


What Is the Underlying Conception of Teaching of the edTPA?

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Abstract

The edTPA, a nationally available performance assessment for teacher candidates, has recently been developed and implemented in teacher education programs across the United States. Advocates make arguments for the need for such an assessment while critics of standardized performance assessments point out the dangers of standardization. This article takes a step back from the arguments in support of or in opposition to the assessment and asks fundamentally what the underlying conception of teaching of the edTPA is. After examining conceptions of teaching articulated by scholars such as Nathaniel Gage, Larry Cuban, Lee Shulman, Paulo Freire, and bell hooks, this article argues that the underlying conception of teaching of the edTPA is one of professional practice, not only at the individual level but also at the level of teaching as a collective enterprise. The conception of teaching argument is also connected to discussions of the validity arguments for the edTPA with specific attention to face validity, content validity, and construct validity.

Keywords

performance assessment, certification/licensure, philosophy

In the past 20 years, discussions about teaching quality have shifted from a discourse of defining “good” teaching through the establishment of performance standards to creating processes for evaluating teaching through performance assessments. In the development of a set of performance expectations for teaching, we must ask what the underlying conception of teaching is that gives shape to the expected performance. In other words, what are the value assumptions about the outcomes of teaching? What are the underlying assumptions that shape what teachers and students do? The conception of teaching within a performance assessment sets an ideological stance about teaching and how it is performed. Underlying conceptions of teaching in performance assessments are often taken for granted within a community and may vary across communities.

This article begins by setting the stage for the edTPA, a new performance assessment for preservice teachers that is being offered nationally, with a brief history of its development and design. This is followed by a summary of a variety of conceptions of teaching that have been described by scholars of teaching over time to search out the underlying conception of teaching within the edTPA. This brief summary will not attempt to provide an exhaustive discussion about defining teaching. It will, however, attempt to provide enough of a context for the variety of conceptions of teaching in the literature to place the performance expectations of the edTPA within a conceptual framework that defines what teaching is according to the edTPA expectations.

An analysis of the edTPA for its underlying conception of teaching is essential to ongoing discussions about the validity of the edTPA as an assessment that measures the quality of the performance of a beginning teacher. This article closes with a discussion of the face validity, the content validity, and the construct validity of the edTPA. Threats to validity, such as how different communities within teacher education may hold differing assumptions about underlying conceptions of teaching, are also discussed.

Setting the Stage for the edTPA

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is the first organization to tackle the messy problem of evaluating the performance of teachers via a set of performance standards at the national level. The NBPTS performance assessment process for teachers has been viable since 1994 when the first teachers achieved National Board Certification (Sato, 2000). The NBPTS assessment process was designed to capture accomplished teaching of teachers who already have, at minimum, 3 years of experience as a classroom teacher. Both lauded for how it captures authentic

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work of teaching and criticized for its cost to individual teachers and school systems, the NBPTS assessment approach has proven to be an educative assessment process grounded in the everyday work of teaching (Sato, Wei, & Darling-Hammond, 2008). Its assessment design uses multiple measures of teacher performance, including classroom video, student work sample analysis by the teacher, teachers' written analysis about their teaching practice, testimonials about teacher leadership and professional work outside of the classroom, and a written exam.

In the past 10 years, high stakes performance assessments similar to the design of the National Board's have come on the scene for preservice teachers. These efforts follow on the heels of the growth and development of teaching portfolios that have been popular in teacher education programs since the 1990s (during the initial growth and development of the National Board portfolio assessment process). For some teacher education institutions, performance assessments have been fundamental to their programs for many years. The ideological shift that is now taking place nation-wide, however, is to move away from institution-specific or "home-grown" performance assessments and move toward a more standardized assessment that holds common expectations for teachers across an institution, a state, or even the nation. For example, California enacted legislation in 1998 requiring a summative assessment of teaching performance of preservice teachers (CA Senate Bill 2042). Some institutions adopted the California Teaching Performance Assessment (CalTPA) developed by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and the Educational Testing Service while a separate consortium of institutions developed the Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT) developed by a team at Stanford University.

The PACT assessment was modeled on the National Board's performance assessment. It uses multiple measures of performance—classroom video, student work sample analysis by the teacher, and teacher analysis and commentary about his or her practice. The performance tasks link together teachers' ability to plan lessons, enact instruction, engage students, assess student learning, and reflect on their performance and next steps. Unlike the National Board assessment, there is no written exam and no testimonial about the professionalism and leadership of the teacher outside of the classroom. One argument for these missing elements in a pre-service teacher assessment is that states typically have a content knowledge test required for a teaching license making a written examination of content knowledge redundant to assessments that are already in place and that as a beginning teacher, leadership and community outreach are aspects of professional practice that are still in early stages of development. Thus, the PACT assessment and its kin focus on classroom teaching performance, grounded in the work of the P-12 students and the teachers' analysis of learning outcomes for those students. During the early stages of PACT development in California, I was a graduate student and post-doctoral fellow at Stanford University. I

ran a program that supported hundreds of California teachers toward National Board Certification and conducted research on the impact of the National Board Certification process on teachers' classroom teaching. Given this experience with performance assessments of teaching, I worked on the periphery of the PACT development, writing support guidelines for candidates and participating in scorer training for the science assessment.

