Chapter 7
Examining edTPA’s Educative Nature and Its Alignment to Standards of Effective Teaching

Drew Polly
University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA

Erik Jon Byker
University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA

ABSTRACT
This chapter advances the idea that completing the edTPA project is an educative experience that has potential to support teachers’ development of high-leverage instructional practices. An inductive analysis of teacher candidates’ reflections about completing the practice edTPA indicated that teacher candidates found value in some aspects of the project, such as planning, examining their video, and assessing students’ work, but many of the participants perceived that the writing of the commentaries was not relevant. The chapter also describes a strategy called edPASR, which support teacher candidates through the edTPA process as an educative experience based in performance assessment. The chapter examines vignettes of teacher candidates experiences with the edTPA portfolio and concludes with a discussion of the relationship between edTPA and the day-to-day practice of teaching.
INTRODUCTION

In an era of high-stakes and high-stress testing, how do we ensure that classroom instruction does not give way to inappropriate teaching? (Popham, 2001, p. 16)

High-Stakes Assessments in Teacher Education

While No Child Left Behind ([NCLB], U.S. Department of Education, 2001) and the Every Student Succeeds Act ([ESSA], U.S. Department of Education, 2015) have increased the high-stakes nature of assessments in Kindergarten through Secondary Education in the United States, teacher education programs have not been involved in much of the pressure to produce high scores on tests and assessments until recently. In the past few years, that pressure is slowly seeping into the classrooms of schools, colleges and universities that prepare teachers due to many states adopting performance-based assessments and requiring candidates to reach a certain score to qualify for their teaching license. As a result of this increased pressure, many administrators and faculty members in educator preparation programs hold a critical eye towards assessments that must be completed in order for teacher candidates to earn their teaching credential (Sato, 2014).

Historically, teacher candidates have been required to sit for and pass tests that assess knowledge of content and pedagogy (Darling-Hammond, 2010). These summative assessments typically examine teacher candidates’ ability to recall or regurgitate information, and in some cases apply their knowledge into contexts with multiple choice or open-ended items that are rigorous. For example, some test items include the analysis and synthesis of content they have either learned previously in their teacher education programs or general knowledge content. Along with traditional assessments performance-based assessments, like edTPA, have also been used in teacher education in some instances.

Stecher (2010, p. 3) offers the following definition of performance tasks and performance-based assessments:

A performance task is a structured situation in which stimulus materials and a request for information or action are presented to an individual, who generates a response that can be rated for quality using explicit standards. The standards may apply to the final product or to the process of creating it. A performance assessment is a collection of performance tasks.
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