

## CHAPTER 5

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# THE POWER OF SUPPORTS TO IMPROVE edTPA OUTCOMES

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### In the Beginning . . .

In 2012, the state Professional Standards Commission (PSC) announced their decision to incorporate a high stakes teacher performance assessment for initial teacher certification candidates. Candidates would have to pass this assessment in order to become certified in the state. At the time, there was institutional pushback based on the fact there was little to no reliability data

regarding the scoring of the assessment, and validity data were based on content that many agree were important indicators of effective teaching, although not the only indicators. Told that this was a “done deal,” our strategy switched to “if you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em” since we had no choice in the matter. The focus was now how to build structures that supported faculty and candidates in understanding the assessment tasks and rubrics in order to ensure that candidates were prepared to be successful.

Educator preparation programs (EPPs) have been the target for change on national, state, and local levels. This changing landscape has included all areas of education preparation from candidate selection, pre-service curricula, and comprehensive field experiences to data collection, candidate/completer tracking, and performance assessment. The ultimate objective for many of these changes is that beginning teachers have the pedagogical skills and expertise in planning, management, and assessment on the first day of school. One initiative to meet this objective is a high-stakes work sample portfolio assessment, edTPA®.

The edTPA portfolio is a national performance-based assessment that focuses on the content pedagogy and student learning in a classroom (Wie & Pecheone, 2010) and was adopted by the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) as a high-stakes assessment for all pre-service candidates eligible for an initial teaching certification. Both PSC and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) endorse edTPA as a tool for program accreditation.

In an era in which teacher education has been challenged to demonstrate its effectiveness, performance assessments have emerged not only as useful measures of teacher performance but also as a way to evaluate the quality of credential programs for state accountability systems and program accreditation. (Pecheone & Cheung, 2006, p. 23)

Research pointed us to the fact that supports are necessary for a successful completion of the edTPA portfolio and the types and frequency of those supports can be generalized to some degree, but should also be designed around the unique needs of teacher candidates at specific universities (Baron, 2015). Our work is an attempt to determine how to best support teacher candidates’ edTPA completion and success. In that effort, we began to systematically explore data related to the following questions:

- What are the supports that the edTPA Team built to support edTPA success?
- How did cooperating teachers view their role as a support in the development of their edTPA portfolios?

- How did supervising faculty view their role as a support to teacher candidates as the students completed the edTPA portfolios?
- Which supports did teacher candidates find most useful in edTPA success?

This ongoing work illustrates how the formation of a collaborative team of dedicated faculty, staff, and cooperating teachers, listened to candidate and faculty voices and engaged stakeholders as they constructed specific supports in response to data gathered.

### **First Things First**

By the spring of 2014, we came to terms with the reality that edTPA was here to stay. The state had identified the academic year of 2015–2016 as the first consequential year for implementation of this requirement for all initial certification candidates. This gave us a very short time to prepare. The first order of business was to establish leadership that would collaborate on primary initiatives. An edTPA team, established during Fall 2013 as a subgroup of the college assessment committee, was comprised of the associate dean, director of field experiences, LiveText administrator, two faculty representatives, and two department heads. One of the first initiatives discussed was the professional development of the faculty who prepared teacher candidates since the motivation and pedagogical content knowledge of the faculty are the foundations of student outcomes. Schieb and Karabenick (2011) highlighted several themes leading to successful motivation through professional development. From systemic reforms such as curriculum alignment to the mentoring of candidates through the edTPA process, the understanding and engagement of the faculty is necessary.

In the summer 2014, all faculty and clinical supervisors were encouraged through a paid stipend to attend local evaluation training presented by a national expert on edTPA. All but two faculty members attended. Feedback was mixed with many stating, “What’s new? This is what we *do*,” to “This is just another new thing the state is mandating and will be gone in a couple of years replaced by something new.” Other reactions took the form of grumbling that this assessment was overly complicated, heavy handed, and invasive. Faculty edTPA buy-in was going to be a bit tougher than we had expected.