In the most recent iteration of teacher performance assessments, members of the teacher education community in the United States have been making an effort to define the performance expectations for teachers exiting teacher education programs by developing a performance assessment that can be commonly administered across institutions and reliably scored by experts in teaching (e.g., teachers and teacher educators). The American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE), a leading professional organization of teacher education institutions in the United States, supported the development of a performance assessment that would set performance expectations for beginning teachers across the nation. They drew on the PACT model and its development team to launch this nation-wide effort of developing an assessment of teaching for preservice teachers from within the field of teacher education. Development was rapid as the PACT model was already in place. The edTPA, as the new assessment is now called, currently has legislative or licensure board pool policy support from 7 states, 430 institutions have participated in the development and use of the assessment, and a national convening in 2013 set the national standard for candidate passing scores on this new assessment (Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity, 2013b). Given my earlier history with the National Board Certification process and the PACT development, I remained active in teacher performance assessment development and have served on the national design team and a standard-setting panel for the edTPA and have co-chaired the state steering committee for the adoption and implementation of the edTPA in Minnesota, where I currently work.

Much debate roils around the development and adoption of the edTPA on a national level. Proponents argue that developing a performance assessment for teacher education is a step toward more authentic ways to assess readiness for teaching than the typical standardized tests about pedagogy that use multiple choice items and are disconnected from authentic teaching situations. They also argue that establishing a common assessment that has validity and reliability related to agreed-upon teacher candidate performances will give the field of teacher education a set of meaningful analytics that can be used for continuous program renewal (Haynes, 2013). These advocates have been early adopters of the assessment and have actively participated in many aspects of the edTPA development process.

The arguments from skeptics and opponents of a common assessment for teacher candidate performance in general and the edTPA in particular seem to come from three distinct

perspectives. First, some of the most vocal criticisms of the edTPA have centered on the outsourcing of the scoring process from higher education to a corporate entity that has the business infrastructure to build an electronic platform to house and protect thousands of teacher candidate performance assessments each year and hire and pay teachers and teacher educators as external scorers on a year-round basis. These critics argue that engaging a corporate entity risks making teacher education a big business enterprise that is driven by profit and a production mind-set (Winerip, 2012).

Related to the use of an external agency for scoring the assessments, some people argue that the real value in teacher preparation programs lies in the personalized relationships that are developed between the teacher candidate and his or her instructors, coaches, and cooperating teachers (Schulte, 2012). Introducing a capstone assessment that is not coached and is subsequently scored outside of the educative relationships that are integral to the preparation program strips away the knowledge of the candidates' real skill and development needs. In this argument, depersonalized score reports are not valued feedback on performance as compared with the coaching sessions that happen after live observations of teaching. This article does not address the debate about operationalizing the edTPA at scale via a corporate partnership. Rather, I take up the question of how the edTPA was built around a conception of teaching that was "agreed upon" by the developers and the hundreds of experienced educators—teachers and teacher educators—who brought a variety of perspectives about the process of teaching during their participation in the conceptualization, design, and development of the assessment.

Second, opponents argue that having a common performance assessment across the nation risks standardizing the process of teacher preparation, not accounting for the distinct approaches to preparing teachers valued by individual preparation programs (Sawchuk, 2013). For example, if a program has a mission to prepare teachers for urban contexts, then an assessment that is designed to apply across multiple types of contexts may miss some of the deeply nuanced aspects of that program's candidate performance. These critics ask important questions about how the assessment developers have chosen to represent the teaching and learning process in the assessment, how the scoring process can guarantee fairness given the wide variety of contexts in which teacher candidates are teaching, and how the assessment will be used for consequential decisions about awarding a license to a teacher candidate without adversely affecting program completers because of the program values.

The third criticism, and the one that has sparked the development of this article, raises an age-old question about whether there is a core body of knowledge and skills that teachers ought to know and be able to demonstrate through performance before being entrusted with a license to teach. It is this question that leads me to examine the underlying conception of teaching and how a particular body of knowledge

and skills becomes related to a conception of teaching. These debates arise most often from the perspective of critical multicultural education. In 2013, the National Association of Multicultural Education (NAME) issued a statement describing why it does not support the development and adoption of standardized performance assessments for teacher education such as the edTPA. Among the many points this organization makes is that "the edTPA undermines critical multicultural education" (NAME, 2014). Countering this point, AACTE's (2014) response to this position statement said,

AACTE agrees with NAME's position that "the practice of critical multicultural education cannot, by its nature, be standardized, nor can the development of teachers who will engage critical multicultural education in their classrooms." At the same time, we support the profession's desire and efforts to identify the core practices we know impact student learning in PK-12 classrooms and a common set of metrics for evaluating that practice. edTPA is one such assessment, developed by the profession for the profession, which contributes to that movement.

