Chapter 70
How to Thrive in the Changing Landscape of Teacher Education:
Planning for Implementation of Performance-Based Assessments

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores a number of issues for consideration when adopting and implementing edTPA as a summative performance-based assessment of preservice teacher candidate tasks. This chapter aims to offer guidance and support for programs in the beginning stages of implementation of edTPA. Each of the considerations includes a vignette from personal experiences at a regional comprehensive university in the southeast. Issues discussed include timeline for implementation, buy-in, decision-making processes, professional development and training, mapping, and next steps. The vignettes detail particular issues or concerns and include faculty, staff, and/or teacher candidates. Data used to develop the vignettes was collected via interviews, surveys, and reflections.

INTRODUCTION

Embracing the New Landscape of Teacher Education

Research supports the use of multiple measures to evaluate teacher candidate effectiveness; edTPA can be a valid tool when used as one of several measures (Darling-Hammond, 2006). The landscape of teacher education is changing and educators should embrace innovative practices that prepare our candidates to have a direct impact on student achievement. Evaluations of teacher should include measures of teacher quality, teaching quality, and teaching effectiveness (Darling-Hammond, 2007). Traditional measures of teachers' competency for licensing decisions have been criticized for their lack of authenticity and predictive validity (Darling-Hammond, 2001; Haertle, 1991; Mitchell, Robinson, Plake, & Knowles, 2001; Porter, Youngs, & Odden, 2001). In an era in which teacher education has been challenged to demonstrate its effectiveness, performance assessments have become beneficial measures of teacher effectiveness as well as a means to assess the quality of teacher preparation programs for state accountability systems and program accreditation (Chung, R.R, 2006; Pecheone, R.L.). The term "teacher quality" is a broad concept, and refers to "the bundle of personal traits, skills, and understandings an individual brings to teaching, including dispositions to behave in certain ways" (Darling-Hammond, 2007). Teacher quality is composed of a set of qualities that would typically be relevant in a variety of contexts. For purposes of licensure, a teacher should be assessed on breadth of knowledge and skills. More specifically, Darling-Hammond (2007) defines teacher quality in this way:

Teaching quality has to do with strong instruction that enables a wide range of students to learn. Such instruction meets the demands of the discipline, the goals of instruction, and the needs of students in a particular context. (p.5)

If we view teacher effectiveness as defined not by a teacher's actions or skills but by the outcomes for students, then how we describe effectiveness becomes the most important, and most problematic, standard for assessing good teaching (Newton, 2010). Goldhaber and Anthony (2007), studying student data in North Carolina for the school years 1996-97 and 1997-98, used value-added models to see if National Board (NB) certified teachers were more successful in increasing student achievement than other teachers. They found that NB certification, which depends on the results of a performance assessment-type portfolio of work, was associated with higher student achievement. Goldhaber and Anthony (2007) concluded that, "NBPTS certification does in fact convey information about teacher quality above and beyond what can be learned from performance on teacher licensure tests alone" (p. 141). These results were maintained even when they included school-level fixed effects. Because of these and other studies, it is now widely believed that edTPA has potential to be a valuable and reliable performance assessment tool in not only predicting beginning teacher success, but quite possibly also predicting classroom student achievement.

Teacher preparation programs across the nation have long utilized some method of performance assessment to evaluate the preparedness of teacher candidates. These assessments have often been developed as a portfolio, tracking certain evidences deemed "good" teaching practice. More recently, there has been a push to move away from these-"grassroots" assessment portfolios towards a more standardized practice that would hold pre-service teachers to the same set of expectations on a broader scale. In order to develop this set of common expectations, a collection of teacher educators came together in order

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