Meanwhile, guided by research and lessons learned from other adopters, many different ideas and initiatives came out of the edTPA team’s work. An analysis of data gathered led to supports tailored for the university’s candidates in an effort to result in a successful completion of the edTPA portfolio requirement (Petty, Heafner, Lachance, & Polly, 2016; Suleiman & Byrd,

2016). In addition, once faculty were familiar with the edTPA constructs, they instituted curricular revisions and updates that helped candidates better understand the process and requirements for the edTPA portfolio carrier in the program of study (Hobbs, 2015). The use of exemplars (Burns, Henry, & Lindauer, 2015) by candidates proved to be a useful support as evidenced by program completer surveys at the end of each semester. Another very important support, suggested by the work of Burns et al. (2015) and Greenblatt (2016), was that cooperating teachers should be better informed about the edTPA process and how its requirements impacted their student teachers.

### **Our Pilot Study of edTPA Implementation in Our Programs**

We began edTPA implementation in spring 2014 by randomly identifying a candidate from each program. Participants were encouraged to volunteer to submit an edTPA portfolio for national scoring at no financial cost to them. We made the case that candidates would be assisting the college and their peers in gearing up for this assessment, as well as furthering their own understanding of pedagogy; in other words, an educative experience. Participants included volunteers from 4 out of 9 programs (early childhood education [BSED & MAT], special education, mathematics, and visual arts). After submission, candidates were interviewed regarding their individual experiences and completed a short open-response survey.

During the academic year 2014–2015, every teacher candidate, both graduate and undergraduate, was required to submit a portfolio for local scoring, though only randomly selected candidates representing each of 9 programs submitted portfolios for official scoring by Pearson (Fall 2014, n=26; Spring 2015, n=22). Programs included elementary education, special education, health and physical education, secondary science, secondary history, secondary English language arts, secondary mathematics, visual (art) and performing arts (music). Elementary, special education, and secondary education are offered at both the Bachelor of Science and Master of Arts levels at the university. Costs of national submissions were paid for by the college and through vouchers provided by the state. Feedback was attained through a survey based on the previous pilot results. That feedback was used to further develop candidate supports for edTPA as well as plan professional development for supervising faculty.

Plans for assessing the impact and effectiveness of the supports resulted in further development of teacher candidate surveys, supervising faculty surveys, cooperating teacher surveys, and structured interview protocols. Teacher candidates were surveyed at the conclusion of the official LiveText

submission seminars for academic years 2015–2016 and 2016–2017. The survey questions were developed from a document analysis from the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE, 2015b) materials available in the American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE, 2016) resource library as well as documents and PowerPoint presentations from EPP sponsored seminars and informational sessions on edTPA (SCALE, 2015a).

Cooperating teachers were interviewed using a structured protocol at the conclusion of the Fall 2016 semester. Supervising faculty participants, consisting of fifteen university academic and clinical faculty, were also interviewed.

## Building Supports

The edTPA team identified the need to build initial supports for candidates in the pilot semesters. These supports included video support seminars for Task 2, LiveText and Pearson submission support, and an edTPA resource library. All resources were available in LiveText and included seminar PowerPoint presentations, and resources for supervising faculty, content mentors (faculty experts in content areas), and cooperating teachers.

Although there were many supports developed along our journey toward edTPA success, they can be discussed in three categories: *human resources* from faculty and staff, *document* resources such as handbooks and other documents and websites, and support *seminars* held throughout each semester.

### *Human Resources: Faculty and Staff*

The human resources were perhaps the most appreciated and needed. The edTPA team worked collaboratively to identify key faculty roles and define responsibilities and to develop the resources, both textual and in seminar form, to support our candidates. Additionally, in Spring 2016, the creation of the position of edTPA coordinator was approved as well as a permanent edTPA Committee. The necessity for a central point of contact for candidates, faculty, and cooperating teachers had become evident. The edTPA coordinator had six responsibilities:

- to establish expert knowledge of all edTPA content areas used by university candidates;
- to deliver professional development to faculty undertaking the mentoring of candidates through the edTPA process;
- to serve as a resource to faculty, candidates, and schools;
- to attend and present at edTPA conferences both regional and national;

- to maintain a candidate database; and
- to chair a retake committee for candidates unsuccessful in meeting cut scores, and the edTPA committee.

The edTPA committee had the responsibility of determining candidate supports, the structure of the submission seminar, the EPP's retake policy, and a continual restructuring of how the university could better support teacher candidates. The committee included members from each teacher education program at the university who could better define the role of faculty support for teacher candidates. With this new administrative structure, the EPP had a single person to contact with any and all matters edTPA. This has resulted in many fewer miscommunications and a more consistent message to our candidates.

