Conflicting Perspectives: A Comparison of edTPA Objectives to Actual Experiences of Teacher Candidates and Educators in New York City Schools

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The edTPA is a performance-based assessment of teacher candidates created by the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning and Equity (SCALE) and nationally scored by Pearson Education. It is also promoted by American Association of Colleges of Teacher Educators (AACTE) as a "standards-based assessment." As of the spring of 2018, the edTPA is used as a requirement for program accreditation or teacher candidate certification or program completion in 18 states. This article analyzes the stated goals, objectives, and benefits made by SCALE and AACTE and compares them to data collected from interviews and open-ended questions in a with teacher candidates and teacher educators in New York City who were sharing about their experience with the edTPA. Overall, evidence from these participants does not support that the goals, objectives, and benefits of the are being met. In fact, in several instances, they are contradicted. Although this data is not meant to be generalizable, it brings up concerns that warrant consideration and future study. Since in many states the edTPA is a high-stakes test for certification in many states in the U.S., it is important to investigate if the intended outcomes are being met.

Introduction and Background Information

Teacher quality is an important issue throughout the United States ranging from individual parents' concerns for their own children to employers demand for a prepared workforce (Cochran-Smith et al., 2012). From the early years of teacher training in the United States, competency for entering the profession was met through licensure and professional credentials from a teacher preparation program, which has long been politicized and controversial (Cochran-Smith, Feinman-Nemser, McIntyre, & Demers Kelly E., 2008).

Over the last century, the responsibility for assessing readiness for entering the teaching profession in the U.S. shifted several times from the individual candidate to teacher education programs and from inputs to outputs (D. M. Campbell, Melenyzer, Nettles, & Wyman, Jr., 2000; Cochran-Smith et al., 2008). This led to a movement to professionalize teaching from within. The professionalization movement resulted in an increased interest in the use of performance assessments with the intension of giving teacher candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their

teaching ability in context. Although U.S. teacher education programs evaluate their teacher candidates through lesson observations, local assessments typically result in variations in what is assessed as well as in the quality of the tools themselves. With this in mind, Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning and Equity (SCALE) created the edTPA and marketed it as "a rigorous, valid assessment that is scored reliably" and a "nationally available standards-based assessment" (AACTE, n.d.-a). The American Association of Colleges of Teacher Educators (AACTE) has endorsed the edTPA and worked with SCALE to issue a list of stated goals, objectives, and benefits outlined on the "About the edTPA" and "edTPA FAQ" webpages. This article will examine these statements and compare them with the data collected from a study that investigated the experiences of New York City teacher candidates and teacher educators with the elementary education edTPA portfolio.

Previous literature shows mixed results in terms of the experiences of those taking a performance assessment. Some teacher candidates found that taking a performance assessment made them a more reflective practitioner, better teacher, made their planning more detailed, or helped them meet the needs of English language learners (Abdul-Alim, 2013; Barron, 2015; Bunch, Aguirre, & Tellez, 2009; Bunch, Aguirre, & Téllez, 2015; Butler, 2015; Huston, 2015; Langlie, 2015; Lunsford, 2015; Margolis & Doring, 2013), while others felt that the assessment interfered with their student teaching experience, changed the focus of their coursework, and was not an authentic measure of their day-to-day work in the classroom (Chiu, 2014; McConville, 2014; Proulx, 2014). The challenges and costs, both for teacher candidates and for schools of education, may prove to be a barrier to entry for those already underrepresented in the teaching profession (Davis, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

This study uses a critical policy approach in investigating how "the discourse of power" and to examine the theory that "policy typically serves to reproduce existing structures of domination and inequality" (Levinson, Sutton, & Winstead, 2009, p. 769). This study also gives a voice to those on whom the policy is enacted –those who are dominated in the power dynamic.

The comparison of the SCALE and AACTE's statements and the data from the participants in this study are also guided by policy theories including: the law of unintended consequences, policy paradoxes, and Campbell's Law. The "law of unintended consequences"

states that "Policies created for one set of purposes almost always create an additional set of results that were not part of the original plan. Very often these unintended consequences are seriously adverse" (Hall, 2014, ch. 1, sect. 3, para. 9). The "law of unintended consequences" occurs whenever a new rule or regulation is implemented which can undo a policy that has good intentions (Hall, 2014). Additionally, policies may benefit some stakeholders while having consequences for others. This is what Stone (2002) calls a "policy paradox," which can result in contradictory policies that work towards the same goal because stakeholders have different priorities.

