

edTPA: AN EVIDENCE-BASED ASSESSMENT OF TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS IN THE CONTEXT OF ONLINE AND FACE-TO-FACE (F2F) TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Teacher preparation programs involve face-to-face (f2f) and online modes of delivery. Although the face-to-face learning environments are often complex and unpredictable, we are very familiar with them and have developed high levels of skill in working in these environments. The skills, strategies, and techniques that we so effectively use in face-to-face learning environments may not work well in online learning and vice-versa. Despite the pervasiveness of online learning in higher education, this delivery mode has yet to receive similar quality status of F2F learning. Long standing beliefs that F2F training as the only viable option continues to dominate teacher education. Central to determining the effectiveness of technology to support learning and the value of technology-mediated instruction is the quality of programs. edTPA (Educative Teacher Performance Assessment) is a widely accepted, national measure of teacher readiness and preparation. Using edTPA scorecards, teacher candidates' efficiency can be evaluated after the completion of teacher education program in traditional face to face (F2F) and online mode. This article focuses that online may be a more effective and adept program delivery platform for preparing educators for planning for instruction and assessing student learning outcomes.

Keyword: edTPA



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Introduction

There is a massive expansion of higher education institutions in India. However, the efforts to expand higher education are characterized by great opportunities and significant challenges. One of the challenges includes the lack of standardised assessment of higher education programs. Teacher education being a most significant aspect of higher education, the quality of the same should be assessed without errors and ambiguities. Higher education has been faced with the need to provide intensive faculty professional development and to

consider extensive curricular redesign to ensure candidates are prepared with the professional knowledge and expertise to succeed.

Assessment of teacher preparation programs involves continuous process of inquiry and improvement at all aspect of the education program. This process is to be carried out co-operatively by all concerned with the growth and development of children. It is related with the changes in the child as a result of teaching. It is a systematic attempt to find out the progress made in the teaching performance towards the realization of object of teacher education.

Teacher preparation programs may be face to face or online. There is a belief that face to face programs are more consistent than online modes of delivery. Technology enhanced learning is sometime more appropriate than face to face learning. The focus was on identifying the talents of the beginning teacher and empowering with positive input. There have been many innovations like semester system, grading system, assessment system etc., but a proper system to address the challenges in evaluation is not implemented with originality. In this regard, it has been rightly remarked that the evaluation of the prospective or new teachers is very important strategy, expected of them to raise the standards of achievement in pupils by giving constant feedback, remediation and improvement of classroom instructional strategies based on evaluation system.

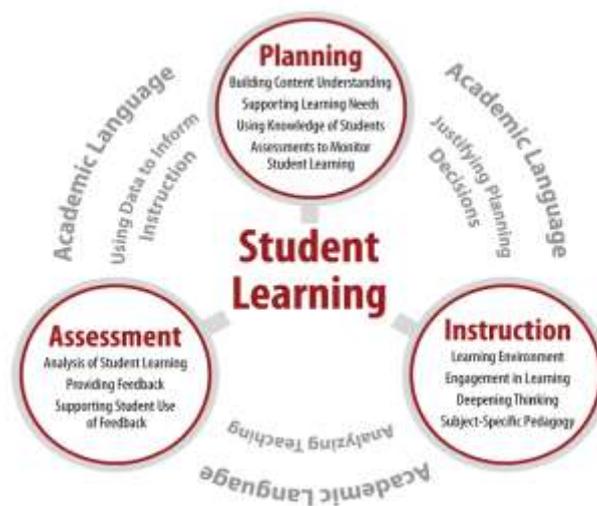
edTPA is an assessment system of teacher performance in higher education sector. It is a subject-specific assessment designed to achieve a common standard of teaching quality that supports student learning. The edTPA was created by SCALE (Stanford Centre for Assessment, Learning and Equity) in collaboration with the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE). It is an evidence based assessment of teacher preparation programs. Hence, there is great need to study edTPA in making promising role of teachers of tomorrow.