Similarly, some critics suggest that particular kinds of pedagogy are valued over others in the edTPA, thus limiting the choices candidates have for how to present their teaching in the assessment. The Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE) the group at Stanford University leading the development of the edTPA, addressed this criticism in an "edTPA Myths and Facts" sheet by stating that the edTPA was developed:

to allow preparation programs to support candidates using multiple approaches to teaching and learning . . . For all fields, the central focus of student learning must go beyond facts and skills to develop conceptual understandings and engage with content in meaningful ways . . . through a variety of instructional approaches.

I think these seemingly divergent understandings about what kind of teaching approach or practice is expected in the edTPA can be better understood within a broader discussion of the underlying conception of teaching upon which the edTPA is built. In the next section, I explore a variety of conceptions of teaching to locate what the edTPA expects of teachers as individual practitioners and of teachers collectively.

Conceptions of Teaching

Several authors have come to a similar conclusion that teaching can be conceptualized into two broad categories. For example, Nathaniel Gage (2009), often referred to as the "father of the field of research on teaching," organized his discussion of models for the process of teaching into two categories: progressive–discovery–constructivist models and conventional–direct–recitation models. He bases these

broad categories on decades of research on teaching and prior conceptualizations of models of teaching, specifically drawing on four families of teaching described by Joyce and Weil (2000): the social family, the information-processing family, the personal family, and the behavioral systems family. The progressive–discovery–constructivist model of teaching is based on constructivist learning theory that came into the education consciousness in the latter part of the 20th century. This process of learning is facilitated by the teacher and organized around the conceptual development of the students. The individual student’s interests, needs, and abilities are accounted for in the selection of curricular materials and choice of instructional activities. Learning is viewed as a process of individual cognitive processing, but the social role of the classroom community in terms of interactions among students and the supportive climate for challenging student understanding are also central to this model of teaching.

The conventional–direct–recitation model of teaching is based on teacher-structured learning activities. Instruction is primarily driven by teacher questions and student responses. The explicit nature of instruction through stating goals for learning, reviewing prior instruction, presentation of new material, detailed instruction and explanation, active practice, and systematic feedback and correction is a familiar lesson design that most readers will recognize. Gage refers to this model as conventional because, he argues, it is the most widely used process for teaching in the United States and that it has endured the test of time as described by historical accounts of teaching by Cuban (1993) and a large-scale sampling study of classroom instruction by Goodlad (1984).

Larry Cuban (1993), a renowned historian of education, described teaching in the United States as stretching across a continuum from teacher-centered to student-centered instruction. Teacher-centered instruction is dominated by teacher talk, occurs most frequently in a configuration of the whole class focused on the same topic; time is controlled by the teacher; and the instructional materials are the same for all children, most often a textbook. Student-centered instruction relies more heavily on individual and small group work that will produce more student talk in the classroom, students have more choice in the curricular content and the instructional materials are more varied, and the use of time on learning activities is negotiated between the teacher and the students. Cuban (1993) described these two traditions of teaching as “anchored in different views of knowledge and the relationship of both teacher and learning to that knowledge” (p. 8).

In Philip Jackson’s (1986) classic book *The Practice of Teaching*, he concludes with a discussion of an “alternative outlook on teaching” and tries to expand our understanding of these commonly accepted dichotomies of teaching. He intentionally renames the frames on teaching as the “mimetic tradition” and the “transformative tradition” to allow a deeper discussion of the underlying notions of knowledge and outcomes of education as opposed to describing teaching

merely as an instructional approach, process, or method. Jackson argues that these two traditions are deeply bound in epistemological commitments. In the mimetic tradition, knowledge is viewed as something that is detached from the person and can be reproduced and transmitted from person to person. Teaching in the mimetic tradition is a process of instilling knowledge in another person through presentation, practice, evaluation, feedback, and attainment. The teacher, in this tradition, must be viewed as having some expertise in the content that the students are to take up and in the methods for transmitting that content to the students.

The transformative tradition is not based on a metaphor of knowledge as a commodity. The “outcome” of the transformative tradition is to shape and reshape the person in ways that leave both teacher and student in a different state of being as a result of the instructional relationship. Jackson (1986) described the transformative nature of teaching as a process that can “modify character, instill values, shape attitudes, and generate new interests” (p. 123). The process by which this happens is difficult to describe as it is not based on a particular set of pedagogical skills, but instead may rely on approaches such as personal modeling, “soft”-suasion, and the use of narrative or stories. This positions teachers not necessarily as content experts who are supporting the uptake of new knowledge, but expects them to bring about change in the person through discussion and argumentation. The outcome is personal; transformative change by helping students to become “better persons, not simply more knowledgeable or more skillful, but better in the sense of being closer to what humans are capable of becoming—more virtuous, fuller participants in an evolving moral order” (Jackson, 1986, p. 127).