The unintended consequences of policies are also exacerbated when the use of accountability mechanisms are corrupted when they become high-stakes (Nichols & Berliner, 2007). The corruption of the intention of a policy when it becomes high stakes is known as "Campbell's Law." Campbell (1979) explained that "when test scores become the goal of the teaching process, they both lose their value as indicators of educational status and distort the educational process in undesirable ways" (p. 35).

Methodology and Context

This article compares SCALE and AACTE's public statements of goals, objectives, and benefits outlined on the "About the edTPA" and "edTPA FAQ" webpages with data collected from interviews and open-ended questions in a mixed-methods study that investigated the experiences of New York City teacher candidates and teacher educators with the elementary education edTPA portfolio. The teacher candidates in this study: a) took the elementary education edTPA, b) attended a school of education in New York City, and c) student taught in a New York City public school. Teacher candidates who were getting dual certified (special education, early childhood, bilingual education, middle school extension, etc.) were included in the study as long as they took the elementary education edTPA to become a certified teacher.

The analysis for this article focused on data from nine schools of education and included surveys and interviews from fourteen teacher candidates and interviews from eight teacher educators. The survey included information about personal, student teaching placement, and school of education information, as well as Likert scale questions about their experience taking the edTPA. The interviews were unstructured and started with a general prompt asking participants to share about their experience with the edTPA.

Data was analyzed using a critical policy lens. First, the statements from the "About the edTPA" and "edTPA FAQ" webpages were explored to get a sense of SCALE and AACTE's intended consequences of the edTPA. These were listed as: goals, objectives, benefits for teacher preparation programs, benefits for states, and how the edTPA can be "educative" for schools, teacher candidates, licensure boards, and policy makers on the webpages. The interview and open-ended survey data was coded using values coding and versus coding (Saldaña, 2013) to find evidence supporting or contradicting the statements made by SCALE and AACTE. This coding explored the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the participants about the policy and how they reveal issues related to the policy paradoxes, tensions, or issues of power. Additional coding was done for additional consequences or benefits of the edTPA. This included the following a priori codes that were used for the interviews. Codes were created from information gathered from the pilot of the surveys and interviews, literature review, and the researcher's experience working with teacher candidates taking the edTPA.

Triangulation occurred using survey and interviews with student teachers and interviews with teacher educators. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Respondent validation and member checking occurred by allowing respondents to read the analysis drawn from their data and comment on it. Gathering a significant sample of interviews allowed for discrepant cases. Additionally, the data collection procedures were piloted and feedback was given to improve the construct validity of the tool. Reliability was considered by making sure the definition of the codes remained stable throughout the process by comparing data with the codes and writing memos about the codes and their definitions (Creswell, 2013).

The word "participants" was used when the data was about both teacher candidates and teacher educators. Pseudonyms were used when sharing findings from interviews with teacher candidates. Teacher educators were labeled as Teacher Educator A-G. Colleges were labeled separately as College 1-7. If the findings would lead to identifiable information, the general terms were used (college, teacher educator).

Population of the Study

Nine schools of education were represented across all participants (teacher candidates and teacher educators). Fourteen teacher candidates were surveyed and interviewed representing six schools of education (four public and two private). Seven teacher educators were

interviewed across schools of education in New York City from five public and two private colleges with two of the participants from the same college. The findings show that this study had a good sample of those underrepresented in the elementary education teaching force in terms of gender, race, and socio-economic status. Of the 14 teacher candidates interviewed, two participants identified as male and six participants identified as people of color. In terms of socio-economics, six participants were on financial aid and four were the first in their family to graduate from college. One participant was being dual certified in general education and special education, and two were being dual certified in general education and bilingual education. One participant was an undocumented citizen. Eleven of the participants were teacher candidates from public colleges.