What is edTPA?

edTPA is an abbreviation form of educative Teacher Performance Assessment. edTPA is summative assessment used to evaluate student teacher quality and provide data that support growth and renewal of teacher preparation program. edTPA can be integrated with other teacher candidate assessments such as clinical evaluations, GPA(Grade Point Average), and content knowledge examinations to inform program completion decisions or as a metric for licensure. It acts as a source of evidence for program review, teacher licensure or state and national accreditation.

edTPA is a performance-based, subject-specific assessment and support system designed to emphasize, measure and support the skills and knowledge that all teachers need from the very first day in the classroom. It is the first such standards-based assessment available in the United States. It advances subject-area assessments with a practice that needs teacher candidates to demonstrate that they have the classroom skills necessary to ensure students' learning.

It requires the submission of such artefacts as lesson plans, assignments, assessments, student work samples, videotape segments that capture the teacher candidate engaging students in learning, academic language, and extensive commentary on each of the three tasks: planning, instruction, and assessment. In short, the edTPA requires the teacher candidate to reflect on the demands and real work of teaching and measures not only content and pedagogical knowledge but also the candidate's readiness to become a teacher.



(<https://northcentralcollege.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/edTPAGuide.pdf>)

What is edTPA designed to achieve?

edTPA is designed to help teacher preparation programs by increasing their focus on quality by providing a common standard of teaching quality that supports student learning. Teacher educators may use the edTPA process to examine their programs for possible areas of improvement.

edTPA assesses the performance of new teachers and determine whether they are ready to enter the teaching profession with the skills that make learning of all students possible and fruitful. It gives teacher licensure and support state and national or even international program accreditation and renewal.

edTPA is the assessment and support system designed to provide evidence that the prospective teacher candidates are ready to teach. With a focus on learning for all students, edTPA engages new teacher candidates in developing the knowledge, skills and abilities they need to meet the needs of today's diverse learners.

- **edTPA assesses subject-specific pedagogy**

edTPA is a subject-specific performance assessment that recognizes that teaching and learning are not the same across all subjects and all grades or levels. A history teacher doesn't approach inquiry in the same way as a science teacher. A kindergarten teacher doesn't communicate in the same way as a middle school math teacher. Thus edTPA doesn't assess all teachers in the same way. The support of edTPA resources help teacher preparation programs deepens their focus on the subject specific skills of aspiring teachers by making the atmosphere of a real classroom.

- **edTPA is conducted in real practice**

edTPA is conducted in realistic atmosphere. Current practice of testing in which subject-area knowledge alone is assessed can not reflect the overall efficiency of a beginning teacher. edTPA's integrated portfolio model and authentic outcome of practice are prepared by candidates in an actual teaching experience and reflect a cycle of effective teaching. The candidate demonstrates how she plans instruction based on their teaching context and students' strengths and needs, engages students in deep subject specific instruction and analyzes student learning to inform next steps for teaching. This cycle of planning, instruction and assessment reflects what the real teachers do on day-to-day to ensure their students learn.

- **edTPA provides support for implementation**

An important element of the experience gained from the broad use of edTPA is that support to faculty members and programs is fundamental to fulfilling its educative promise. edTPA's robust support includes guidelines for incorporating the learning principles of the edTPA across time to ensure that programs provide candidates with formative opportunities to develop their practice and states have baseline data for determining performance standards. edTPA developers provide numerous resources such as webinars, local evaluation protocols, online and face-to-face training and professional networks that allow participating faculty, programs and institutions to review their own practices and curriculum, identify strengths and needs of candidates, embed edTPA in their multiple measures assessment systems, and to join new professional communities.

Merits of edTPA:

1. Helps teachers to develop the confidence and skills they need to be successful.
2. Provides a standard and evidence-based data that can be used across states to evaluate aspiring teachers demonstrate their readiness for the classroom.
3. Measures candidates' ability to differentiate instruction for diverse learners, including English language learners and special education students.
4. Provides adequate data that can be used to improve teacher education programs and renew program curriculum.
5. Creates a body of evidence of teacher performance.

Preparation for Critical Dimensions of Teaching

Candidates must prepare a portfolio of materials during their student teaching clinical experience. edTPA requires candidates to demonstrate readiness to teach through *lesson plans* designed to support their students' strengths and needs; *engage* real students in ambitious learning; *analyze* whether their students are learning, and *adjust* their instruction to become more effective.