Jackson’s (1986) argument for renaming the dichotomies of teaching traditions ends with a discussion of how the mimetic tradition is increasing in the United States and is often viewed as progress in that it gives a “firmer intellectual foundation to the entire enterprise of education” (p. 141). This progress, however, does not come without compromise. If the transformative tradition is slowly eroded from our public and political conception of the expectations of teaching, then we risk losing the strong relational successes and relying too strongly on scientific or technical approaches to instruction and a narrowing focus on what counts as good teaching. Jackson (1986) acknowledged that individual teachers can bridge the epistemological rifts between the two traditions and create “those rare and memorable encounters with teachers that leave us doubly enriched, morally as well as intellectually” (p. 144). Yet, the individual accounts of teachers who move successfully within and across these traditions leave the connections between these differing conceptions of teaching tenuous in our collective, public, and political thinking. Jackson (1986) concluded,

I fear that as polarities of educational thought the mimetic and the transformative will be with us for a long time to come, perhaps forever. Moreover, a certain amount of tension and

strife between the two traditions may turn out to be inevitable. How to keep the tension within tolerable limits and therefore productive rather than destructive and at the same time, how to avoid the attraction of extremes within each tradition are questions I cannot answer except by advocating the continued exercise of intelligence and goodwill in the search for answers . . . When we consider what has already been said about those rare teachers who seem to achieve a near perfect blending of the mimetic and the transformative, we can see that the tension between the two traditions can be experienced individually as well as collectively. What it makes conceivable, if not exactly likely, is the possibility that such tensions may be more readily resolved at the individual level, within the confines of a single classroom, than at the level of public debate, where the rift between the traditions appears so great that one is virtually forced to choose sides. (pp. 144-145)

Other authors have attempted to capture conceptions of teaching via metaphors rather than high level descriptors such as the dichotomies discussed so far. For example, Pratt (1992) empirically derived five conceptions of teaching based on 253 interviews across four countries: engineering—delivering content; apprenticeship—modeling ways of being; developmental—cultivating the intellect; nurturing—facilitating personal agency; and social reform—seeking a better society. Gary Fenstermacher and Jonas Soltis (1986), two heralded philosophers of education who have written extensively about teaching, conceptualized three “approaches to teaching” using metaphorical language and defined the underlying theoretical perspectives that drive each approach. They describe the “executive approach” as viewing teaching as a process that brings about specific learning and relies on the skills and techniques that may be derived from research on effective teaching. This approach to teaching assumes the outcome of teaching is student learning and the process assumes the management of learners and the classroom activities. The “therapist approach” assumes that the outcome of teaching is personal growth and meaning making with roots in humanistic psychology and philosophy. The “liberationist approach” assumes teaching is about freeing the mind and supporting the development of autonomous and moral people with roots in the traditions of liberal education. This approach seeks to help students become open-minded and conscious of their opinions by opening their minds to ideas outside of their preconceived understanding and traditions of thought. Interestingly, the idea of liberation for Fenstermacher and Soltis is not rooted in critical theory or the work of Paulo Freire for whom the idea of liberation would be a political construct akin to revolution.

Paulo Freire’s (1970) conception of teaching in his classic book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* provides the cornerstone ideas of critical pedagogy. Of note is Freire’s rejection of the “banking approach” to education. This metaphor suggests that students are empty bank accounts and that teachers’ work is to make deposits into the empty minds of the students. Treating students as empty vessels and teachers as

holders of sanctioned knowledge is viewed by Freire as dehumanizing and furthering the agenda of oppression of the powerless. Instead, Freire advocates for a mutual approach to education between teacher and student in which the struggle is to become more fully human through mediated experiences in the world. Pedagogy would not necessarily be conceived as a process of “teaching and learning” or as “instruction,” but rather as part of an overall educational process in which people engage together. The desired ends of education are not to become full of knowledge and skill, but to seek freedom by leveraging knowledge and skill through cooperation, unity, and organization. The means toward these collective interactions are dialogics, not coercion, manipulation, invasion, and conquest. Education becomes a form of revolution that allows the colonized to become free of the colonizer; it is a form of informed action through praxis, and it is a form of humanization through the quest for freedom. Importantly, Freire does not abandon commitments to teaching within the disciplines. He understood that freedom of oppressed people requires that they become literate and numerate, and that they learn how to use the tools of the disciplines.