Although the population was diverse in some respects, it was not in others. The mean GPA for the participants was 3.82 with a standard deviation of .23. The mean edTPA score for 13 of the teacher candidates (one of participants had not received edTPA her score at the time of the interview) was 58.15 with a standard deviation of 9.83. Additionally, one of the participants failed the edTPA while nine of the participants not only passed, but scored at the "mastery level."[1]

Intended Outcomes vs. the Current Study

The following sections will compare the results of the current study with statements taken from the "About the edTPA" and "edTPA FAQ" webpages. These statements express SCALE and AACTE's goals, objectives, benefits for teacher preparation programs, benefits for states, and how the edTPA can be "educative" for schools, teacher candidates, licensure boards, and policy makers. It will also examine these statements in the context of the edTPA experience to reveal intentions or consequences that may not be apparent.

Reflection and Data Analysis

Although not specifically mentioned in goals, objectives, or benefits by SCALE or AACTE, reflection and data-analysis are essential aspects of the exam and are often stated in the rhetoric of the edTPA as important skills teacher candidates develop in the process. The importance of error analysis and data-based planning was a benefit cited by one of the teacher

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[1] At the time the data was collected, the New York State passing score was 49 and mastery level score was 57.

candidates in the study. Nicole mentioned how the edTPA pushed her to reflect and critique her teaching. Two teacher educators expressed related sentiments. Teacher Educator B said, "they are really learning to reflect on their own practice," while Teacher Educator C said, "I think our student teachers come out of the program better equipped to use data to assess students in their classes than they did previously." Teacher Educator D explained that not only did her program already develop these skills (planning, teaching, assessing, and reflecting) but that she would be concerned if other programs weren't doing this work already as well.

Reflection by Cooperating Teachers and Partner Schools

SCALE and AACTE state that the edTPA is educative in that cooperating "teachers and schools use edTPA to reflect on their own teaching practices" (AACTE, n.d.-b). There was no evidence of this in the findings for this study. In fact, as will be discussed in the next section, cooperating teachers found the edTPA to use language that was inconsistent with their own teacher education and work experience.

Common Framework and Language

One of SCALE and AACTE's stated benefits of the edTPA is that it "gives states, school districts, and teacher preparation programs a common framework and language for defining and measuring performance of teacher candidates" (AACTE, n.d.-a). The complexity of the texts, the difficulty of the vocabulary, and amount of writing required of the edTPA was cited as a challenge even for those attending elite graduate schools. Lisa explained,

> I still to this day don't know what they are asking about the question about the language function, and if your students used it. I completely made up that answer. I had no idea. Because my language function was "analyze" and I was like, "Am I supposed to say if my students used the word 'analyze' or if they analyzed?" So, I just made up whatever I thought.

Adam added, "it seemed to have its own form of academ-eze that was really kind of challenging to decipher." Some participants talked about the edTPA being repetitive, which made it confusing and left teacher candidates questioning if they were answering the questions correctly. Lisa went on to said,

The questions were so repetitive. I just didn't understand why they were asking the same questions in so many different ways. I felt like I repeated myself throughout the entire thing. And then I was unsure if I had to repeat myself in order to do well because what if they don't look back. Like if they are like, "What are you talking about here?" Even though you already talked about it.

In fact, even after getting their passing scores, there were teacher candidates who mentioned they were still unsure of what many of the vocabulary words on the edTPA meant.

Teacher Educator F explained that although some of the language is connected to the Danielson Framework which is used in K-12 schools, some of the terms are not commonly used. Teacher Educator F also shared that cooperating teachers came to him asking for explanations of some of the vocabulary. He stated, "I have actually made copies of the glossary for the cooperating teachers so they have this information as well…I think it is the terminology that is most important." Additionally, Teacher Educator C admitted that some of the terms were unfamiliar to her, and she was unsure of some of their meanings despite being an expert in the field.

Subject-specific Performance-based Assessments

SCALE and AACTE state that one of their objectives is the "Use of a subject-specific, performance-based assessment system aligned to general and discipline-specific teaching standards designed and developed by educators for educators" (AACTE, n.d.-b). However, this is not true for the bilingual educators. Unlike those working towards dual certification with general education and either special education or early childhood education, those in bilingual education do not have an option of taking the edTPA in their content area.