The edTPA process identifies and collects subject-specific evidence of effective teaching from a learning segment of 3- 5 lessons from a unit of instruction for one class of students. Teacher candidates submit authentic artefacts from a real field experience. Candidates also submit commentaries that provide a rationale to support their instructional practices based on the learning strengths and needs of students. Candidates' evidence is evaluated and scored within the following five dimensions of teaching:

1. **Planning Instruction and Assessment** establishes the instructional and social context for student learning and includes lesson plans, instructional materials and student assignments and assessments. Candidates demonstrate how their plans align with content standards; build upon students' prior academic learning and life experiences and how instruction is differentiated to address student needs. Candidates submit lesson plans for 3-5 consecutive lessons along with relevant instructional materials, such as assignments and handouts.
2. **Instructing and Engaging Students in Learning** includes one or two unedited video clips of 15-20 minutes from the learning segment and a commentary analyzing how the candidate engages students in learning activities. Candidates also demonstrate subject-specific pedagogical strategies and how they elicit and monitor student responses to

develop deep subject matter understandings. It shows what they would change about their instruction and justifies their responses with evidence from the videos.

3. **Assessing Student Learning** includes classroom based assessment (evaluation criteria), student work samples, evidence of teacher feedback, and a commentary analyzing patterns of student learning. Artefacts include a summary of patterns in whole class learning, samples of work from three students, and the feedback given to these students. The commentaries include an explanation of how the assessment data will inform next steps for instruction, both for the class and for the individuals.
4. **Analysis of Teaching Effectiveness** is addressed in commentaries within Planning, Instruction and Assessment tasks. In planning, candidates justify their plans based on the candidate's knowledge of diverse students' learning strengths and needs and principles of research and theory. In Instruction, candidates explain and justify which aspects of the learning segment were effective, and what the candidate would change. Lastly, candidates use their analysis of assessment results to inform next steps for individuals and groups with varied learning needs.
5. **Academic Language Development** is evaluated based on the candidate's ability to support students' oral and written use of academic language to deepen subject matter understandings. The edTPA includes an analysis of the instructional context and an emphasis upon academic language acquisition in all subject areas .Candidates explain how students demonstrate academic language using student work samples and/or video recordings of student engagement.

edTPA Common Architecture		
Dimensions	Artifacts	15 Rubrics
Planning	Lesson plans, instructional materials, student assignments, assessment, Planning commentary	Planning for Content Understandings, Supporting Students' Learning Needs Planning Assessment to Monitor Student Learning
Instruction	Unedited video clips, Instruction commentary	Demonstrating a Positive and Engaging Learning Environment Engaging Students in Learning Deepening Learning During Instruction Subject-Specific Pedagogy
Assessment	Samples of student work Summary of student learning Assessment commentary	Analyzing Student Learning Providing Feedback to Guide Learning Supporting Students' Use of Feedback
Analysis of Teaching	Planning commentary Instruction commentary	Using knowledge of students to inform Planning Analyzing Teaching

	Assessment commentary	Using Assessment to Inform Instruction
Academic Language	Unedited video clips and/or student work samples Planning and assessment commentaries	Identifying and Supporting Language Demands Evidence of Language Use to Support Content Understandings

(<https://northcentralcollege.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/edTPAGuide.pdf>)

The Requirements of edTPA

The teacher candidate will choose one class for the edTPA project and will complete the edTPA context for learning template that provides background for the school and the focus class. The candidate will then construct commentary in response to questions on the rubrics to reflect on teaching practices in the areas of planning, instruction, and assessment. While the commentary will take additional time by designating edTPA work days for the candidates, the basic requirements of the project align with what the candidate should already be doing. edTPA takes the real work of teaching and provides an opportunity for the candidate to learn from his/her practices through extensive reflection on planning, instruction, and assessment.

The Time commitment that students are expected to manage

Students are generally instructed that they should be working on Residency plans, grading, and other responsibilities during weekdays and evenings with some overlap into the weekend as necessary. Work related to the edTPA that lies outside normal planning for instruction and grading should be done on weekends, in the seminars' small group strategy building time, or on the three assigned work days. The edTPA should complement what teacher candidates are already doing and should never interfere with the teacher candidate's ability to carry out his responsibilities in the K-12 classroom.