In her book *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*, bell hooks (1994), professor of women’s studies and American literature and a noted feminist author and cultural critic, described classrooms as both a source of constraint and a potential source of liberation. Taking up many of the stances of Freire, hooks argued that the use of power over students in the classroom to control them teaches obedience to authority. As students are coerced into activity, they become disengaged rather than enthusiastic about learning. Through descriptions of her own teaching efforts as a college professor, she describes and calls for teaching that is collaborative, that unfolds through student interest and drive, and that is emotionally satisfying. Pedagogy for freedom requires that teachers be clear about how to teach students to learn and use knowledge and skills, ideally rooted in inquiry that is meaningful to students and in a collaborative space. The process itself is part of the learning goals.

Through this discussion of conceptions of teaching, we can see the dichotomies of how learning is conceived as a process of construction and a process of cognitive uptake, how activities associated with teaching are viewed as student-centered and teacher-centered, how epistemological differences define the impact of teaching as knowledge acquisition and personal transformation, and the undeniable role of politics in education as human freedom is introduced as a state of being through the education process. All of these discussions about conceptions of teaching lead to a fundamental question of the desired outcome we are seeking through the act of teaching. There is no definitive research that suggests that one set of outcomes is more important, more relevant, more desirable, or more productive for students than another set of outcomes. The choice of outcomes

can be a value-based decision, a politically driven decision, or a decision that is made within long-standing traditions of the culture of teaching itself. The next section describes how the edTPA fits within these conceptions of teaching as a matter of argument.

What Is the Underlying Conception of Teaching of the edTPA?

The edTPA is described as follows on the current webpage of the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (n.d.):

Aligned with the Common Core State Standards, edTPA is an authentic assessment tool that shows how teacher candidates develop and evaluate student learning. The centerpiece of the edTPA process is a portfolio that describes and documents authentic practices from the candidate's teaching experience. The portfolio addresses planning, instruction, assessment, analyzing teaching, and academic language to reveal the impact of a candidate's teaching performance on student learning.

As the edTPA was developed and piloted over a 3-year period, the performance tasks were defined and the technical processes for submitting and scoring the performance were clarified and became more specified over time. The most recent versions of the edTPA now include a diagram of the overall "architecture" of the assessment that gives us insight into the underlying conception of teaching held within the assessment itself. This architecture places student learning in the center of a three-step teaching cycle: planning, instruction, and assessment. These aspects of teaching are placed within an outer ring of teacher decision-making actions: justifying planning decisions, analyzing teaching, and using data to inform instruction. Finally, the edTPA includes a connective thread of attention to academic language across the planning, instruction, and assessment activities of teaching (Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity, 2013b).

This description clearly states that the desired outcome of instruction is student learning. In today's educational climate, attention to fundamental opportunities to learn for students and inequities in student achievement along race and socioeconomic boundaries are acute. Impact on student learning has become widely accepted as an outcome of teaching that is fundamental to assessing teacher performance (Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2011; Goe, Bell, & Little, 2008). The edTPA has taken up the call of focusing on student achievement and the identifiable impact the teacher has on student learning. There is a clear expectation that the act of "teaching" leads to an identifiable learning outcome for students. The edTPA expectations, however, do not limit a candidate to achievement test scores nor does it narrow the outcomes for students to quantifiable measures of learning. The teacher candidate selects the learning goal and the means by which the student learning is evaluated.

According to the designers of edTPA, the assessment provides insight into a candidate's ability to teach his or her specific content area effectively to diverse learners. The focus on content learning outcomes narrows the conception of teaching to one that emphasizes disciplinary learning. This focus does not prohibit the teacher candidate from supporting outcomes such as personal growth, self-actualization, or humanistic aims, but these outcomes of the teacher-student interaction are not the core focus of the edTPA as an assessment of successful or competent teaching. Thus, a conception of teaching as transformative (Jackson, 1986), or teacher as therapist (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 1986), is not the core conception underpinning the edTPA.

With a focus on student disciplinary or content learning outcomes, the question I now ask is could a teacher working within a Freirean or critical pedagogy conception of teaching who chooses to define learning goals that are associated with social reform successfully complete the edTPA? If the learning outcomes were defined within a specific discipline or content area and the teacher candidate could capture his or her approach to teaching in the required artifacts (video and student work samples), then it is conceivable that a candidate could successfully complete the edTPA while operating within a critical pedagogy framework. For example, a learning segment could be designed around a community-based issue such as pollution in a science class, capturing elders' historical accounts of political actions in a social studies or literature class, or statistical study of local economies in a mathematics class. The conceptual tensions with critical pedagogy and the edTPA expectations for instructional design would lie within the realm of identifying the teaching and educational outcomes. A critical pedagogue may argue that outcomes are not pre-defined or pre-determined by the teacher, but instead are created by the classroom community and may evolve through the dialogic learning process. This conception of teaching in the broader scheme of a democratic purpose for education is not dismissed by the edTPA. However, the edTPA as an assessment of teaching does require that the teacher candidate be able to embed within that broader conception how he or she is able to teach students how to leverage knowledge and skills of the disciplines so that they can raise good questions, engage knowledgeably in debates, and participate purposefully in problem solving around issues that will bring about social reform. Thus, the expectation of creating meaningful disciplinary learning opportunities for students is not in conflict with conceptions of pedagogy of the oppressed or pedagogy of freedom; yet the edTPA is not scoring candidates on their commitments to the larger ideals of these conceptions of teaching. It is feasible, then, that candidates teaching within a critical pedagogy conception of teaching can be successful on the edTPA if they align the edTPA submission with the disciplinary knowledge and skills they are preparing their students to use in their fight for freedom and anti-oppression.