In this study, two interviews were conducted with bilingual education majors. Teaching in a bilingual/dual language setting created some special considerations. Claudia was in the French component of a dual language English/French setting, so she did her lessons in French. She found that translating her video and worksheets added an additional challenge to her edTPA experience. Other bilingual education teacher candidates chose to do "English-only" edTPAs to avoid some challenges or potential biases from scorers. In fact, teacher candidates were being encouraged to complete their edTPA in English. Teacher Educator C shared,

We have instructed them all to do them in English. 'Just do yourself a favor and do them in English.' But that takes a little maneuvering. I have had some students who have had to guest teach in another classroom just because of the constraints of their classroom which certainly isn't ideal. And again, it's supposed to be showing how you know your students deeply. Well, I don't think so.

Develop Confidence

Another one of SCALE and AACTE's stated objectives is that the edTPA will "Help candidates develop the confidence and skills they need to be successful in urban, suburban, and rural schools." In this study, there were a variety of comments related to the development of confidence. Teacher Educator C felt that the performance assessment did result in her students feeling more confident. She felt that because the portfolio was "such a huge task" the teacher candidates had a feeling of accomplishment of professional readiness. On the other hand, Teacher Educator D found that her teacher candidates doubted themselves and needed the emotional support to believe that they could successfully complete the portfolio.

Teacher candidates shared that they questioned their abilities throughout the edTPA process. The confusing language and prompts led teacher candidates to wonder if they would earn acceptable rubric scores. Kelly explained,

> …it was a lot of work which I did not feel was necessary because I wasn't proving myself as an answerer of questions or like [by] following a rubric I was showing I could teach. And [I was] worrying about using a specific wording. I don't want to describe syntax when I mean to describe discourse. [I was] just not really understanding what the questions are really asking or fearing that I wouldn't answer it the right way.

Lisa shared,

> So, once I was finished with my filming, I felt like I was on the right track and then writing was definitely much harder. I mean, I knew it was going to be hard, but it was much harder than I anticipated just to understand what the questions meant or what they wanted exactly because I didn't really feel like I knew what they wanted.

Beyond their results on the assessment, teacher candidates shared that the edTPA decreased their confidence as a future educator. Adam, who earned a mastery level score, felt

the edTPA made him feel less confident and capable and decreased his motivation. Christy said she would stare at the screen and second guess if she really wanted to be a teacher. Additionally, teacher candidates reported other affects that can be associated with decreased confidence. These included crying, feeling depressed, and physical reactions to stress such as losing weight, nosebleeds, and eye twitching. As seen in Table 1, of the 22 interviews conducted, many participants used negatively toned emotional words such as: stressful, overwhelming, frustrating, tedious, pressure, and anxious in the interviews about their edTPA experience.

Table 1. Participant count of in vivo coding of combined from interviews and survey responses from teacher candidates and teacher educators

Word	Teacher candidates	Teacher educators	Total
Stressful	11	5	16
Overwhelming	9	3	12
Frustrating	6	1	7
Tedious	4	2	6
Pressure	7	1	8
Anxious	4	1	5

One of the teacher candidates, who was also a parent, shared the guilt she felt when taking time for the edTPA. She stated that her "family life was suffering" and her husband felt like a single parent because of all the time she spent working on the edTPA. Two other teacher candidates expressed feeling isolated because of all the time they spent in front of their computers working on the portfolio. Katie explained that

> At the end of edTPA, when I finally turned it in, all of a sudden I realized that I hadn't seen any of my friends in months. I realized that I had sort have been sequestered. I spent more time on it than I spent on my thesis for my undergrad, for my Masters degree. I spent more time doing that one thing than I have on any other project I have in my entire life. It's so difficult to explain what you are doing to anyone who doesn't go through this process. When I finished it, I felt like I was able to return to being myself as a person and seeing my friends and family again. I felt like I was getting out of jail.

Differentiation of Instruction

Another stated objective of the edTPA is to "Measure candidates' ability to differentiate instruction for diverse learners, including English language learners and special education students." Teacher candidates in this study reflected on how much they learned from working with these students but also admitted to excluding them from their "class" on the edTPA to simplify their portfolio commentary. Claudia said,

> I quickly realized that I didn't need to tell edTPA about my struggling learners. I just decided to have a very uniform set of kids that conveniently didn't have IEPs... because you quickly realize that 'Why would I?' Because if I wasn't meeting their needs...I could make sure that I didn't have to face that issue...That didn't make any sense because I learned so much from having to figure out the different kids and everything, but no one wants to run that risk with edTPA because there are so many moving parts, and you don't know which bit you should be trying to satisfy.

