

edTPA Perspectives: Connecticut's Novice Teachers Reflect



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Abstract

edTPA is an educative performance assessment designed to assess teacher readiness. It has gained momentum across the country; yet, it has often met with resistance from educators in various roles. Framed by Bandura's social learning and self-efficacy theories, this collective case study addressed the gap in edTPA literature by exploring new teachers' perceptions of the assessment as an efficacious tool. The researchers explored: 1.) What are novice teachers' levels of self-efficacy regarding readiness to teach as measured by the edTPA Teacher Survey? 2.) How do novice teachers perceive the edTPA process as an influence on their professional practices? A major outcome revealed that new teachers are using mastery experiences to build efficacy and honing their craft *in spite of* their edTPA experience. Recommendations include a re-tooling of the edTPA assessment and preparation process to ensure a more authentic experience and meaningful long-term value for new teachers.

<h3>Goals</h3> <p>We intended to understand whether the edTPA assessment process created confident and prepared teachers and whether those novice teachers internalized and transferred the elements of the edTPA tasks to their current practice.</p> <p>The study also aimed to provide a platform for sharing perspectives of novice teachers in Connecticut, where the edTPA has recently become a high stakes tool for teacher licensure. We further intended to provide an understanding of the confidence ratings, or efficacy, that new teachers hold as a result of their experiences at their Educator Preparation Programs, which use the edTPA as an evaluative tool.</p>	<h3>Methodology</h3> <p>This collective case study was comprised of 10 purposefully sampled participants who graduated from the Graduate School of Education at UB and successfully completed the edTPA portfolio preparation for licensure. The study was limited to novice teachers who completed the edTPA preparation at UB as part of their licensure requirements. Spring 2020 teacher candidates who accepted CT's COVID-19 edTPA waiver were also included in the study since they completed all of UB's edTPA portfolio requirements during clinical placement.</p> <p>Data Collection</p> <p>The data collection included several IRB-approved pieces. An efficacy survey was utilized to collect teachers' confidence ratings related to readiness to teach. The survey was validated using the Lawshe Method. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in an effort to add context and paint a picture of personal edTPA experiences. Interviews were transcribed and coded. Member checks were conducted to address accuracy and reliability. When available, lesson plans and edTPA scores were analyzed to add another layer of understanding as to the application of edTPA elements in current teaching situations and proficiency levels with edTPA at the time of assessment, respectively.</p>	<h3>Literature Review</h3> <p>The edTPA is an educative assessment that supports candidate learning and readies them for Day 1 in the classroom (Pecheone et al., 2018). There have been criticisms related to edTPA as a high-stakes measure. Some concerns indicate that the edTPA emphasizes test preparation over the clinical learning experience compromising the valuable and educative nature of student teaching (Bernard et al, 2019; Burns et al., 2015; Clayton, 2018; Greenblatt & O'Hara, 2015). Other research indicates there are unintended consequences of edTPA implementation including causing unintended barriers for teachers entering the profession (Will, 2020). Studies also reveal frustration with the jargon specific to edTPA assessment and redundancy of tasks (Burns et al., 2015; Huston, 2015). The research gap lies in that most studies have focused on teacher candidates' and EPP's perceptions of edTPA. This study focused on giving voice to in-service teachers.</p>
<h3>Research Questions</h3> <p>1.) What are novice teachers' levels of self-efficacy regarding readiness to teach as measured by the edTPA Teacher Survey?</p> <p>2.) How do novice teachers perceive the edTPA process as an influence on their professional practices?</p>		<h3>References</h3> <p>Bernard, C., Kaufman, D., Kohan, M., & Mitoma, G. (2019). Confronting the edTPA in Connecticut: Recommendations for teacher candidate quality, sustainability, and empowerment. Education Policy Paper. The University of Connecticut.</p> <p>Burns, B. A., Henry, J. J., & Lindauer, J. R. (2015). Working together to foster candidate success on the edTPA. <i>Journal of Inquiry and Action in Education</i>, 6 (2).</p> <p>Clayton, C. (2018). Policy meets practice in New York state. <i>Teacher Education Quarterly</i>, 45(3), 97-125.</p> <p>Greenblatt, D., & O'Hara, K. (2015). Buyer beware: Lessons learned from edTPA implementation in New York state. <i>The NEA Higher Education Journal</i>, 57-67.</p> <p>Huston, T. P. (2015). <i>Being assessed: Student teachers' experiences of IUTPA</i> (Publication No. 3715594). [Doctoral dissertation, Indiana University]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.</p> <p>Pecheone, R.L., Merino, N., & Klesch, H. (2018). Educative assessment and meaningful support: edTPA annual administrative report 2018. Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE).</p> <p>Will, M. (2020). Georgia eliminates the edTPA requirement for teacher candidates. <i>Education Week</i>.</p>
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Key Findings:

RQ1: What are novice teachers' levels of self-efficacy regarding readiness to teach as measured by the edTPA Teacher Survey?