I now move to the question of whether the edTPA completely ignores aspects of teaching for social justice in what is actually assessed. Dr. Marvin Lynn, a self-proclaimed scholar of race and education and dean of the School of Education at Indiana University South Bend, argues that teacher preparation programs provide increased awareness about race, culture, and student background through foundational knowledge courses. However, he suggests that they struggle with how to translate that knowledge into practice and performance of the teacher candidate. In his examination of the edTPA, the link between what the candidate knows about multi-cultural populations and how to use that knowledge to engage in effective teaching in diverse contexts is forged:

edTPA requires candidates—and their instructors—to be sophisticated about P-12 student context, how they learn and what makes them tick. And teacher candidates have to be explicitly non-deficit in their orientation. In other words, aspiring teachers must understand where student potential lies and demonstrate they can leverage it. (Lynn, 2014)

Given these expectations of the edTPA, it is fair to say that a teacher candidate must demonstrate a commitment to all students. Having served on the design team for the edTPA, I can attest that how to expect a performance that successfully demonstrates teaching that is driven by a stance of equity was an ongoing commitment of the team as well as a design challenge for the group. To dig deeper into the question of how the edTPA represents the conceptions of teaching for social justice or equity-minded pedagogy, Hyler, Yee, Carey, and Barnes (2013) conducted a detailed analysis of the text of the 2011 field test version of the *Secondary Mathematics edTPA Handbook* using a culturally relevant pedagogy framework (Ladson-Billings, 1995). They looked for opportunities and prompts that would allow candidates to demonstrate aspects of culturally relevant pedagogy. They found that

70.3 percent of the handbook text units (naturally occurring sentences or phrases) provide teacher candidates with either an opportunity to present CRP elements or prompt them to do so . . . overwhelmingly the assessment allows space for candidates to demonstrate elements of CRP but does not require them to do so.

This analysis suggests that the edTPA tasks represent a commitment to educational equity as defined specifically through a culturally relevant pedagogy theoretical framework; yet the assessment depends on the preparation programs to instill in their candidates the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to enact this framework, and must guide them toward whether or not to take the opportunity to present their teaching in such ways.

I now examine the question of whether the edTPA favors a teacher-centered or student-centered conception of

teaching. The handbook directions allow a candidate to choose instructional strategies for whole class, individuals, and/or groups of students with specific learning needs as long as they can describe why the strategy is appropriate and acknowledges the needs of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students. The edTPA appears to be fairly neutral on its stance between teacher-centered and student-centered approaches based on how students are grouped, as there are no specific requirements about organizing students in instructional activities. All students in the edTPA learning segment may be learning the same content together led by the teacher, or students may be working in small groups on varied projects and the edTPA criteria can still be met. The expectation that learning needs of individuals and small groups are being met by the teacher might suggest that a student-centered approach is favored, yet differentiation for individuals and groups with specific learning needs can be met while still maintaining a teacher-directed curriculum and learning activities.

The edTPA candidate handbooks direct candidates to select instructional strategies that

- link to students' prior academic learning and personal, cultural, and community assets with new learning;
- elicit and build on student responses to promote thinking; and
- model the learning strategy and support students as they practice.

These expectations of assessing and linking to prior knowledge and building on student ideas suggests that the edTPA leans toward a constructivist approach to support student learning as described in Gage's (2009) progressive-discovery-constructivist model of teaching. This conclusion is also supported by other research that concludes that national standards "clearly favor teachers who emphasize advanced content, deep understanding, reasoning, and applications over a strong focus on just basic skills and facts . . . [and] leans more toward constructivist teaching than toward direct instruction" (Porter, Youngs, & Odden, 2001, p. 292).

I conclude that teaching that is based solely on teacher demonstration, narrative, or lecture will not meet the edTPA expectations. Thus, the edTPA does not support a conception of teaching on the extreme end of the teacher-centered spectrum. However, the instructional expectation is that learning goals are defined and aligned with local, state, or national standards and are of disciplinary importance. Thus, a conception of teaching on the far end of the student-centered spectrum that allows agency to students in the negotiation of learning outcomes is limited by the assessment design. The edTPA attempts to straddle these conceptions of teaching, expecting strong student engagement in learning activities

that they find meaningful and that are well structured or orchestrated by the teacher.