This claim is strongly connected to the next claim since meeting the needs of students with varying special needs is a daily challenge for teachers.

Addressing Real-world Needs and Challenges that Teachers Face Every Day

SCALE and AACTE claim that one of the benefits of the edTPA to teacher education programs is that it provides "Actionable evidence of candidates' performance over time to address the real-world needs and challenges that teachers face every day" (AACTE, n.d.-b). The small amount of video submitted was mentioned by participants as a way to avoid showing real-life classroom challenges. In this study, there were teacher candidates who admitted to manipulating their experiences based on the confines of the video requirements. For example, one of the teacher educators shared how a parent came storming into a classroom cursing and throwing things which disrupted an entire lesson. This lesson was then cut out of the learning segment as if it never happened. Similarly, a teacher candidate in the study asked her cooperating teacher to turn off the camera during one of her edTPA lessons due to the confusion that occurred when there was an unexpected scheduling change in her students' pull-out support services.

Claudia and Michelle made specific statements expressing their concerns about authenticity of the edTPA. Michelle stated, "I feel like it is so much work that when you actually

do it in the classroom; it's not effective because you are just trying to get all the points that they want, and it's not really useful." Claudia also expressed that she originally thought the edTPA was authentic before she started it but then found it not to be authentic in execution. As previously mentioned, Claudia admitted to manipulating who was in her "class," within the guidelines of the edTPA. She felt this was a "shame" because she learned so much from her special needs students, but this strategy made to make the edTPA more manageable. She also explained that the edTPA "shows my rapport and respect but in small ways not the way I am with my students realistically."

Formative use of Rubrics, Assessments, and Evaluations

One of the stated benefits of the edTPA is the "Formative use of rubrics in course assignments, locally developed curriculum-embedded assessments, and clinical practice evaluations" (AACTE, n.d.-b). This means that programs may create parallel tasks, assignments, and rubrics to prepare their teacher candidates for the edTPA. Some of the schools in this study reprioritized aspects of the teaching cycle throughout their curriculum, particularly assessment. Overall, the teacher educators in this study felt that they had been developing the skills needed to the edTPA because, and as Teacher Educator C explained, the "elements are focused on what good teachers should be doing." There were teacher education programs in the study which had already been using video analysis of teaching or data-driven decision making. However, overall, the teacher educators also expressed that the some of the prompts on the edTPA pushed them to spend more time working on areas such as feedback to students and analyzing student data. In terms of assignments, two colleges replaced their research paper requirement with the edTPA (which they do not grade as an assignment). One teacher educator felt that since very few students continue on and conduct research, it was logical and time-effective to make this change.

Another consequence was noted by Teacher Educator D who reflected that her program used to be more social justice oriented before the edTPA implementation. In this study, the teacher educators were more concerned about supporting their teacher candidates and making sure they were certified rather than what was being omitted from of the curriculum.

Costs to the Student Teaching Experience

Besides the consequences to the teacher education curriculum, the high stakes when the edTPA is for certification has other unintended consequences. A policy paradox of the edTPA is that it hopes to assess the readiness and preparation of teacher candidates through a performance assessment, however, the edTPA may undermine clinical practice and take over the student teaching experience. Of the 14 teacher candidates in this study, the mean score for how much the edTPA interfered with their student teaching experience was 4.43 with a standard deviation of .94 and a range of 3 (neutral) to 5 (strongly agree). This means that, on average, they fell between agree and strongly agree that the edTPA interfered with student teaching. Additionally, this means that, at best, the teacher candidates felt neutral about the edTPA's possible interference with student teaching and none of the teacher candidates disagreed that the edTPA interfered with student teaching. Several teacher candidates commented on this consequence. For example, Katie didn't jump in and do more instruction when she could have because she was frantically trying to complete her portfolio. Another teacher candidate wrote how she turned down opportunities to teach because she was preoccupied with the edTPA. Similarly, Michelle gave responsibilities back to her cooperating teacher during what was supposed to be her full days of student teaching because she couldn't keep up with the workload of planning for so many lessons while completing her edTPA, admitting that her priority was the edTPA rather than her students. Claudia had the opposite approach. She decided to wait until after the semester to type up her edTPA because she was concerned that the edTPA would take her focus away from her students.

