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edTPA Implications for Teacher Education Policy and Practice: Representations of Epistemic Injustice and Slow Violence

Cara Faith Bernard
University of Connecticut

Douglas Kaufman
University of Connecticut

Mark Kohan
Citizens Alliance for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
&
Glenn Mitoma
University of California, Santa Cruz
United States

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Abstract: edTPA is a widely used teacher performance assessment. However, studies have raised concerns with its use. We conducted a study of candidates' and faculty members' perceptions of edTPA on their learning and performance. Analysis of responses revealed six themes: confusion about the meaning of "ready to teach"; interference with relationship building; narrowed responsive teaching practices; concern for placements' impact on assessments; mistrust of evaluators' understanding of their contexts; and increased barriers for

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marginalized candidates. Findings suggest that edTPA can be interpreted as perpetrating forms of "epistemic injustice" and "slow violence" that impede diversity in the profession. To realize the promise of a more diverse teacher workforce—equity for all students and justice for marginalized communities—teacher educators and policymakers must ensure that the ways in which they prepare and evaluate teachers are increasingly more relational, diverse, equitable, and just.
Keywords*:* edTPA; education policy; teacher education; slow violence; epistemic injustice

Implicaciones de edTPA para la política y práctica de formación docente: Representaciones de injusticia epistémica y violencia lenta

Resumen: edTPA es una evaluación del desempeño docente ampliamente utilizada. Sin embargo, los estudios han planteado preocupaciones con su uso. Realizamos un estudio de las percepciones de edTPA de los candidatos y miembros de la facultad sobre su aprendizaje y desempeño. El análisis de las respuestas reveló seis temas: confusión sobre el significado de "listo para enseñar"; interferencia con la construcción de relaciones; prácticas de enseñanza receptivas limitadas; preocupación por el impacto de las ubicaciones en las evaluaciones; desconfianza en la comprensión de los evaluadores de sus contextos; y mayores barreras para los candidatos marginados. Los hallazgos sugieren que edTPA puede interpretarse como formas perpetradoras de "injusticia epistémica" y "violencia lenta" que impiden la diversidad en la profesión. Para hacer realidad la promesa de una fuerza laboral docente más diversa, equidad para todos los estudiantes y justicia para las comunidades marginadas, los formadores de docentes y los encargados de formular políticas deben asegurarse de que las formas en que preparan y evalúan a los docentes sean cada vez más relacionales, diversas, equitativas y justas.
Palabras-clave: edTPA; política educativa; formación del profesorado; violencia lenta; injusticia epistémica

Implicações da edTPA para políticas e práticas de formação de professores: Representações de injustiça epistêmica e violência lenta

Resumo: edTPA é uma avaliação de desempenho de professores amplamente utilizada. No entanto, estudos levantaram preocupações com seu uso. Conduzimos um estudo sobre as percepções dos candidatos e membros do corpo docente sobre o edTPA em seu aprendizado e desempenho. A análise das respostas revelou seis temas: confusão sobre o significado de "pronto para ensinar"; interferência na construção de relacionamentos; práticas de ensino responsivas estreitas; preocupação com o impacto das colocações nas avaliações; desconfiança na compreensão dos avaliadores sobre seus contextos; e aumento das barreiras para candidatos marginalizados. Os resultados sugerem que a edTPA pode ser interpretada como perpetrando formas de "injustiça epistêmica" e "violência lenta" que impedem a diversidade na profissão. Para concretizar a promessa de uma força de trabalho de professores mais diversificada—equidade para todos os alunos e justiça para comunidades marginalizadas—educadores de professores e formuladores de políticas devem garantir que as formas pelas quais preparam e avaliam os professores sejam cada vez mais relacionais, diversas, equitativas e justas.
Palavras-chave: edTPA; política educacional; formação de professores; violência lenta; injustiça epistêmica

edTPA Implications for Teacher Education Policy and Practice: Representations of Epistemic Injustice and Slow Violence

As the student population in the United States has become more racially, ethnically, and socially diverse (Tavernise, 2012), there has been increasing concern that there has not been a corresponding representation of teachers of color (Banks, 2016; Brown & Boser, 2017). As a result, there have been national initiatives to diversify the teaching profession (Ladson-Billings, 2011; Nieto & McDonough, 2011; Sleeter et al., 2014). This initiative has been reflected in the state of Connecticut. In June, 2019, the Connecticut General Assembly charged the governor to undertake policy changes toward hiring significant numbers of "new minority teachers and administrators" (Moran, 2020, p. 2). In our teacher education program at the University of Connecticut, we had been working toward recruiting and supporting increasing numbers of diverse candidates of color, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, aligning our program curriculum and pedagogy with the goals of ensuring the teaching workforce better reflect the classroom, and that all educators are prepared to teach in diverse communities.

Concurrently with this push for greater teacher diversity, the Connecticut State Department of Education adopted edTPA, a widely used performance-based portfolio assessment of preservice teachers seeking certification. The policy adoption came in response to longstanding efforts to reform teacher preparation and require candidates to complete a "rigorous performance-based assessment as part of clinical experiences" (Venkateswaran et al., 2016, p. vii). Passing edTPA became a requirement for certification in Connecticut in 2018.

Members of our own teacher education program at the University soon described experiencing tensions among the state's aim to diversify the workforce; the adoption of edTPA as a measure for certification; and the educational values articulated in the program's formal tenets, which had recently been revised to focus extensively on issues of equity, diversity, and access for all students. The emergence of edTPA required a restructuring of some of our program's policies, priorities, and areas of focus only one year after implementation of the program's redesign. Teacher candidates and their student-teaching seminar leaders—those who appeared to be most affected by the new policy mandate—expressed serious concerns about how to reconcile these tensions. In response, we engaged in formal inquiry to discover how participants in our program perceived their experiences with edTPA and its possible influence on teacher professional development.

Background

Development of edTPA

To prepare teachers for the profession, many colleges and universities have adopted standardized performance-based teacher portfolio assessments (TPAs) to measure candidates' readiness to teach. TPAs have been prevalent for several decades, aiming to support candidate readiness and "the development of common teaching practices" (Gitomer et al., 2021, p. 4). Some state that portfolios can be used to indicate or improve teacher quality (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Peck & McDonald, 2013). While some TPAs have focused on long-term growth over years during the induction phase of teaching, recent TPA mandates have eliminated longitudinal mentorship components and attention to inservice teaching in favor of shorter-term evaluations of preservice teachers that are more standardized and high stakes, and assess instruction, analysis of teaching, and student work (Gitomer et al., 202; Pecheone & Chung, 2006). Passing these assessments has become a popular requirement for initial licensure.