Initially, faculty and university supervisors acted as content mentors with the faculty chosen on the basis of their expertise in a specific content area. Content mentors attended each seminar with their teacher candidates regarding edTPA presentations. They were given time to work with their candidates during each seminar and could also meet with them at other convenient times. That format was based on feedback from the 2014 seminar, when content mentors were not fully aware of the edTPA guidelines that had been shared with the candidates. The second year (2015), both candidates and mentors heard the same information from the same resources. Previously, clinical faculty only served as process mentors, which translated to supporting the deadlines and processes of edTPA, but with no knowledge of the content required in the edTPA portfolios. However, clinical faculty expressed a need to learn more about constructs and tasks of edTPA. Based on that feedback, the edTPA Committee developed a series of four seminars for the supervising faculty to be trained in local scoring and appropriate feedback for the teacher candidates.

### *Documents and Text Supports*

Document and text supports were uploaded into each candidates' LiveText edTPA assignment. Because it became an overwhelming amount of information, the supervising faculty were also given summaries of the documents available so they could appropriately help their candidates as needed. These were indexed within LiveText so candidates could easily find what they needed. For example, the academic language handout from SCALE was easily found under the title of "academic language." Checklists developed for the video seminars and the submission seminars were provided during the seminar before they were needed and explained in depth. In addition to presenting the task-specific information at each seminar, the seminars were video recorded and technology-based presentations were uploaded into LiveText so students could go back and check any information

as needed. Technical screenshots of how to organize documents and submit assignments into LiveText were included.

One very popular set of documents proved to be the edTPA content-specific exemplars, which were also housed in LiveText. We asked students each semester what would help them the most and they consistently asked for exemplars in their content areas. The edTPA Coordinator created a set of exemplars covering ten content areas, using EPP candidates' portfolios as models. Candidates signed a waiver permitting the use of their work as resources for training and development. The edTPA coordinator developed the exemplars using a system of highlighting to indicate what a scorer likely would tag as evidence for meeting rubric expectations. She also highlighted what would need to be done to achieve a higher level score with an explanation of why it was required. These have proved very useful to our candidates; but, we recognize that as edTPA progresses, they will become outdated.

### *Seminars*

Seminars for candidates were held on campus four times during a semester and were planned and facilitated by the edTPA coordinator, the field placement office director, and the LiveText coordinator. The first seminar provided an overview of edTPA with an in-depth focus on the context for learning (and context of learning Task 4 for elementary education facilitated by a faculty member who was an expert on Task 4). The second seminar focused almost exclusively on Task 1 and planning documents: lesson plans, instructional materials, planned assessments, and the planning commentary. Each of the first five rubrics was discussed in depth. The third seminar focused on Task 2. Interns were given a three-part "instructional assignment" to complete (a) during the upcoming Seminar 3, (b) during the video support seminar, and (c) for the final submission seminar. This instructional tool was designed to help candidates critically analyze their videos. In addition, Rubrics 6–10 were covered in depth and video permission forms were collected and scanned into candidates' LiveText accounts. The fourth seminar focused on Task 3 and an in-depth review of Rubrics 11–15 as well as what artifacts from Task 1 were to be completed in Task 3.

Video support seminars were also scheduled for a time when candidates would have finished their video recording. These seminars offered assistance with formatting, cropping, and compressing files. Candidates were given a check-sheet to have completed before these seminars that required them to have chosen their videos and documented their time stamps as required by content area. The goal was for the candidates to have completed the video portion of Task 2 by the end of the seminar. Submission seminars were scheduled by content area and at times that would not interfere with candidates who were actively teaching.

In 2016–2017, the edTPA Committee restructured seminar days to allow candidates free time to write and collaborate either with their colleagues or with their faculty content mentors. In most cases, their content mentors were also their university supervisors in the classroom. Other interactive activities were added starting in fall 2016. These included a *Teaching for Equity* (Whittaker, 2016) emphasis in the first candidate seminar to support Task 1, an interactive worksheet for students to use to track their Task 2 video preparation, and a requirement for seminar admission or a “ticket in the door” for the final submission seminar which included how each file was named, the number of files required, and the type of document.

Also during the Spring 2017 semester, three university supervisors hosted interactive discussion sessions within the seminars focusing on topics such as authentic assessments, effective differentiation, and professional dispositions and communication.