Additional Consequences

This study also found that the demands on time and the need for income were challenges that resulted additional consequences. These demands included taking additional classes, working, or family obligations. Participants commented that they did not put their full effort into assignments for their classes. Carla shared how she did not complete all the course readings in favor of working on the edTPA. Claudia explained the consequences for her and what she observed in her cohort,

> I sort of had to rush through a lot of the assignments because the edTPA was just...piling
> up…That seemed to happen across the board because there was the feeling of "well, you

> have to pass edTPA to be a teacher. That's it, so." And you don't want to have to repeat it and all the rest so a lot of us were like, "Yeah, we'll skip reading for that. And we'll rush that assignment in." That definitely was happening.

What was more clearly articulated by Nicole was how she was frustrated if the assignments were not connected to edTPA preparation because she felt she needed to be focused on passing her certification exam.

An additional consequence is related to the cost of the edTPA. Concerns over the $300 fee for the edTPA was mentioned by two teacher candidates and two teacher educators. The teacher educators in the study told stories of teacher candidates who did not have room on their credit card for the fee or who needed the money to pay for essential living expenses. As Teacher Educator C explained, "For our students, that money is definitely an issue, and the costs of all of these tests is just becoming prohibitive." Additionally, Michelle and Janet had to reduce their hours of employment during student teaching to keep up with the workload of the portfolio, which resulted in an additional financial burden. Michelle explained, "It costs so much money. $300. For me, that's a lot of money. So, time also is money, so I'm losing money not working on top of paying for this thing."

Discussion of Unintended Consequences

> What I have an issue with is it being high-stakes. I have a big issue with cost. I have an issue with the way it was delivered. It wasn't prepared. There's a lot of rhetoric around what we are supposed to learn from it, but you didn't deliver it in a way where we can actually learn from it. – Teacher Educator G

Threats to Authenticity

The requirements and limitations of the edTPA threaten the authenticity of the exam (Greenblatt, 2016). Questions have arisen about the authenticity and validity of the assessment especially once the edTPA became high-stakes for certification (Henning, 2014; K. Meuwissen, 2014; Sato, 2014; Wilkerson, 2015). Additionally, the use of a nationally scored exam brings concerns about a lack of local context which could lead to inequitable testing situations (An, 2015; Dover, Schultz, Smith, & Duggan, 2015; Ginsberg & Kinston, 2014; Madeloni & Gorlewski, 2013). As seen in the data, teacher candidates in high-needs classrooms may choose

to leave out certain students in their portfolio to simplify completing edTPA, or they spoke or acted differently for the video component because they were unsure of how the scorers would interpret their culturally relevant pedagogy with urban students.

Additionally, the amount of the video required is a small amount of evidence can result in an inauthentic representation of teacher candidates' proficiency on a consistent basis. Submitting short clips of video across 3-5 days allows teacher candidates to hide evidence of badly executed instruction or poor interaction with their students (Clark-Gareca, 2015; Sandholtz & Shea, 2012). Teacher candidates can submit as little as three minutes of video to show evidence of a positive learning environment, how they engaged students in the literacy skill, and teacher modeling. This means that the 3-20 minutes presented in the portfolio may be the only time the teacher candidate was able to satisfactorily execute these skills in the learning segment.

Issues of equity

The financial costs of the edTPA was mentioned by several participants in the study. Costs have the potential to disproportionally reduce the number of teachers already underrepresented in the profession and reduce the number of teachers entering the profession overall (Davis, 2015). In general, licensure exams increase the cost of entering into the profession and can be a barrier to entry for some or make it less appealing to others (National Research Council, 2001). Hildebrandt & Swanson (2014) warned that policy makers need to consider the rising costs of teacher certification on the teacher workforce.

> Clearly, adding additional formal assessment experiences like edTPA to existing assessment mandates may further discourage prospective teachers, who already struggle with sizable educational debt while preparing for a job that is compensated at about $36,000 annually at the beginning of a career (p. 589).