Connecticut is well-versed in TPAs as policy. The state utilized the Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) portfolio until 2010. Inservice teachers completed BEST requirements during their first two years of service. Early career teachers were mentored by BEST-trained senior colleagues, receiving regular support, feedback, and resources (CT Department of Education, 2007). While BEST focused on mentoring and longitudinal, formative aspects of teaching, time, and resource constraints led to its discontinuation. After BEST, Connecticut transitioned to Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM). TEAM emphasized growth during induction years, requiring in-service teachers to complete five standards-based modules connected to the Common Core of Teaching (CT State Department of Education, n.d.). While TEAM is still compulsory for early career teachers, edTPA has been adopted as a certification requirement for teacher candidates.

edTPA, a similar assessment developed by Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE) and Pearson Education, is now one of the most widely used portfolio assessments in the United States. (SCALE, n.d.). Pearson states that edTPA evaluates candidates' "readiness to teach" through blind review of their electronically submitted portfolio artifacts (i.e., lesson plans, written narratives and reflections, and teaching videos), produced and selected to demonstrate competence in three pillars or "tasks": planning, instruction, and assessment. Candidates must complete and submit three to five lesson plans, three ten- to twenty-minute videos of their teaching, three samples of student work, and assessments that they have created to evaluate their students (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education [AACTE], n.d.-a). Required with each submission are extensive written narratives where candidates attend to academic language, focusing on discourse, syntax, vocabulary, and language function (as defined by edTPA) to describe and reflect on their planning, instruction, and assessment.

Each submission is assessed by "teachers and teacher educators with subject-area and grade-level expertise, and experience mentoring, teaching or supervising teacher candidates and/or teachers" (Pearson, 2022a). edTPA scorers are trained and monitored by SCALE and assess submissions using SCALE-developed five-point rubrics. While the rubrics used to evaluate each of the planning, instruction, and assessment tasks differ by content area, each task is evaluated with at least five rubrics for a minimum of 15 discrete scored elements. A score of 3 indicates the candidate has been evaluated by the scorer as "ready to teach" on this element (SCALE, 2013). As of November 2022, edTPA has been implemented, piloted, or considered in over 900 educator preparation programs in 40 states and Washington D.C., while 17 states plus the District of Columbia have approved edTPA completion as the initial assessment requirement, or an option to fulfill the requirement, for licensure (Pearson Education, 2022b). Connecticut adopted edTPA in December 2018; in anticipation, our teacher education program piloted the portfolio in 2014, incorporating elements of the assessment into methods classes and student teaching seminars.

Pearson describes edTPA as fulfilling the need for a "common, standards- and performance-based assessment of teaching effectiveness that would measure the classroom readiness of aspiring teachers and provide information for program improvement" (AACTE, n.d.-b). Promotional materials frame teaching as analogous to other "high-status" professions, which edTPA describes as "comparable to the licensing exams that demand applications of skills in other professions, such medical licensing exams, the architecture exam, or the bar exam in law" (AACTE, n.d.-a, para 6). Implied in this literature is that current assessments of teacher candidates do not adequately ensure that they enter the field with appropriate training, content knowledge, or perspectives:

> The teaching profession cannot afford to wait a year or more for new teachers to become really effective [...]. Thus edTPA is designed to ensure that those who become teachers not only understand educational theory and subject matter content, but can demonstrate their ability to lead a classroom and ensure that students with

> diverse strengths and needs are learning. New teachers have to be effective from Day 1. (AACTE, n.d.-c)

Documentation on edTPA Implementation

During the past eight years, scholars have studied edTPA (e.g., Greenblatt & O'Hara, 2015; Noel, 2014; Paugh et al., 2018; Ratner & Kolman, 2016). Some research suggests that edTPA has the potential to improve collaboration among teacher educators and provide opportunities for faculty to develop shared language and goals (Peck et al., 2014). One self-study inquiry revealed edTPA's potential for enacting a collaborative and interactive culture of learning. The teacher educators conceptualized edTPA as supporting other programmatic commitments that focused on curriculum design, teacher dispositions, and communities of practice (Miller et al., 2015). Others, including AACTE, have suggested that edTPA scores can be used formatively to identify strengths and weaknesses in teacher education programs that lead to curricular and instructional improvement (AACTE, n.d.-c; Lit & Lotan, 2013).

Other literature has cautioned against the use of such standards-based portfolios. The implementation of edTPA in teacher education programs has been identified by some as a "program eater," causing faculty and students to spend many hours preparing for and completing edTPA tasks, thus detracting from other important teaching and learning activities (Barron, 2015; Dover & Schultz, 2016; Shin, 2020; Tuck & Gorlewski, 2016). Greenblatt & O'Hara (2015) reported that due to multiple tasks of edTPA, including its video component, certain school districts turned away student teachers. Others suggested that attending to edTPA tasks distracts preservice teachers from focusing on culturally sustaining pedagogy, critical thinking, and responsiveness within more local and diverse contexts (Cronenberg et al., 2016; Dover, 2018; Kuranishi & Oyler, 2017; Madeloni & Gorlewski, 2013), favoring more performative, prefabricated policy practices and ways of teaching (Bernard & McBride, 2020; Powell & Parkes, 2019).

Some have argued that edTPA implementation upholds commonly recognized inequities regarding issues of race, culture, class, language, and location. Greenblatt and O'Hara (2015) and Dover, Schultz, Smith, and Duggan (2015) found that teacher candidates completing edTPA performed better in districts with higher family incomes. Goldhaber, Cowan, and Theobald (2017) found that Latinx/e students were three times more likely than their white colleagues to fail edTPA. Similarly, a 2017 SCALE report (Pecheone et al., 2018) indicated that white candidates scored higher than African Americans; candidates working in suburban schools scored higher than those in urban or rural locations; native English speakers scored higher than those whose second language was English; and women scored higher than men.

Additionally, students of color and first-generation college students reported high levels of stress and anxiety while completing edTPA (Farinde-Wu & Griffen, 2019; Souto-Manning, 2019). Further, scholars argued that high-stakes testing and accountability mandates such as edTPA are disruptive because they shift control of decision-making and resources from teachers and community members to third-party evaluators who are not necessarily familiar with the community (Heilig et al., 2014).

Context of Our Teacher Education Program

The teacher education program in which we work is in a large public university in the Northeastern United States. Our program is a five-year, cohort-based Integrated Bachelors'/Masters' program. Candidates begin their methods courses in their junior year and spend six semesters in demographically diverse school placements. They spend their final two semesters in a graduate internship designed to extend teaching and leadership beyond the student teaching experience.

Our commitment to preparing high quality educators has been nationally recognized (Levine et al., 2014; Moss et al., 2005). Our candidates' passing rates on certification tests—including edTPA—are higher than all other institutions in our state, and their five-year teacher retention rate is higher than the national average (Levine et al., 2014). We also engage in continual program revision. Recently, our faculty redesigned the program around commitments to equity and multicultural education, emphasizing teacher-student relationships that enhance learning and engagement; complex and creative curricula and lessons; and a wide range of clinical placements across urban, suburban, and rural contexts. Our program identifies learning as relational (Raider-Roth, 2005) and dependent upon a foundation of trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). As part of this, our program uses a discussion-based cohort model where debate, dialogue, and deliberation practices are utilized regularly in better understanding the clinical contexts, activities, and critical incidents of schooling and teaching. Further, we have scaffolded topics of equity and multicultural education into multiple course syllabi, as well as created new courses that center these topics, throughout the five-year program. This now includes a course in the first year of the program that focuses on foundations of multicultural, equity, and social justice education. In their graduate year, candidates choose from course options in language and cultural diversity.