## **Building Communication and Collaboration**

Research was necessary in order to understand the impact of edTPA on all stakeholders working to support teacher candidates. By understanding how cooperating teachers and university supervisors viewed their knowledge and responsibilities of the edTPA assessment and specific tasks, we surmised that we would be able to support these key resources. Surveying and interviewing cooperating teachers and university supervisors was key in building communication and collaboration that ultimately resulted in a successful edTPA process.

### ***Cooperating Teachers***

Although we routinely conducted a survey of our cooperating teachers in the field, only a few of those questions were directly associated with supporting our candidates through the edTPA process, which left many of our edTPA questions unanswered. Since this is one of the most consequential assessments required of our candidates, we decided to conduct in-person and telephone interviews of six cooperating teachers from a variety of content areas and grade levels. We selected teachers in the areas of elementary education, music, visual arts, and secondary history, science, and mathematics.

We discovered that although the cooperating teachers knew about edTPA, they really had no clear or organized way of understanding how they should support their candidates while in their classrooms. How much or little they knew about the edTPA portfolio depended largely on two factors: (a) the amount of knowledge the university supervisor knew and communicated to the cooperating teacher, and (b) how much the candidates themselves understood. Some of the cooperating teachers felt they had a



clear idea of the requirements, partly because they mirrored the portfolios required for National Certification, and others because they had taken the initiative to research the edTPA website. However, many of the teachers simply did not have the time to do the research and were confused by the candidate's need to plan for teaching and video recording lessons so far in advance of teaching them. Planning well in advance was complicated by the use of the school districts' use of pacing guides, which dictated what content needed to be covered in a given nine weeks or semester. We found that some candidates' plans to teach were thwarted because the classroom teacher had to reteach concepts or other school activities, such as field trips, got in the way. Setting aside three or more days for the candidate to video record was a problem in those cases.

The requirement for the candidates to video record their edTPA lessons also was problematic for some cooperating teachers. Although the need for the candidates to video record without distractions was emphasized repeatedly in their on-campus seminars, the real world of the classroom didn't always cooperate. Some of the interruptions were laughable after the fact, but not for the stressed candidates desperately trying to complete their videos. One video showed a school nurse entering the room to do a "lice check" of the students. Another video had the potential to make the national scorer motion sick as a result of zooming in and out with the video camera and making dizzying swoops across the classroom. All of these issues pointed to the fact that the requirements and needs of their candidates to complete edTPA had not been well communicated to the cooperating teachers.

Cooperating teachers who took part in the structured interviews had several suggestions of how to remedy this problem. One was to create short videos or online modules for them to use as a guide. Another was to hold webinars, and yet others were to create a binder or a PowerPoint for them to use. Fortunately, all of these resources had previously been created, but the problem was that there was no one central place for all cooperating teachers to receive the same information and be able to discuss it in a common forum. The request from cooperating teachers to remedy this was to have a day on campus just for them, where all of their questions could be answered before the school year began and they were busy teaching their classes. Thus, a professional Teacher Camp was developed that reviewed all internship requirements with an extensive edTPA overview and plenty of time for discussion and questions, and included packets of information and websites. Teacher Camp will be an annual event, bringing new cooperating teachers each summer in an effort to ensure that we are all on the same page.

### *Supervising Faculty*

In Fall 2016, 15 university supervisors from across the EPP (elementary, special education, secondary health and physical education, mathematics, music, and art education) were trained during four three-hour seminars conducted by the edTPA coordinator using the model developed by SCALE (SCALE, 2015b). Redacted edTPA portfolios written by our own university candidates were examined (with appropriate permissions from candidates) and faculty scores were compared to actual Pearson scores. A survey of 7 open-ended questions and 2 Likert-scale questions were completed by the 15 supervising faculty.

Faculty who had been supervising candidates through edTPA said that they participated because they wanted to be sure that they truly understood how edTPA scoring worked. Others were new to the process of supervising candidates through edTPA. The supervising faculty were shown how the prompts in the commentaries were closely aligned with the rubrics and how much national scorers depend on the responses to those prompts. The importance of having the lesson plans and instructional materials and assessment support those responses was discussed. The faculty worked together in content-area groups to decide on scores for each rubric and develop a rationale and evidence to support their chosen scores. After each group presented their scores and reasoning, the Pearson scores were provided. For the most part, faculty were within one level of the Pearson scores. One participant stated, “I understand the process better now. Now I see what the reasoning is behind the rubric level scores.” Another supervisor added, “Talking it through helped me understand why in-depth responses are scored at a higher level. Working together as a group and looking closely at the rubrics was eye-opening.” This training gave our supervising faculty the ability to support cooperating teachers and their teacher candidates in a more highly informed fashion.