- Median & mode reveal high efficacy levels (score of 4 or 5) self-reported in all three categories
- 9/10 participants felt confident to implement all aspects of instructional practices related to each category.
- No significant associations could be found among the various factors of gender, ethnicity, or certification and the three sub-categories of the survey

A comparison of efficacy levels across cases indicates that all participants except Colin felt confident in their preparedness to teach related to pedagogy, knowledge & skills, and learning environment.

Case *pseudonyms	Certif. Area	Pedagogical Knowledge (Mode)	Knowledge & Skills (Mode)	Learning Environment (Mode)	edTPA score	Lesson Plan
Colin	Elem K-6	Low: 54.5%	Low: 50%	Mid:66.6%	Waiver	Plan met or exceeded target in all rubric areas
Shane	Elem K-6	High: 100%	High: 100%	High: 100%	55	Plan met or exceeded target in all rubric areas
Joshua	Music K-12	High: 77.2%	High: 75%	High: 66.6%	49	Not submitted
Patrick	English 7-12	Mid: 40.9%	High: 75%	High: 100%	50	Not submitted
Laura	Elem K-6	High: 63.6%	Mid:50%; High: 50%	High: 66.6%	52	District does not require lesson plans
Sharon	Biology 7-12	High: 81.8%	High: 75%	High: 100%	49	Uses standards of discipline; no formal plan
Jen	Business 7-12	High: 72.7%	High: 50%	High: 100%	Waiver	Plan met or exceeded target in all rubric areas
Kara	Elem K-6	Mid: 72.7%	High: 75%	High: 100%	53	Plan met or exceeded target in all rubric areas
Liz	Elem K-6	High: 95.5%	High: 100%	High: 100%	Waiver	Not submitted
Kate	Business 7-12	High: 91%	High: 100%	High: 100%	Waiver	Scores on all rubric areas were below target

RQ 2: How do novice teachers perceive the edTPA process as an influence on their professional practices?

Theme 1: General perceptions pertaining to the edTPA preparation process

- **aggravation** at the minutiae of tasks, **anxiety & fear of failure**; 9/10 perceive edTPA as **negative**
- Tasks are **tedious; redundant; overly-complicated** *"More advanced than appropriate for novice teacher"*
- Participants **"bugged out"**; focused on **passing the test**; edTPA **overshadowed** student teaching

Theme 2: Current beliefs related to edTPA process as indicator of readiness

- edTPA scores were **not considered to be a good indicator of candidates' perceptions of readiness to teach**. Six demonstrated high efficacy related to readiness to teach across all three categories **in spite of** their negative associations *"I felt prepared to teach, but not because of edTPA"*
- Constructive feedback, authentic opportunities & observation of master teachers were most **educative**; edTPA process is **not perceived as being influential on current practices**

Theme 3: edTPA process as influence on current professional beliefs and practices

- Teaching philosophies were **not influenced by edTPA**; edTPA aligned with and reinforced personal beliefs but **did not contribute** to the composition of them
- None of the participants identified strongest skill as Task 2: Instruction
- High confidence levels in planning, but **few participants are implementing elements of the task**
- 0% of K-12 districts using edTPA to inform PD/induction of novice teachers

Theme 4: Barriers to Success on the edTPA

- No barriers linked to race or gender reported by participants
- Most common issue was confusing construct and language of the edTPA itself,
- Two participants had to borrow materials to complete Task 2 (video-taping)

Theme 5: Novice teachers' suggestions related to edTPA improvements

- edTPA should be **eliminated entirely** and/or **eliminate the expense and bureaucracy**
- Remove from semester where student teaching occurs align or merge with induction (TEAM)

Novice teachers say edTPA is predominantly a means to an end as opposed to a process that instills a lasting application of the assessment's tasks. So...

✓ Remove edTPA from the clinical placement semester!

✓ Modify view of edTPA as formative & not solely summative!

✓ Make edTPA meaningful; translate to professional setting via Induction/TEAM alignment!

✓ EPPs: provide multiple mastery experiences rather than over-emphasizing edTPA!