Finally, after acknowledging our historic failures to recruit and retain candidates of color, we have focused on meeting the statewide priority of increasing racial and ethnic diversity in the profession. Toward this end, we hired two academic advisors to support the recruitment and retention of students of color. We have also created study abroad opportunities in demographically diverse settings to broaden understandings of teaching and education in the US through comparative lenses. Lastly, we have supported the development of "Diversity Affinity Group" (DAG), a student-led organization that amplifies the voices of students of color and provides minoritized students with a mentor network and ongoing professional development to support high-quality learning, teaching, and leading.

Method

Given the articulated concerns of candidates and instructors working amidst policy and curricular mandates, we aimed to systematically examine the perceptions of those involved in edTPA. The research questions that framed our exploration were: 1) How did teacher candidates and teacher educators perceive their experiences with the implementation of edTPA? 2) What did they perceive to be the strengths and weaknesses of edTPA? and 3) What impacts did they perceive edTPA as having on their own learning, teaching, and understanding of "ready to teach"?

To examine these questions and capture the described lived experiences of participants, we designed a perception study using a phenomenological lens (Freeman, 2021; van Manen, 2014). We conducted this research as part of a larger program self-study to provide information to guide policy and practice changes (Donovan & Cannon, 2018). We employed a collaborative method (Anderson et al., 2007; Samaras & Freese, 2009) of focus group and individual interviews to collect data, and conducted a review of relevant documents to provide context about the education environment participants resided in and the tasks with which they engaged.

Participants

Participants included 33 teacher candidates who were completing or had just completed edTPA requirements during their student teaching; five teacher educators; two academic advisors; and the Director of Assessment and Director of Teacher Education for the School of Education. The five teacher educators taught student teaching seminars, where they oversaw the student

teaching experience and led candidates in weekly debriefs to process the day-to-day planning and interactions with content. These seminar leaders took on substantial responsibilities to prepare candidates for edTPA completion. The academic advisors had, among their duties, a responsibility for recruiting students of color and supporting them once enrolled. Both academic advisors identify as persons of color. When soliciting participants, we framed the purpose of our inquiry as a component of our review of the effect of larger programmatic changes, which included the implementation of edTPA.

Candidate participants included 13 from a senior-year music education cohort; 15 from an elementary education cohort; and five from various subject-area programs who were involved in DAG. Among these candidate participants, seven identified as persons of color. We recruited from the two specific cohorts using purposeful sampling (Richards & Morse, 2013) as candidates studied in the authors' program areas of music, literacy, human rights, and multicultural education, respectively. This facilitated access to candidates and yielded a larger number of willing participants. Additionally, we knew these candidates' status regarding their edTPA completion. Lastly, the majority of students of color who participated in DAG were in these cohorts.

In order to address the issues of familiarity between students and researchers, and limit power structures between them (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009; Morgan, 1997), we did not interview candidates whom we taught. In order to focus on lived experiences, we purposefully chose faculty participants directly involved with teaching and implementing edTPA. These faculty participants hold similar ranks and positions as we, and we worked closely with them during previous program reviews, which mitigated potential problems regarding power differentials or discomfort due to unfamiliarity. All participants have been given pseudonyms.

Data Collection

Contextualizing Documents and Programmatic Data

We reviewed edTPA handbooks to identify requirements and their relation to the goals of our program and our recently adopted teacher education redesign documents aligned to equity and social justice. We specifically attended to performing arts (SCALE, 2016a) and elementary education (SCALE, 2016b) handbooks as they pertained to the candidates we interviewed. We also collected documents that were disseminated to candidates in student teaching seminars, including lesson plan templates, handouts on academic language, timelines, and due dates for edTPA tasks. Lastly, the Director of Assessment provided information about how edTPA was being implemented in universities, and our candidates' performance in relation to national/regional trends. While these materials were not analyzed explicitly, they provided us with a greater understanding of the working components of edTPA and how they were introduced and utilized in courses. This provided a contextual landscape as we analyzed focus group and interview data.

Focus Groups

Focus groups served as a primary source of data to "best view the intersection of pedagogy, activism, and inquiry" (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011, p. 1). Employing focus groups allowed participants to work together in thinking through discussion topics, building off the answers of others (Morgan, 1997). It also helped to decenter the authority of the researchers (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011), providing settings where candidates felt more comfortable offering honest assessments.

The music education cohort was divided into two groups consisting of seven and six participants; the elementary education cohort was divided into four groups of three; and five members of DAG were interviewed together with the two academic advisors. We also conducted a focus group with the five teacher educators who taught student teaching seminars. Two researchers

guided each focus group session, striving for conversational dialogue where participants could discuss "social-interactional dynamics that produce particular memories, positions, ideologies, practices, and desires" (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011, p. 15). We established this tone in the focus groups by inviting participants to speak freely about their edTPA experiences, encouraging them to elaborate on initial statements and supply additional information to capture more fully their perspectives of their practice in relation to edTPA (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Questions were direct and simple, purposefully designed to ascertain the lived experiences of those involved with edTPA. Participants first provided their general backgrounds. Researchers then asked questions from a protocol sheet (Appendix) about participants' 1) general impressions of and experiences with edTPA; 2) appraisals of the strengths and weaknesses of edTPA; 3) perceptions of the impact of portfolio creation on their teaching and learning; 4) perceptions of edTPA's accuracy in assessing the candidates' readiness to teach; and 5) impressions of the possible impacts on the rights of classroom students while candidates performed edTPA.

Interviews

While we utilized focus groups as the main source of data, due to scheduling conflicts four key participants were unable to join in the discussions. Due to this, and in order to provide moments for elaboration in conversation, we employed the same focus group protocol to conduct individual interviews with the Director of Teacher Education, Diane, as well as three elementary education teacher candidates (Appendix A). Though our original research design did not anticipate individual interviews, participants' rich, extensive answers provided additional data. In our interview with Diane, we followed the same semi-structured protocol and asked the same questions as focus group participants. Her answers offered a larger institutional perspective, providing background and context about the redesign of our program, issues of adopting edTPA, and candidates' responses and concerns. Similarly, for consistency, we asked the same focus group questions to the three individual teachers candidates interviewed.

Data Analysis

We engaged in reiterative data analysis, following a systematic procedure of open and axial coding (Saldaña, 2013) that involved independent reviews of the same data sets by individual researchers, comparisons of initial codes across researchers, and regular reviews to search for evidence that would disconfirm initial findings.

As a group, we followed a three-step coding process informed by Saldaña (2013). Following each focus group session, the two faculty interviewers conversed to share initial reactions and thoughts. After transcription, each of the four researchers engaged in independent open coding of each data set, searching for prospective themes in answers that directly informed the research questions. We subsequently came together to share our codes, search for pattern agreements, and establish inter-coder reliability. We followed suit for one-on-one interviews, coding individually then coming together to share out. In this step, we searched for similarities between individual interview and focus group responses.

Following this step for both focus group and individual interviews, we engaged in another round of axial coding (Saldaña, 2013) together, funneling codes into more fundamental categories. We returned to the data individually, using categories to create larger themes. Finally, we reconvened to share our own themes, then committed to mutually agreed-upon themes. Once final themes were determined, we recognized them as corresponding with theoretical concepts, which we introduce in our discussion.