### *Candidate Perspectives*

Using the survey data from teacher candidate participants from Fall 2015–Fall 2016, we attempted to ascertain which supports developed by the EPP, supervising faculty, and cooperating teachers were perceived to be the most useful for completing the edTPA portfolio. Teacher candidates responded to a survey at the end of each semester. The survey was modified during the first 3 semesters and only scores for the semesters that the edTPA was required (identified as highly consequential) were used for this study (academic years 2015–2016 and 2016–2017). The final survey consisted of 10 questions.

Candidates continued to report feeling “overwhelmed” by the task of developing the edTPA portfolio. Almost 60% of the candidates reported that edTPA took 61 or more hours to complete on the Fall 2016 edTPA survey.

Candidates ranked the perceived usefulness of all of the supports and resources provided related to their completion of the edTPA. Two main prompts from the survey were analyzed due to impact on the supports: Prompt 2 and Prompt 6. Prompt 2 required participants to rank order their preference for usefulness of provided resources. That prompt asked candidates to rank in order of VALUE the following supports: edTPA seminars, content mentors, edTPA handbooks, edTPA exemplars, LiveText submission seminar, and video support seminar. In Spring 2015, two additional supports were added: peer support and edTPA resources (which included Making Better Choices, Rubric Level Progressions, and other resources available on the edTPA website). A score was then calculated for each support and allowed a comparison of the supports.

Survey Prompt 6 rated the helpfulness of each support resource on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (not helpful at all) to 5 (excellent support). That prompt listed support personnel such as the process mentor (university supervisor), content mentor (program faculty), cooperating teacher, video support (learning commons), and submission support (LiveText coordinator).

Shown in Figure 5.1 are the scores from Teacher Candidate Prompt 2: Rank in order of VALUE the following support structures. Scores are indicated by semester. The helpfulness of each support resource was rated on a 5-point Likert scale (see Figure 5.2). This again is indicated by semester. Fall 2015 participants indicated the submission support was the most valuable resource for them. Spring 2016 and Fall 2016 participants both indicated the Cooperating Teacher was the most valuable resource for them.

As shown in Figure 5.1, edTPA Support Values, physical resources such as edTPA Handbooks, edTPA exemplars, and edTPA resources documents all were ranked high by teacher candidates in terms of the value of their