Based on the discussion so far, the edTPA aligns most closely with the description of teaching through an “executive approach” as described by Fenstermacher and Soltis (1986). As a reminder, this conception understands teaching as a process that brings about specific learning and relies on the skills and techniques that may be derived from research on effective teaching. The edTPA handbook specifically asks candidates to “use principles from research and/or theory to support your explanations.” This approach to teaching assumes the outcome of teaching is student learning and the process assumes that the teacher manages or orchestrates learners and the classroom activities. Candidates who hold deeper political commitments about the purpose of education and how they want their students to take up social reform will not be assessed on their philosophical stances, and they will not be penalized for them either. They will be assessed on how they engage their students in disciplinary learning that is meaningful and purposeful to them in meeting the larger goals that the teacher and student have negotiated.

Fenstermacher and Soltis wrote about this “executive approach” in 1986, a time when the field of research on teaching was taking up arguments to professionalize teaching. If we read “executive” as “professional,” the edTPA can be understood as being built within a conceptual frame of teaching as a *professional* activity. Lee Shulman (1998), professor emeritus from Stanford University and past president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, argued that

the idea of a “profession” describes a special set of circumstances for deep understanding, complex practice, ethical conduct, higher-order learning, circumstances that define the complexity of the enterprise and explain the difficulties of prescribing both policies and curriculum in this area. (p. 515)

In his argument, Shulman is not describing teaching as a set of instructional approaches nor is he concerned with arguing for or against particular outcomes of teaching as he would view teaching as a complex and multi-faceted endeavor that would not ascribe to oversimplified notions of singular outcomes. His work helps us understand the structure of teaching as an activity taken up by a group of people. This conception of teaching moves us farther away from the classroom activities and closer to an argument for why the edTPA can even attempt to overlay a standardized assessment on a complex practice such as teaching.

Darling-Hammond and Hyler (2013) examined the role of performance assessment in the process of developing teaching as a profession. They argued,

Professions make a compact with the public that allows them to manage their own work in exchange for holding themselves accountable for mastering the knowledge and skills that allow

them to practice safely and effectively. The extent to which an occupation is micromanaged by rules from without is directly related to the extent to which it fails to maintain high, common standards of competence and professional practice. For this reason, rigorous licensing and certification tests have been critical to the professionalization of occupations—from medicine in the early 1900s to nursing, law, engineering, accounting, architecture, and others thereafter . . . [and] they are designed and scored by members of the profession . . . Unfortunately, the tests mandated for teachers have not, for the most part, been designed by members of the profession; nor have they captured the essence of the knowledge and skills needed for teaching.

Shulman describes six characteristics that can be attributed to all professions and argues that the education of teachers is increasingly taking on these challenges of professional preparation through new pedagogies and increased emphasis on connections between theory and practice:

- the obligation of *service* to others, as in a “calling”;
- *understanding* of a scholarly or theoretical kind;
- a domain of skilled performance or *practice*;
- the exercise of *judgment* under conditions of unavoidable uncertainty;
- the need for *learning from experience* as theory and practice interact; and
- a professional *community* to monitor quality and aggregate knowledge. (p. 516, emphases in original)

My observation is that the edTPA is attempting to apply these criteria of a profession onto teacher education as a means of supporting teacher education as a field to demonstrate these professional characteristics. For example, the obligation to service is manifest in the focus of the assessment on supporting student learning. In previous versions of teacher candidate assessments (e.g., standardized paper and pencil exams and most observation instruments currently used in teacher education programs), the focus of performance is on the knowledge and behaviors of the teacher candidate. These forms of assessment treat teaching as an individual endeavor with consequences only for the candidate and not for the client that the candidate will serve—namely the P-12 students. The edTPA requires that the candidate demonstrate his or her impact on the student, in service to the student. This is the part of the assessment that can raise conceptual tension among teacher educators and teacher candidates when their expectations of impact on students differ from those of the edTPA.

Understanding of a scholarly or theoretical kind has been held by teacher education programs since they became

situated in higher education (Labaree, 2004). The edTPA takes up this aspect of the higher education mission, expecting the teacher candidate to demonstrate his or her understanding of a body of theoretical knowledge by asking the candidate to draw on that theoretical knowledge to explain his or her practice.