Attending to Researcher Positionality and Subjectivity

We recognize distinct subjectivities that influence our analysis of participant experiences. We paid close attention to how our subjectivities might impact our research process throughout (Tolman & Brydon-Miller, 2000). We attended closely to the wording of and approaches to initial questions, data collection, and analysis and evaluation to limit inevitable biases in the language of delivery of interviews and focus groups. To prevent participants from perceiving that we were trying to lead them to desired conclusions, we crafted questions that were neutral in tone, asking participants to 1) offer their general perceptions of how they experienced edTPA and 2) discuss both positive and negative aspects of edTPA implementation. Throughout the conversations we did not discuss our own perceptions, either positive or negative. We also generalized questions so that they were relevant to every disciplinary cohort.

Also, as professors in the program, we were aware of inherent asymmetrical power relationships between interviewer and student interviewees, which could lead to data constrained or withheld (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). We recognized issues of power as four white, cisgendered, able-bodied professors. Studies on interview methods that have looked at the effects of race suggest that interviewees of color—when interviewed by a white person—may be more conservative in his or her critique of whites in issues of race and racism (Krysan & Couper, 2003). Again, we took great care with wording of interview and focus group questions to minimize our influence on all participant responses (Kamberelis & Dimitriades, 2011). Individual interviewers intentionally interviewed students outside of their program area—students that they did not know, supervise, or mentor. We did this for two primary reasons: 1) so respondents felt more comfortable offering potentially difficult or controversial answers to questions, and 2) so respondents would not have heard any interviewers' commentary regarding edTPA during courses, which might somehow influence their own responses. During focus group sessions we spoke as little as possible, providing a question and then letting participants speak as freely and for as long as they wished, responding to one another rather than to us.

During data analysis, we adhered to a procedure that involved systematically looking for disconfirming evidence once thematic patterns in responses began to emerge. Despite procedures to ameliorate these issues, the identity of the researchers and the bias it might have caused is a possible limitation of this study. We also recognize the inherent limitations of investigating one's own institutional work, offering our conclusions as only one part—albeit one we find valuable—of a larger research initiative to determine the impacts of edTPA on teacher preparation programs and their stakeholders (Anderson et al., 2007).

Finally, we considered whether our program's particular rollout of edTPA or ways of preparing students—the subjectivity of our context—somehow influenced participants' critical commentary and resulted in responses that were idiosyncratic or circumstantial. Two factors suggest that this is not the case. First, our candidates (including the participants of this study) have consistently outperformed state and national averages regarding passing rates, suggesting that their responses do not arise out of failure of instruction leading to frustration. Second, several of our findings correlate with those of edTPA studies conducted at other institutions (e.g., Donovan & Cannon, 2018; Paugh et al., 2018), suggesting that the results are not simply the product of our implementation or instructional processes.

Themes

When asked what the "strengths and benefits" of edTPA were, some participants described edTPA as helpful for reflecting on practice, which they recognized as corresponding with our

program's own emphasis on reflection. Discussing reflection, candidate Rebecca said,

> I thought it helped us focus on exactly what we were doing and how we can improve. Although very time-consuming, I thought that was important in showing what we did and how we thought about what we did and how we learned from that.

Seminar leaders (though not candidates) suggested that videorecording and reflecting might benefit candidates, allowing candidates and faculty to view and reflect together and plan accordingly for future lessons.

Additionally, participants viewed edTPA as standardizing and clarifying depictions of performance in ways that were significant to certification boards and future employers. Candidate Haniya appreciated the clear-cut description of tasks, stating that she thrived with to-do lists. Candidates also noted that edTPA's use as an assessment across multiple states potentially helped them to obtain certification outside of our state.

However, respondents' perceptions of the edTPA implementation were largely negative across questions. Answers to our first question, "Tell us about your experiences with edTPA so far," they overwhelmingly expressed dissatisfaction and concern. Further, when asked to describe the "weaknesses and drawbacks" of edTPA, participants were more expansive and nuanced than when identifying strengths and benefits. Even when identifying "positive" aspects of edTPA, their responses often came with caveats, highlighting structural concerns that overrode some beneficial components that they found useful. In analyzing these responses, we identified six themes of concern: 1) lack of clarity about what it means to be "ready to teach"; 2) interference with the development of productive relationships; 3) a narrowing of practices focused on predetermined tasks; 4) teaching placement location as impacting edTPA completion success; 5) mistrust of edTPA evaluators' understandings of candidate backgrounds and contexts; and 6) barriers to success for racially, linguistically, and economically marginalized candidates. We interpret each theme as related to and influencing one another.

Lack of Clarity About What It Means to Be "Ready to Teach"

Respondents perceived discrepancies regarding a candidate's "readiness to teach." Candidates and faculty expressed confusion about edTPA's statement that it could measure someone's readiness to teach by "demonstrat[ing] knowledge and skills necessary to help all students learn in real classrooms" (SCALE, 2017). When asked what they felt it meant to be "ready to teach," most candidates identified adaptability, authenticity, and ability to experiment as important qualities. Candidate Erica felt that "'ready to teach' probably means that you have tools in your toolbox to teach a lesson you've planned, but instead of sticking to your plan you follow [where] students are going…. You need to be flexible." Another, Kerry, added, "You have enough skill sets that you can adapt." In these instances, candidates located adaptability and flexibility as important factors and also recognized the necessity of learning students' needs and proclivities, and of modifying lessons in real-time.

However, candidates felt bound by the extensive writing and documentation of planning required for edTPA *before lesson delivery*, which created barriers to being present during teaching and dissuaded them from engaging in flexible, adaptive practice. Tom, a candidate, voiced concerns about how his portfolio did not reflect his readiness to teach:

> How much I adapted my lessons to actually fit the needs and learning styles of my students in my classroom probably doesn't reflect my best teaching practice because I was so focused on doing it for edTPA. But I don't feel like edTPA was a large factor in preparing me to feel ready to teach.

The majority of respondents interpreted the demonstration of "readiness to teach" under edTPA as requiring candidates to isolate practices in ways that did not enhance their professional development.

Similarly, seminar leaders noted that their definitions of "ready to teach" did not readily align with that of edTPA. Eleanor stated that being ready to teach involves "knowing how to question your practice, to ask questions and take risks. But something like edTPA in a nice, boxed package doesn't let you ask a question or take a risk, or even think about what's a good question." Another seminar leader, Harper, added, "[edTPA] actually discourages you from [questioning and taking risks]. Because if you do, you're gonna get marked down."

Interference With the Development of Productive Relationships

Participants perceived that preparing for and executing edTPA tasks inhibited their ability to build trusting relationships that facilitated social growth and academic learning between 1) candidates and teacher education faculty; 2) candidates and cooperating teachers; and 3) candidates and their students. Consonant with our program commitments as expressed in our redesign documents, Diane, Director of Teacher Education, noted relationships as the foundation of good teaching: "When [candidates] go out and teach, it's their ability to form relationships with kids that are going to make or break them completely, as well as their instruction. You know, it's critical—that relationship building piece."

