention of classroom management in edTPA rubrics. Student teaching assessments should encourage candidates to teach in all schools, and teacher candidates need to learn about, be assessed on, and be supported to improve on issues of classroom management.

7. Bias Against Diverse Teacher Candidates

While we believe that there needs to be teacher performance assessment, having a corporation such as Pearson as the clearinghouse may result in a variety of

issues. The edTPA costs \$300, which in itself is prohibitive for diverse populations of students. By their nature, standardized assessments place value on specific knowledge and skills, which are traditionally biased against racially diverse, poor, working, and immigrant teacher candidates. Presently we don't have research on the demographics of edTPA test takers, and the field test results haven't been widely disseminated. We believe that the edTPA will further marginalize diverse populations from becoming role models and teacher leaders in schools.

8. Lack of Meaningful feedback to Teacher Candidates and Programs

The edTPA is an assessment that goes contrary to the very instruction and assessment cycles it requires of the teacher candidates. Within edTPA, teacher candidates must demonstrate their use of assessments to measure instructional objectives, provide feedback to learners and use the data to inform planning and delivery of ongoing lessons. The edTPA assessment itself does not give timely or usable feedback to the student or the teacher education program that prepared the teacher candidate.

In conclusion, we realize the value of recruiting, preparing, supporting and evaluating high quality educators. Indeed, this is the core of our work at Roosevelt University. We remain concerned about the social injustice of this assessment and strongly voice opposition against the standardization and corporatization of teacher education. It is unlikely that the edTPA assessment will be an improvement over the processes currently used by teacher education institutions across Illinois and nationally.

We strongly recommend that the regulations for implementing edTPA be revised:

- First, the high-stakes nature of this evaluation should be eliminated. The edTPA can be used as a tool to inform and tailor individual teacher education instruction and assessment. This will better meet the needs of teachers who serve diverse populations across the nation.
- Second, the legislation needs to allow more time for colleges of education to understand and field test the edTPA in order to effectively and thoughtfully prepare teacher candidates and address the impact of this assessment on their programs.
- Third, the cost of edTPA for students should be drastically reduced.
- Fourth, edTPA should be scored by teacher educators and on-site, cooperating teachers, who are supporting the teacher candidates' preparation. This will enable the candidate to receive meaningful and helpful feedback both in written and verbal formats.
- Fifth, classroom management should be included in edTPA rubrics in terms of making allowances for this and not having it negatively affect a teacher candidate's score.

Sincerely,
Roosevelt University College of Education Faculty