Another variable that may affect equity is related to differences in student teaching placements. The challenges that are more common in urban settings, such as scripted curriculums and high percentages of English language learners, can impact teacher candidates' edTPA experience. These challenges may dissuade teacher candidates from wanting to student teach in culturally diverse, low-income, or underperforming schools (Dover & Schultz, 2016; Jordan & Hawley, 2016; Tuck & Gorlewski, 2016). There are potential ramifications when a high-stakes certification exam is more difficult to enact for those student teaching in high-needs

urban placements. Schools of education may avoid placing teacher candidates at these schools. Additionally, colleges that are committed to serving these communities might be penalized in two ways: 1) with a lower passing rate, and 2) with fewer applicants to their programs. Partnering with low-income, high-needs schools provides benefits to the community, by lowering the student-teacher ratio and, to the teacher candidates, by preparing them (and encouraging them) to work with a population that needs high-quality teachers. These consequences are counterproductive to Race to the Top's goal of improving the lowest-performing schools. Furthermore, the challenges associated with student teaching in high-needs schools posed additional challenges that may dissuade teacher candidates and schools of education from placing student teachers in these schools.

Bilingual Education

Potential to further dissuade diverse candidates must be contemplated when considered when those majoring in bilingual education. The fact that other certification areas have their own edTPA shows at least the acknowledgement of, and at best a respect for, those content areas. As Kleyn, López, & Makar (2015) explain that "edTPA does not directly address teaching bilingually as an area of specialty" which has ramifications on teacher candidates clinical work and their learning to teach their students (p. 89). Additionally, only Spanish language scorers are provided for elementary edTPA (Pearson Education Inc., 2107) which forced those teaching in other languages to either do their edTPA in English or translate all their materials, use close captioning, or write a script of their video clips, as seen with Claudia in this study. Furthermore, those in bilingual Spanish language classrooms are concerned, like Carla was, with both the extent of the scorer's familiarity with Spanish and any biases that might occur towards a lesson conducted in Spanish, especially since the portfolios are nationally scored (Kleyn et al., 2015). These factors result in bilingual education teacher candidates purposefully leaving out the bilingual aspect of their instruction (Kleyn et al., 2015). This sends a message that the teacher candidates themselves feel they must accept the bias against bilingual education to become certified.

Differentiation of Instruction

One of the stated objectives of the edTPA is to "Measure candidates' ability to differentiate instruction for diverse learners, including English language learners and special education students." This objective has the potential to push teacher education programs to infuse strategies or a course for differentiating instruction for these student populations; however, because the edTPA is for initial certification, the curriculum focuses on a particular content area. Considering that teachers get additional certifications and Masters degrees in these areas, any supplement to another area of certification is only scratching the surface. In earning high scores for this area, teacher candidates could gain false confidence that what they have learned is sufficient to meet the challenges of the variety of students they will encounter in their careers. Furthermore, not all placements have these diverse learners, so some teacher candidates show their proficiency working with these populations while others do not; therefore, some teacher candidates can skip this aspect of the assessment. This makes the exam more challenging for those teaching in settings with special education students and/or English language learners.

Issues of Discourse

As explained above, SCALE and AACTE have a stated discourse of the goals, objectives, and benefits of the edTPA. As a certification exam, the edTPA creates a discourse about what is important in teaching as well. This is a concern when the exam favors certain pedagogy (modeling) and content (comprehension or composition) over others. Teacher candidates cannot use constructivist learning methods or teach word study and pass the edTPA. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, there is the unstated discourse about the value of bilingual education.

Furthermore, despite claims that the edTPA develops a common language and framework, there are concerns about the vocabulary used. As supported in the study, these terms are not commonly used in K-12 classrooms and teacher educators are not familiar with them either. This brings up a major concern that cooperating teachers and teacher educators cannot confidently support their students. Furthermore, the vocabulary of the edTPA is being embedded throughout the teacher education curriculum as a support to students, but the consequence is that the language used is being dictated by an assessment and is not consistent with what is being used at the university and K-12 levels (Lewis & Morse, 2013). This reality could be considered

a policy paradox of the edTPA or perhaps an unspoken intension to change the discourse of teacher education.