We found one reference to relationships within the edTPA handbooks we reviewed, which describe relationships in terms of "rapport," as a "close and harmonious relationship in which the people or groups understand each other's feelings or ideas and communicate well with each other" (SCALE, 2016b, p. 72). However, respondents indicated that they did not have time to develop such relationships that they saw as foundational to candidates' experiences. Participants noted a shift in relationships between seminar leaders and candidates, evident in the ways that faculty now guided candidates through the program. Marie, a seminar leader, reflected, "It became about logistics and ensuring that I knew what a word meant or how to create the right response, instead of building relationships." A typical seminar class in the past, for example, might first attend to candidates and seminar leaders debriefing on specific events that occurred within the candidates' placements during each week. These conversations often focused on operating within complex classroom and school environments, attending to affective and relational components of teaching. Now, according to seminar leaders, the attention shifted to addressing edTPA components. They stated that they felt forced to focus almost exclusively on academic language and logistics required to complete edTPA portfolio items.

Candidates also complained about losing close connections with their cooperating teachers. Ainsley, a candidate, described that the time she spent developing her edTPA portfolio detracted from connecting with her cooperating teacher:

> What's really benefited me is my cooperating teacher. She's shaped me to be the teacher I'm gonna be in the future. I wish I didn't have edTPA because I would've had more time to soak up all of her knowledge. It took tons of time for me to videotape, plan, and do all of that, when I could've been spending it learning more from her.

Finally, candidates felt that attention to edTPA requirements undermined relationships with their students. For instance, Melissa admitted, "Who I am on those videos and who I am with students are totally different"; she felt she could not be herself on the videos, nor show her care for or knowledge of her students.

Narrowing Practices Focused on Predetermined Tasks

According to respondents, the diminishment of relationship building—with less attention on cultivating trust and rapport—affected ways candidates engaged with their students. Candidates and teacher educators noted how this impacted their daily teaching practices. Rather than listening to students and responding to their immediate needs, they focused on completing a predetermined series of narrow edTPA-required tasks. Harper, a seminar leader, saw the shift from discussing relationship-building to technical strategies of instruction in her seminar. In particular, she was struck by the new ways she heard candidates describe teaching as a series of formulaic steps: "The moments and joy of teaching and the student interaction, the problems of practice that feel *real* and not constructed within a handbook—that organic nature of the experience—was stripped." Another seminar leader, Eleanor, described this narrowing of practices as a process that "grinds the art of teaching into dust for formulas." Matthew agreed, noting how candidates attended more to creating and executing "perfect" lesson plans in seminar:

> You can teach anyone to lesson plan, but you cannot teach someone how to be with students, how to connect with them, how to lead them down a path—and to do that with integrity in an embraceable way. That is where teaching happens. And that was lost in this course, for me, almost entirely.

Candidates noted similar phenomena in their teaching placements. Fran remarked that the focus on completing discrete lesson tasks lessened her ability to provide feedback for her elementary students; instead, she rushed through conversations with them in order to move to the next teaching point to complete edTPA tasks:

> I'm trying to get to as many comments and as many students as I can in this lesson. I said to a kid, "Great job writing...here's your weakness, here's your strength, here's what I want you to work on," and moved on quickly. And I know that's not me as a teacher.

Candidates consistently articulated that their concerns with executing edTPA tasks led them to prioritize completing written lessons over responding to emerging student needs and classroom issues, even when they recognized that such responses would have high educational impact. Candidate Erica responded, "I feel like we're focusing on minor details when we need to be thinking about the bigger picture most of the time and what we can do to learn how to teach and write our own curriculum."

Analysis also revealed candidates' greater focus on ensuring compliant behavior from their students. Candidate Katie described offering rewards and bribes to students in order to "get through [an edTPA] lesson…. I gave my class candy at the end, like, 'Thank you for staying quiet.'" James added, "I told the students every day, 'Please be on your best behavior; I'm making a video and I need to submit it and don't want it to be a mess.'" This concern with compliance extended to candidates' video reflections. Marisa noted that the reflection items required by edTPA as evidence of good teaching "don't mean as much in these bound spaces because we have to show the kids are behaving and learning."

Candidates noted that the commentary tasks—including analyses of teaching—narrowed their focus to provide answers tailored to predetermined prompts rather than encouraging reflection on the more complex, interrelated concerns of classrooms. Notably, there is no guiding definition of "reflection" in edTPA handbooks, and several candidates expressed concerns about the nature of reflection during edTPA tasks. Commenting on the required reflection components of the portfolio, Alaya remarked,

> One of the best ways I've reflected is through journaling and conversation; an ongoing conversation works best for me. So, a five-page edTPA essay prompting, "Reflect on this," and someone reads it, and then that's it, it doesn't work.

Another candidate, Melissa, expressed frustration at completing what she perceived to be inauthentic tasks: "Yeah, we reflect to death anyway in this program, we don't need to be reflecting in meaningless ways with people we don't know."

Teaching Placement Location as Impacting edTPA Completion Success

During their student teaching (when they construct their edTPA) candidates are placed in numerous settings, including wealthy suburban districts, urban or rural districts with high poverty rates, or middle-class districts. All students spend at least one semester in an urban placement. Since our program's edTPA implementation, candidates began to identify relative advantages and disadvantages of placements based not on which offered the best opportunities to learn relevant practices, but on how they might facilitate the successful completion of edTPA. Candidate Melissa highlighted how particular locations could promote successful completion of edTPA tasks, particularly those related to teaching diverse students:

> Some of my peers worked in a more—I won't say privileged—but a more resourced environment. So it's harder for them to reflect on things like differentiation and meeting the needs of ELL students or students with IEPs when there's no one in your room in [districts with less linguistic diversity]…and edTPA wants to see that. But if you're not in [districts with high levels of linguistic diversity] and you have to write a page on that one question to reflect, you're like, "Yeah, I have no kids like this in my room." What are you supposed to say?

At the same time, many participants worried about how videos created in more racially, linguistically, and economically diverse classrooms might be interpreted by edTPA evaluators. Some expressed concern that evaluators might favor work done in normative, stereotypical models of small classrooms full of quiet, compliant students—models that would be difficult to approximate in some schools. Candidates weighed the benefits of schools with more diversity and larger class sizes against the perceived threat that such placements might pose to their edTPA scores. Candidate Rachel discussed her concern about the impact of location on successful edTPA completion: "I was placed in [majority Black and Brown urban district] and [Aster] was placed in [racially diverse suburban district]. And we had people placed in [largely white, rural districts]; those districts are not the same."

Director of Teacher Education, Diane, noted that a suburban school, where teachers "taught in very traditional ways," might not provide candidates opportunities to practice some of the more learner-centered strategies that they had been taught in their program. As a result, they might be perceived as "safer" for edTPA purposes. Diane noted that one partner school in an urban district was "more open" to experimentation and presented candidates with opportunities to engage with a range of diverse students. However, urban schools also dealt with issues of inequity regarding resources, lower attendance rates, and more classroom management challenges—all factors that might help a candidate grow exponentially but might also contribute to a portfolio that looked less polished than that of a candidate working in a wealthy district. "I could see kids not wanting to go to [the city]," said Diane, "because they think it's going to be harder and 'I don't want to jeopardize my score.' And that's not our goal in our placements."