The Goal of edTPA

The goal of the edTPA is to provide a measure of readiness for entry into the teaching profession that is aligned with components of the Danielson Framework for Teaching which serves as the foundation for evaluating the work of practicing teachers in many school districts. Through this assessment, the teacher candidate will prove competency in pedagogical practices that will help to ensure success as a classroom teacher, improve student outcomes, and guide professional development. The reflective commentaries will show that the candidate is able to understand how his/her students learn and identify and analyze the evidence of their learning.

What Aspects of Teaching the Evaluators are looking for?

The five general components of teaching skills that are assessed include planning, instruction, assessment, analyzing teaching, and academic language. The 15 areas the rubrics examine include: planning for content understanding, planning to support varied student learning needs, using knowledge of students to inform teaching, identifying and supporting language demands, planning assessments to monitor and support student learning, learning environment, engaging students in learning, deepening student learning, subject-specific pedagogy, analyzing teaching effectiveness, analysis of student learning, providing feedback to guide student learning, student use of feedback, analyzing students' [academic] language use, and using assessment to inform instruction.

Online and Face-To-Face (F2F) Teacher Preparation Programs in the Context of edTPA

In diverse learning environments of higher education, the ways to enhance the teacher effectiveness is a difficult task. In the current environment that includes more and more online courses, many faculties are expected to master teachers in both face-to-face (F2F) and online environments. The teacher education programs in higher education, both online and face-to-face (F2F) courses have to give emphasis for strengthening the effectiveness of teaching.

edTPA ,being a good measure of teacher readiness and preparation,,it can be used at state or national or international level. Like other performance assessments, edTPA is designed to provide a broad view of classroom instruction that evaluates teachers' abilities to plan, provide instruction, assess student learning, analyze teachers' instruction, and support students' acquisition of academic language.

Face to face teacher preparation programs provides an atmosphere for teacher and learner to be in direct contact.In the context of edTPA, face to face (F2F) teacher preparation programs have some limitations like submission of lesson plans in the form of videotapes that uses for demonstration and the he instructional materials are in printed format, not in electronic mode .The submission of student work and assessment also can be in printed form only.

But in online mode of teacher preparation program teacher and learner may not be in the same place. They can overcome geographical barriers. The online teacher preparation makes use of online tools and resources to enhance classroom based education and teacher candidates teach online. Teachers who teach online must be able to create an online learning

environment where the student is physically distant from him. Online learning is pervasive throughout the teacher preparation program to allow for each teacher to be prepared to fill the roles of online course designer, online teacher and facilitator.

In the context of edTPA, teacher candidates are supposed to submit the samples of their work in the classroom like video clips of their instruction, examples of student work, and planning and assessment documentation etc. which is possible in online teacher education programmes. Candidates are supposed to submit videotapes of three to five lesson segments from an instructional unit that show evidence of their teaching abilities for one group of students. They also submit artefacts from a clinical experience that includes assessments of student learning and commentaries about their planning, instruction, and evaluation of student learning.

In edTPA, These sources of information about teaching are scored using 15 analytic rubrics. Using edTPA scorecards, online teacher candidates' learning outcomes can be compared to candidates completing traditional face to face (F2F) programs after the completion of teacher education program. Online teacher preparation programs are equivalent and in some cases more effective method for preparing teachers. It may be a more adept program delivery platform for preparing educators for planning for instruction and assessing student learning outcomes.

Conclusion

Education is a field that is dynamic. As teacher preparation programs adapt to the changes brought by edTPA, we are able to address the challenges in diverse assessment and enhance the educative possibilities of each wave of reform. edTPA is used for developing knowledge and skills of candidates and to be ready for the classroom. It is an effective measure of entry-level teaching skills and readiness for the classroom regardless of the path candidates take to teaching. It focuses attention on the capacity to teach rather than structure of program.

Teacher preparation programs involve face-to-face (F2F) and online modes of delivery in higher education. In the context of edTPA, face to face (F2F) teacher preparation programs have some limitations compared to online modes of delivery. Online Teacher Preparation Programs should make use of edTPA in higher education for constructing an effective teacher for tomorrow.

This new initiative can meet the needs of educators and policymakers for robust and reliable data on candidate effectiveness to guide and inform preparation, credentialing,

and program improvement. Also, there is a need to develop and provide more training materials on edTPA. The evidence that can be used to improve teacher education programs and classroom teaching-learning process.

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