Teacher Education Curriculum

As seen in the literature, faculty members may feel the tension between the demands of the edTPA and their own priorities resulted in compromise (Conley & Garner, 2015; Lachuk & Koellner, 2015; Lit & Lotan, 2013; K. W. Meuwissen & Choppin, 2015). The teacher educators in this study prioritized supporting their students in passing the exam over changes made to their programs that would eliminate certain aspects or change the focus of their courses.

Although the edTPA develops data analysis skills that will be needed in the classroom, replacing a master's level research requirement with a standardized assessment has consequences. Teacher candidates are being denied the opportunity to choose personally meaningful research questions about education. Even if a very small percentage pursue a doctorate, they will now be less qualified to do this kind of work. Additionally, this lack of skills could lesson classroom teachers involvement in research with university partners or writing grants for their school. Furthermore, an inquiry-stance on education is important for the growth of individual teachers, schools, and the profession.

Additional modifications made for the edTPA focus on integrating edTPA language and parallel tasks. These types of changes result in questions about what is left out when a certification exam emerges as a priority. As was expressed at the 66th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Educators (AACTE), faculty was "concerned with 'teaching to the test,' curriculum resources, and the edTPA dominating all other courses resulting in content that may not be taught because of time limitations" (Gary, 2015, p. 19). There are concerns that teacher education curriculums no longer focus on how historical, sociocultural, or political contexts are important for classroom instruction and community. There is much to lose if the edTPA narrows the curriculum. It is important to be aware that what is assessed determines what is valued and what will ultimately be the focus for schools of education (Greenblatt, 2015).

Regardless of how much schools of education have made changes based on the edTPA, the curriculum is effected because the teacher candidates see edTPA as the priority. As mentioned by participants in the study certification took precedent over fully engaging in the

student teaching placement and their coursework. This devalues and deprofessionalizes teacher education.

Educational Renewal

SCALE and AACTE also state that one of the objectives for the edTPA is to "Provide meaningful and consistent data that can be used to improve and update teacher preparation programs and renew program curriculum" (AACTE, n.d.-a) and that one of the benefits of the edTPA is that it affords "Opportunities for continuous program renewal based on meaningful performance data" (AACTE, n.d.-b). According to the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER), unlike educational reform, that has a beginning and an end, "renewal work assumes that we must question assumptions and continue to make changes as we see where improvements can be made and gaps in quality education exist" (NNER, 2016).   However, for this inquiry-stance towards program improvement to be realized, there must be the right leadership and resources or else the edTPA will lead to "compliance over more adaptive responses" (Stillman, Ragusa, & Whittaker, 2015, p. 173).   Currently, a lack of funding is already causing issues for continued progress for schools of education. Additionally, once schools of education make modifications aligned with the edTPA, there is little reason to continue to make changes when students are scoring well. When the impetus for change is a high-stakes assessment, the potential for educational renewal is diminished.

Conclusion

SCALE and AACTE's stated goals, objectives, and benefits of the edTPA sound very promising; however, the current study shows that many of these statements are only good in theory. In researching teacher candidates' experiences taking the edTPA and the experiences of their teacher educators, several claims were addressed. Some participants found the edTPA pushed them to be more reflective and better at data analysis. In the following areas, participants found the outcomes that contradicted the stated claims or had additional consequences:

- addressing real-world needs and challenges teachers face every day,
- common framework and language,
- subject-based performance assessments,
- formative use of rubrics, assessments, and evaluations,

- the student teaching experience,

- developing confidence,

- differentiation of instruction,

- reflection by cooperating teachers and partner schools.

Continued research is necessary as to whether the intentions of the edTPA are being met and if there is any difference between who is experiencing the stated outcomes by SCALE and AACTE and who is not. There is cause of concern in terms of equity being that this research took place in an urban setting and there was no evidence of the stated benefits of the edTPA. Furthermore, there would be more concern if other populations did not experience these intended outcomes either. In addition to the consequences listed above, the adoption of the edTPA as a certification exam has many financial costs and requires faculty and students to devote hours of time outside of class. For this type of investment, it is important that the assessment is worth the investment and that the result is highly prepared teachers for our nation's classrooms.

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