Mistrust of edTPA Evaluators' Understandings of Candidate Backgrounds and Contexts

Many candidates articulated a suspicion that the edTPA process was designed to set them up for failure or label them substandard. While edTPA describes portfolio scorers as expert educators trained in edTPA evaluation (AACTE, n.d.-d), scholars have challenged this claim (Dover, 2018; Parkes & Powell, 2015) and similarly, several candidates questioned the qualifications and positionality of their evaluators. "I feel like they trained random people," said Dawn, a candidate of color. When asked who she believed scored their edTPA portfolios, Alaya, also a candidate of color, responded, "Retired teachers mainly? I dunno." She continued, "How are you evaluating me with the lens and experience that you grew up with that's so different from what I'm learning now?"

Some candidates felt that evaluators were unlikely to understand the contexts in which they were working. Alaya noted:

> You ask where I'm teaching…. I can put [local city], but what do you know about it? Like, do you know anything? I can put that on there, but you don't know anything about that town, that city, the students.

Several candidates contrasted their mistrust of the evaluators' judgments with the supportive evaluation they received from cooperating teachers, supervisors, and seminar leaders who were familiar with their teaching placements and their particular contexts. They indicated a level of comfort receiving feedback from someone they knew, and that the most valuable assessments of their performance were local and formative—feedback that they could use to evolve their subsequent teaching. Dawn remarked,

> It's important for me to talk to someone who understands what I'm going through and knows me as a person, as an educator…. I'd never talk to some random person about teaching because they don't know me. They wouldn't be able to give me that personal feedback I need to grow, for me to reflect, or even just to give me that comfort that I might need if I'm being too hard on myself.

Barriers to Success for Racially, Linguistically, and Economically Marginalized Candidates

Some candidates, particularly those of color, stated that the process of completing edTPA reinforced previous negative experiences with the K-12 and college education systems. They spoke of multiple barriers that made becoming teachers more difficult. These included dominant language conventions, financial hardships, and instructors who did not honor their backgrounds or cultural capital. Sandra, a Latina bilingual candidate, struggled to navigate the language of edTPA:

> The language, I don't understand half of it. But I have to write using it and make it sound good. But someone else that knows the language [both English and edTPA] and understands it really well and can write, they're gonna score higher.

Dawn struggled with the financial costs:

> Who has money like that? We're student teaching. Some of us don't have jobs. If I didn't have financial aid and I had no other resources, I wouldn't be able to complete edTPA. And that would take me out of teaching.

Students of color spoke of continual "hoops to jump through" and compulsory events where they had to "prove themselves" to get into college and begin their journeys toward becoming teachers. For them, edTPA was an added barrier infused with biases, designed to prevent them from reaching their goal. Sandra continued:

> I feel like it's another thing we have to do…another barrier, another thing to jump over to get to teaching. I've always known that I wanted to be a teacher; if I have to do something, I'll do it. It's just unfortunate that this is another thing I have to deal with…another hoop.

Aster named the hoops as constant pressures put upon students of color in a predominantly white university and profession. She summarized:

> Can I be frank? As a student of color I feel like, in the back of my mind—that I have to prove something…. So, I'm looking around, and I'm like, "Do I really belong in this profession?" And I think with all these tests and having to prove yourself with edTPA and Praxis—had I known what I was going to get myself into with these tests and such…. I really do love education, but sometimes it's like, at what cost? There's just so much that's required that I didn't know going into it. And I'm not afraid to work hard…there's just a lot that is required of us.

Aster noted that the multitude of requirements might dissuade candidates of color from becoming teachers:

> With edTPA, they're going to look at our videos…. I feel like it's going to prevent possible teachers of color from wanting to come into a program like this, even if they have passion. You already have to prove yourself being on a white campus, and you always have to prove yourself and work so hard in the workforce. This would be just an added stress again.

Faculty also perceived that candidates who came from varied backgrounds were at a disadvantage in their ability to navigate the requirements with ease. Eleanor, a teacher educator, said, "Students who come from different backgrounds may not be well-practiced in how to navigate standardized mandates that don't necessarily honor their ways of knowing or experiences. If we want a diverse core of teachers, [edTPA] isn't gonna be helpful." Naomi, a Black academic advisor, worked primarily with providing support for candidates of color as they navigated the path to becoming teachers. She described edTPA as one of the greatest barriers preventing people of color from entering the profession:

> This is going to be a barrier for students, particularly students of color…. As things happen, our students obviously are going to tell other students about their experiences. And then they start hearing they have to do edTPA, and then Praxis 2 or Praxis Core; then they have to get transportation and clothes for student teaching. They have to do all of these things in order to become a teacher. A lot of students of color that I recruit are already on the fence. They've heard negative things about teaching; they've had negative experiences in education. They want to teach, but other things are pulling them away from it. And so this is just another thing to be like, "Well, you know what, I'm all set. It's a wrap for me, I'm not going to do teaching."

Discussion

While some participants reported positive aspects of edTPA implementation, most responses highlighted concerns about the impact of edTPA on candidates' productivity and their ability to teach and reflect. We received remarkably consistent responses across the cohorts.

Surprisingly, candidates and seminar leaders did not raise discipline-specific issues. This finding was consistent with other literature on discipline-based candidates' experiences with edTPA, where responses focused more on general pedagogy, planning, and presentation concerns (Bernard & McBride, 2020). As we interpreted the findings, we repeatedly noted an alignment with two theoretical concepts that clarify the potential impact on candidates and teacher educators: epistemic injustice and slow violence. These concepts did not influence our data analysis as we did not intentionally set out to interpret the data through these theories as a framework. They did, however, subsequently inform our interpretation and understanding of participants' lived experiences as examples of epistemic injustice and slow violence.

Connections with Epistemic Injustice

Fricker's (2007) theory of epistemic injustice identifies the harm created against individuals and communities in "their capacity as a subject of knowledge, and thus in a capacity essential to human value" (p. 5). She describes two different types of epistemic injustice. "Testimonial injustice" occurs when someone is unfairly discounted as a "giver of knowledge" about the world or themselves. It is often rooted in the biases and assumptions of the audience or listener (p. 5). Testimonial injustice silences marginalized voices and discounts a common fund of knowledge that, in healthy learning spaces, all people contribute to and draw from.

In addition to testimonial injustice, Fricker describes "hermeneutic injustice" as "a gap…in our shared tools of social interpretation" that makes it difficult to comprehend others' experiences or perspectives (p. 6). In education, such gaps privilege and disadvantage different social groups unequally, diminishing both individual and collective capacities to understand and represent students of diverse backgrounds, creating barriers to access for them.

As we examined the tensions between edTPA implementation, our state's policy effort to diversify the teaching profession, and our own program redesign, our findings pointed to epistemic injustices perpetrated by the deployment of edTPA. Respondents clearly perceived that edTPA tasks failed to capture candidates' ways of knowing and promoted a narrowed, normative, formulaic version of teacher practices. They believed that when the edTPA definition of "ready to teach" conflicted with their own concepts of readiness, the edTPA definition prevailed. The edTPA definition of "ready to teach" also foreclosed time and space for creating relationships between teachers and students that built trust and informed teachers about students' ways of knowing. Resultantly, candidates lost opportunities to respond to their recognized strengths and needs, instead focusing on technocratic practices. Lack of emphasis on relationship-building—as evidenced by the minimal attention to the term given in the edTPA handbooks—favored a forced set of metrics diametric to our program's focus.