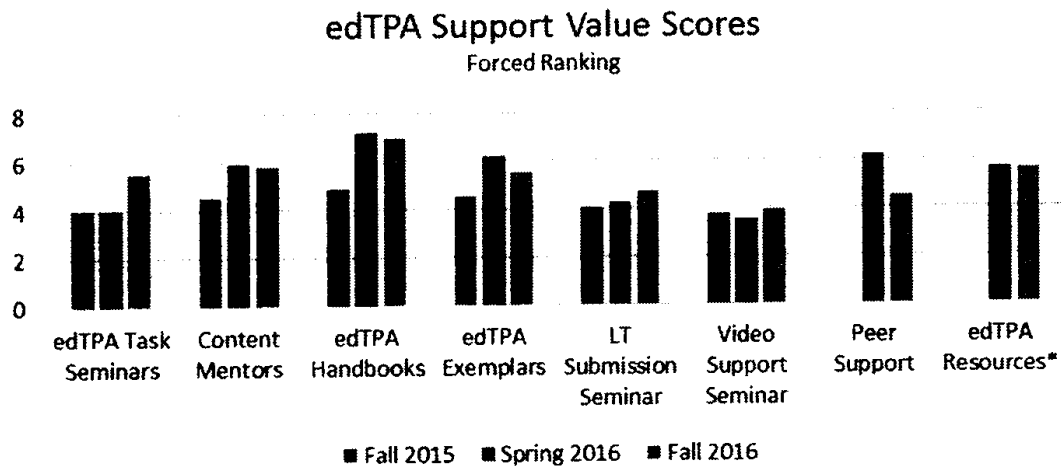
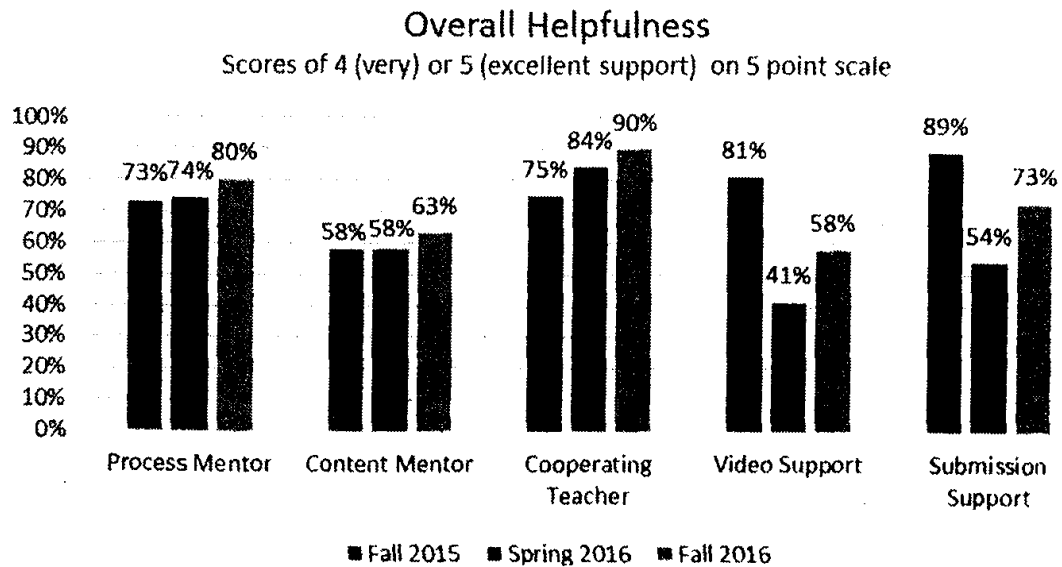


Figure 5.1 edTPA supports value scores.



**Figure 5.2** Overall helpfulness.

support. However, content mentors and peer support were also highly valued, indicating that having personal support was very helpful to the candidates.

For edTPA overall helpfulness (see Figure 5.2), candidates ranked similar factors much higher. As ranked by percentage, the human factors such as process mentors, cooperating teachers, and content mentors all scored at between 58% and 90% in terms of how helpful they were perceived by the teacher candidates. The helpfulness of the support seminars showed a wider disparity in terms of helpfulness, scoring from 41% to 89%. Of special note is the upward trajectory of the helpfulness of cooperating teachers. This may be an indicator of cooperating teachers' increased knowledge, familiarity and comfort with the edTPA.

As these candidate supports continue to be refined based on these survey and individual comments from the teacher candidates, we expect their usefulness scores to increase. This is an evolving process, which will continue every semester.

## REFLECTIONS ON WHAT WE LEARNED

### Candidate Preparation

Candidate surveys indicated that providing both a process mentor and a content mentor was confusing for candidates and also placed a heavy work burden on faculty in addition to their regular duties. To remedy this shortcoming, university supervisors were trained in local scoring evaluation

by the edTPA coordinator, who was a nationally certified scorer. Candidates also reported a disconnect between their curricular supports and the requirements of compiling the edTPA portfolio. Over the past three semesters, significant program curriculum revisions have been developed and approved by the university-wide curriculum committee. Those changes and revisions in candidate edTPA supports are discussed below.

In order to prepare candidates for this rigorous in-depth assessment, both graduate and undergraduate programs have aligned coursework with edTPA best practices. All candidates use an EPP lesson planning template recognized by the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) as an exemplary format (AASU, no date). That template and its corresponding rubric are key assessments in all educator preparation programs and is aligned with edTPA Planning Task 1. In addition, methods courses have required the videotaping and critique of instruction with input by the supervising faculty as well as the cooperating teacher. Finally, a stand-alone assessment course is now part of graduate programs, while an entire “mini-edTPA” assignment is embedded in the undergraduate courses. Internship requirements have been adjusted to reflect the use of performance evaluation standards, which mirror the state’s teacher evaluation standards (Georgia Department of Education, 2014). Using edTPA as a performance assessment of teacher candidates during the student teaching semester has created what one cooperating teacher called a realistic way to prepare for one’s own classroom using “the same book with a different cover.”