Findings suggest that the ability to build the skills and knowledge that edTPA attempts to assess is compromised by edTPA implementation because candidates are now measured in a more standardized, narrow way. For example, the edTPA assessment of reflection—which is not defined—may encourage candidates to produce simplistic products driven by guessing what edTPA requires instead of engaging in longitudinal, complex thinking that attends to candidates' local, situated contexts and communities. Additionally, candidates and teacher educators felt that edTPA did not value the knowledge *they* deemed valuable, a form of both testimonial and hermeneutic injustice. According to Fricker (2007), this exemplifies the undermining of the "credibility" of candidates as owners of important knowledge as well as their understanding of reflection and the effective response that arises from it. This phenomenon thus also undermines the credibility of our teacher educators and our program.

Additionally, candidates who see the high-stakes nature of edTPA may strategically move into clinical settings that they feel will help them to pass the assessment. When these moves occur,

they privilege particular ways of knowing and silencing others, including those that have traditionally been marginalized (Picower & Marshall, 2017; Potter, 2020). Additionally, they discount the importance of diverse teaching placements, which in turn can lead to a more diverse workforce. Certain candidates perceived edTPA as discounting their personal funds of knowledge and backgrounds (Yosso, 2005). Testimonial injustice—revealed in candidates' mistrust of the scorers' knowledge of their teaching contexts—led to hermeneutic injustice as the edTPA image of teacher "readiness" deprived the community of a more holistic, accurate understanding of teaching practice.

Trust in a system is essential to its success (Raider-Roth, 2005), and participants clearly mistrusted the edTPA process, viewing it as indifferent to their own experiences and the situated nature of teaching and learning. Although assessment narratives described candidates' settings, without firsthand understandings of the complexities of these spaces, edTPA scorers may not be able to accurately assess candidates' work within them. As a result, edTPA perpetuates testimonial, and then hermeneutic, injustice.

Respondents also clearly felt that edTPA narrowed their options for planning and teaching different students in different contexts. When an assessment limits rather than expands opportunities for authentic reflection and response, candidates may begin to define their students as barriers to professional advancement. Subsequently, they may shift from victim of epistemic injustice to participant in it.

Connections with Slow Violence

The negative results of edTPA implementation were most starkly articulated in the responses of students of color. For many of them, the completion of edTPA was not a discrete, bounded episode, but a continuation of a long, insidious, and often traumatizing relationship with educational institutions. When we look at the impacts articulated by our teacher candidates, particularly those of color, we see edTPA as positioning our program to enact what can be defined as "slow violence" (Nixon, 2011), specifically at a time when we have redesigned our program to address the needs of a more diverse body of candidates. Slow violence, Nixon holds, is "violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all" (p. 2). Nixon describes the relentless, pervasive, and catastrophic assault on environments of the global poor; however, slow violence may also describe "unspectacular" devastation that occurs in myriad contexts, including educational ones. The temporal and spatial dispersal of slow violence allows its operations and effects to appear normal, or even inevitable, and obscures the agency and intentions of the perpetrators. Slow violence is also cumulative, the result of a series of actions whose impacts compound and amplify one another. Such impacts are often delayed or difficult to identify in real-time, even if the eventual outcomes are evident.

Other education researchers have employed the concept of slow violence as a theoretical framework to analyze recent practices of neoliberal education policy reform (Aggarwal et al., 2012; Aviles & Heyback, 2017). The rising use of standardized assessments is one instance of such practices, which privilege models of efficiency and "accountability" (Apple, 2017; Sleeter, 2017). In the case of edTPA, the assessment is high-stakes and large-scale, which, due to limited time, money, and human capital inevitably forces one to invoke a narrower, more easily measured definition of "ready to teach." Thus, when institutions adopt edTPA, they enforce a monolithic standard of quality premised on cultural assimilation that one of our participants defined as "compliance." Such acquiescent attitudes enable the "unspectacular devastation" of slow violence. To various degrees, each assessment reinforces problematic notions of self-worth or capability and decreases access to opportunities for students of color.

Subsequently, when candidates with different points of view, life experiences, and cultural references don't conform to the standardized definition of "ready-to-teach," they are excluded from the profession: in many states, they will not receive certification. In this way, contrary to its statement that it supports teachers to work with students with "diverse strengths and needs" (AACTE, n.d.-c), edTPA serves as another intrusion in a dispersed, prolonged series of attacks that they have faced, and which we have tried to mitigate in order to support their development.

Participant responses suggest that edTPA compromises our reform efforts with increased invasiveness, as candidates now redistribute their thought, time, and resources to attend to edTPA requirements, both before and during their student teaching experiences. We are also struck by their responses about edTPA's power to compromise the relationship-building that our program defines as essential to exemplary practice. For example, similar to findings by Dover, Schultz, Smith, and Duggan (2015), Farinde-Wu and Griffen (2019), Greenblatt and O'Hara (2015), and Souto-Manning (2019), increased concerns with how their placement might impact their edTPA scores may incentivize candidates to value their students only according to whether or not they will help them score higher.

Employing the concept of slow violence in their study of urban school closures, Aggarwal, Mayorga, and Nevel (2012) noted that the severing of relationships was a key component of the system's "unspectacular devastation": "…[T]he violence began well before the official act of dispossession occurred. It began with the fracturing of relationships among school workers, students, and their communities through measures that separately targeted each of these communities…" (p. 162). edTPA, then, contributes to a regime that displaces local knowledge and relationships in favor of distant external validators who are not familiar with the community (Heilig et al., 2014). As candidates took an instrumental, rather than relational, view of their students, edTPA fundamentally fractured the relationships between them. The harm that occurs appears particularly insidious in that the relational shift positions candidates as both victims *and* perpetrators of slow violence: they cease to attend to students' needs and focus instead on assessment demands.

Conclusions and Implications

Our findings highlight how edTPA can distract, detract, and divert teacher educators' efforts to foster more just forms of education. We conclude that edTPA has the potential to undermine efforts to diversify the teaching profession by subjecting teacher candidates to epistemic injustice and slow violence. Students of diverse backgrounds benefit both academically and socially from having teachers with whom they can identify, who understand their experiences, and who are familiar with the injustices to which they have often been subjected (U.S. Department of Education, 2016; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). While edTPA writers argue, "The teaching profession cannot afford to wait a year or more for new teachers to become really effective, nor can it afford to lose new teachers who get frustrated early without enough support and leave the field" (AACTE, n.d.-c), we respond that their narrow vision of "ready to teach" may actually undermine their own intentions, excluding teachers who will build strong, caring relationships and be effective with traditionally marginalized students, particularly those in urban or low socioeconomic districts. Slow violence, in this case, is perpetrated by an impatient and narrowly defined accountability policy system, one that will continue to act as a barrier to diversifying the profession.