## **Cooperating Teachers**

The face-to-face and phone interviews with selected cooperating teachers yielded information not previously recognized. The cooperating teachers’ perceptions of the edTPA process aligned with McLee’s (2015) perspective that the edTPA portfolio was a realistic preparation for the world of the real classroom.

Resulting from the interviews, most of the cooperating teachers felt that they had adequately supported their teacher candidates as far as helping the candidates plan lessons, but felt that they (the cooperating teachers) did not know enough about edTPA to really understand the requirements of their teacher candidates. All cooperating teachers agreed that they would welcome a time in person, and perhaps on campus, to have a forum to ask questions and understand more about edTPA. The teachers had been provided with a webinar and SCALE documents (SCALE, 2015a) that outlined the role of the cooperating teacher, but all indicated the need for more information. The office of field experiences director and the edTPA coordinator traveled to schools with at least three cooperating teachers to

give them a crash course on edTPA in Spring 2016, but it was widely felt that more information was needed. The cooperating teachers also felt that coming together in person would help them understand the parameters of their supports to better assist their teacher candidates. Teacher candidates indicated that they continued to need edTPA support from cooperating teachers to identify their focus students (a requirement for their edTPA portfolio to indicate a high, medium, and low-performing student) as well as when planning for when lessons would be taught.

### **Supervising Faculty**

A total of 15 faculty, both clinical and academic, attended a series of 5 seminars (2–3 hours each) designed to provide local evaluation training (Barron, 2015) as approved by SCALE (SCALE, 2015b). All faculty indicated they did not understand the rubrics deeply enough nor the thinking behind them. All were experienced university supervisors who understood best practices of teaching. The faculty felt the preparation of the edTPA portfolio certainly met the requirements of best practices, but also felt it was a heavy burden for teacher candidates. Supervising faculty closely studied the edTPA rubrics, using institutional portfolios as their training modules in order to increase understanding. All faculty going through the training scored within one level (adjacent) of the Pearson score, indicating their acceptable understanding of the scoring process.

## **MOVING FORWARD**

The teacher candidate supports outlined in this study have been added and modified over the past three years based on results of teacher candidate surveys, cooperating teacher surveys, and the supervising faculty surveys after local edTPA scoring training. The edTPA Team, established in late Fall 2013 and evolved into the edTPA Committee in 2016–2017, has attended and presented at edTPA conferences; maintained strong relationships with the State Professional Standards Commission and other institutions of higher education using edTPA; and participated in webinars for edTPA coordinators across the state. That participation has resulted in a wide network of experts who advise the EPP in what is considered acceptable candidate support (something that has changed markedly over the past two years [e.g., *Understanding Rubric Level Progressions* was not available to candidates until 2015]). In addition, the edTPA committee was charged with planning and improving edTPA policies, seminars and boot camps, curricular recommendations, and procedures for implementation and submission support.

The training of supervising faculty to serve as edTPA mentors for teacher candidates has provided candidates with support and feedback. Curricular changes are developmentally preparing teacher candidates for the edTPA portfolio assessment. However, there continues to be faculty content mentors who are tasked with mentoring candidates through edTPA with no release from a full workload. Our attempt to give the best possible support to our candidates, while relieving the workload of non-supervising faculty has been a primary focus during 2016–2017 academic year. Using the combined knowledge of several state universities as well as our regional edTPA consultant, the edTPA committee is developing foundational supports for our candidates that are program-based rather than college-focused. Based on the belief that each program has designed its own curricular supports and best knows its content area, it is logical that the programs would become the center of support for their majors. Program driven on-campus boot camps are envisioned for Fall 2017 that relieve individual faculty from mentoring each candidate individually. Professional development and local scoring training will be available for any new supervising faculty each semester.

Future initiatives include requiring boot camps three times during the semester to review Tasks 1, 2, and 3, respectively. Boot camps are scheduled to occur in the morning of the seminar days, while the afternoon will be open for candidates to write and to develop their edTPA portfolios. This, we hope, will give our candidates content-specific support from faculty experts in addition to edTPA support in the classroom from their university supervisors.

Our work will expand to include more in-depth perceptions of the edTPA process with the development of an open-ended survey, and focus groups to include both candidates and content mentors. We believe the results of this work along with the descriptions of the supports provided can help other teacher preparation programs beginning an edTPA portfolio requirement. Starting a new program from scratch can take a lot of trial and error and it was our intention that by being able to see what worked for one university might streamline the process at other universities.

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