The question then becomes, "What is the alternative?" Some might argue that edTPA is another gatekeeping assessment among a long list of others, and a simple elimination would benefit the field by reducing assessment redundancy. Others might dispute that there is no better assessment that ensures that a greater number of qualified and exemplary teachers are entering the

field. We contend, however, that slow violence comes from standardization of such notions of "qualified" and "exemplary" imposed by an evaluator. As a result, notions of "qualified" and "exemplary" must include characteristics and strengths connected to different members of a pluralistic society.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to offer a comprehensive alternative to edTPA. However, based on the findings above, we propose several components of a more just, inclusive, and ethical assessment system might include the following:

- A more longitudinal, locally-based evaluation that looks at candidate growth over time. (This was a feature of Connecticut's BEST program, which was disbanded largely due to financial issues.) This might include evaluating candidates each semester prior to student teaching (instead of during student teaching alone), and then moving into induction years.
- Indicators that encompass a diverse range of qualities that reflect different candidates' skills, including candidate strengths rather than deficits. This might include a portfolio of practice which moves from (or incorporates both) behavior-oriented methods of teaching and assessing (Forzani, 2014; Grossman, 2021) to more approximations of practice—or core practices—which "occur with high frequency in teaching, are enacted across different curricula or instructional approaches, preserve the integrity and complexity of teaching, are research based, and have the potential to improve student achievement" (Whitcomb et al., 2009, p. 209). These indicators include issues related to lesson planning, instruction, assessment, such as: facilitating small group work; engaging students in routines; providing feedback to students; incorporating students' backgrounds and decisions into the classroom; using varied questioning techniques; selecting appropriate content materials; building upon student prior knowledge; relationship building; communicating in speaking and writing with students and colleagues; leading a class discussion; eliciting student thinking during interactive teaching; and anticipating student responses (Grossman, 2021). Feedback would be provided in more narrative forms to demonstrate a more relational nature and to spark candidate growth that can be immediately implemented.
- Evaluators that are familiar with the cultural, educational, and experiential contexts in which the candidate resides. This suggests that teacher educators, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors would play a major role in evaluation, lessening third-party evaluators who rely only on the limited data of a standardized assessment system.
- Teacher candidates as partners in evaluation alongside university supervisors and cooperating teachers. Together, the three determine artifacts (e.g., lesson plans, reflective notes, videos, teaching manipulatives and materials, student work) that best represent approximations of practices for the candidates and their students, their teaching settings, and their current strengths and challenges.

Together, these components suggest a return to more localized evaluation, and an elimination of the large-scale standardized practices that expand the profits of test-creators at the expense of both inclusive and accurate assessment. Our suggestions require a great deal of effort from the teacher education program and their stakeholders. However, they highlight the complexity and personal nature of teaching; namely, that justly ensuring or evaluating one's readiness to teach cannot be standardized or determined by a third-party entity but must be more homegrown.

Future research might examine additional impacts of edTPA in a number of contexts. Researchers might consider the longitudinal impact of edTPA on teachers, including their commitments to communities of color and other marginalized groups. Additionally, scholars must examine how edTPA scores are used by schools to make hiring decisions: administrators may overvalue edTPA's incomplete and inauthentic measures of candidate quality. Even if policymakers successfully increase the number of teachers of color, the narrowed range of practice elicited by edTPA may miseducate teachers of color, discouraging them from developing authentic relationships that support the academic and social needs of their students and communities.

As they make decisions to create educational environments, policies, and assessments that represent and support the widest array of citizens, policymakers would do well to listen to voices of those most affected. During a March 2022 hearing on the future of the edTPA requirement in Connecticut, every teacher, teacher educator, and teacher candidates who testified supported the bill to remove the edTPA requirement and develop a more authentic pre-service assessment. Educational administrators—deans, superintendents, and the Commissioner of Education—testified in opposition to the bill (Connecticut General Assembly, 2022). While the bill was tabled for that legislative session, the voices of those engaged in actual teaching, learning, and assessment make clear that they are increasingly frustrated with edTPA, seeing it as an inaccurate and inequitable measure of performance and potential.

The growth and learning of teacher candidates and their students are intimately tied to the relationships and knowledge of their local communities. Teacher educators and policymakers must work together to create more nuanced, contextualized, and localized assessments that confront epistemic injustice and slow violence; assessments that allow for a broader interpretation of and preparation for "ready to teach." To realize the promise of a more diverse teacher workforce—equity for all students and justice for marginalized communities—teacher educators and policymakers must ensure that the ways in which they prepare and evaluate teachers are increasingly more relational, diverse, equitable, and just.

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Appendix

Interview and Focus Group Protocol

No.	Questions
#1	Tell us about your experiences with edTPA so far.
#2	What do you see as edTPA's biggest strengths or benefits? What do you see as edTPA's biggest weaknesses or drawbacks?
#3	*Student-specific question:* Do you feel that edTPA influenced the way that you approach your learning in your program? If so, how? *Teacher Educator-specific question:* Do you feel that edTPA influenced the way that you approach your teaching in your program? If so, how? *For everyone:* Can you give an example of how edTPA has personally affected you, either positively or negatively? Has edTPA caused you to reflect on your practice? If so, in what ways? Has edTPA caused you to revise your practice? If so, in what ways?
#4	*For everyone:* What does it mean to be "ready to teach"? *Student-specific question:* In what ways do you think edTPA prepares you to be ready to teach? *Teacher Educator-specific question:* In what ways do you think edTPA prepares your students to be ready to teach? *Student-specific question:* Do you believe that the edTPA tasks are appropriate measures of your readiness to teach? *Teacher Educator-specific question:* Do you believe that the edTPA tasks are appropriate measures of their readiness to teach? *Student-specific question:* Do you think that the edTPA scores accurately reflect your readiness to teach? *Teacher Educator-specific question:* Do *you t*hink that the edTPA scores accurately reflect students' readiness to teach?
#5	Do you see edTPA as either supporting or violating the K-12 students' rights in the classroom? In what ways?
#6	*Teacher Educator-specific question:* Do you see any connections between the focus of edTPA, as reflected in its expectations and tasks, and the goals of our program?

About the Authors

Cara Faith Bernard
University of Connecticut
cara.bernard@uconn.edu
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8899-0170
Cara Bernard is associate professor of music education in curriculum and instruction at the University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education, where she teaches courses in choral and elementary methods, curriculum, and supervises student teaching. Her research areas include music teacher evaluation and policy, teacher education, choral music education, and urban music education. She is co-author of the book *Teacher Evaluation in Music: A Guide for Teachers in the US*, published by Oxford University Press.

Douglas Kaufman
University of Connecticut
douglas.kaufman@uconn.edu
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0621-6246
Douglas Kaufman is an associate professor of curriculum and instruction at the University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education and is a University of Connecticut Teaching Fellow. He also directs the Neag Teaching & Learning Abroad Program in Cape Town, South Africa. His current work examines connections between writing education and issues of equity, social justice, and anti-racism; classroom teachers who assume identities as writers; and the role of the teacher as listener and learner.

Mark Kohan
University of Connecticut
pedagogyofpossibility@gmail.com
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3790-5201
Mark Kohan is a writer, educator, and community organizer, living in Pittsburgh, PA. He is a former assistant clinical professor of teacher education and Faculty Director of the Human Rights and Action Learning Community at the University of Connecticut.

Glenn Mitoma
University of California, Santa Cruz
glenn.mitoma@gmail.com
Glenn Mitoma is Managing Director of the Institute for Social Transformation at UC Santa Cruz where he leads efforts to advance human rights and social justice through partnership, collaboration, and community engaged research. Glenn's writing has focused on the history of human rights and human rights education.

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