The edTPA is built on the premise that the candidate must demonstrate a skilled performance. More to the point, however, is the edTPA's attempt to *define* the skilled performance that should be expected of a teacher candidate as a beginning practitioner. The designers of the edTPA and the engaged community in the design process have selected particular skills and linked those skills together in a way that have defined teaching practice not just for a single program but for teacher education as a field. This effort is associated with the last criterion of the profession, that a professional community monitors the quality and aggregate knowledge of that community. The edTPA is seeking to pull together the teacher education community around an agreed-upon set of performance expectations that will allow the field to engage in the activities of aggregating knowledge and monitoring agreed-upon quality of performance. Prior to the edTPA, the field has been guided by a set of standards developed by the CCSSO that have been adapted by most states. But the standards have not defined performance expectations in the same way that the edTPA as an assessment of performance has begun to do for the field.

Finally, in supporting the development of the field of teacher education and teaching as a professional endeavor, the edTPA is built on a model of teaching that requires the teacher candidate to describe the context of teaching and how his or her instructional planning and decisions are justified for that context and for the particular students in his or her classroom. The video component of the assessment is used to show how the candidate is responsive to the students in real time and not in hypothetical terms. Thus, the candidate faces the predictable uncertainty of classroom interactions and must make sense of them as they engage students in the moment. The candidate is also expected to be learning throughout the process of the edTPA as is illustrated in expectations for how candidates can be supported prior to their completion of the final edTPA. Finally, the candidate is held accountable for his or her own professional learning through specific rubrics for analysis of teaching that requires reflective learning based on their students' performance and based on the candidates' assessment of their own effectiveness.

In summary, this discussion suggests that the edTPA is built within a conceptual framing of teaching as a professional endeavor not only for the individual teacher candidate but also for the field of teacher education. The edTPA exemplifies each of the six criteria of a profession as defined by Shulman (1998). It also suggests that teaching within the assessment is conceptualized as an executive process in which the teacher is responsible for selecting worthwhile learning goals for his or her students and then orchestrating learning activities for the group of students in an effort to

support them toward achieving those goals. The approach to teaching and the selection of the activities by the teacher candidate are guided by a conception of constructivist learning. While political purposes for teaching are not explicitly called out and assessed in the edTPA, candidates are not penalized for such ideals and will need to demonstrate how they support students in disciplinary learning that will lead them toward those broader goals. The edTPA does, however, hold an explicit expectation of teaching that is equitable for students with regard to how to teacher candidates understand the diverse backgrounds and learning needs in classrooms and can justify how their teaching meets those needs.

One way in which the underlying conception of teaching manifests itself in our contemporary discourse about performance assessments for teachers is through the demand for proof of validity of the instrument. Validity has many different forms, all of which are based not only on technical analysis of field test scores but also on arguments from within the community about what is important and valued in practice that is being measured. The next section discusses how the edTPA addresses three forms of validity at this stage of its development: face validity, content validity, and construct validity and relates these validity arguments to the conception of teaching on which the edTPA is built. Other forms of validity (e.g., predictive validity and consequential validity) are outside of the scope of this discussion.

Face Validity of the edTPA

The edTPA is designed to align with the authentic teaching practice of the teacher candidate. Thus, the face validity of the assessment can be argued according to how the instructions of the edTPA and the artifacts that are collected align with the actual teaching practices of the teacher candidates during their student teaching experience. Four criteria were used to ensure that the assessment design is authentic to the candidates' classroom teaching. First, the tasks are integrated (i.e., the learning goals, the instruction, and the student assessment are linked together) as they would be in the authentic work of a teacher. Second, each edTPA task requires the candidate to collect and submit direct evidence from the actual work of teaching, for example, student work samples or video recording of the candidate engaged in instruction and interacting with students around the content learning goals. Third, the tasks not only represent the behaviors of the teacher but also include the impact of the instruction on student learning as demonstrated through an analysis of student learning. And fourth, the instructional tasks are considered within the context of the subject-matter content and learning goals. Given that the structure of teacher licensing in each state uses subject-matter discipline or content-specific categories, teacher candidates are seeking a license in a particular content field. Thus, this criterion aligns with the authentic work of teaching within a specific content area.

Efforts to keep the face validity of the assessment strong during implementation include (a) providing minimal expectations

for lesson plan formats to allow teacher candidates to use locally developed lesson plans from the teacher preparation program or school; (b) collecting student work samples from regular instructional activities rather than a standardized student assessment measure; (c) opportunity for the candidate to describe the local context of the school and justify teaching choices based on that context so that scoring can account for context-based decisions made by the teacher; and (d) selecting instructional activities at the discretion of the candidate to increase the probability of fit of instruction in the local context of teaching.

Threats to the face validity of the assessment could manifest in several ways. For example, teacher candidates who have not done video capture of their teaching before the introduction of the edTPA may view video as an intrusion in the classroom, thus, not authentic to teaching practice. This threat can be mitigated by the early introduction of video and video analysis as a professional development practice in the teacher preparation program. This practice would not necessarily be introduced solely to comply with the edTPA expectations but is also supported by almost 20 years of video use in teacher development activities and demonstrated effectiveness of supporting teacher learning through video analysis (Sherin & Han, 2004; van Es & Sherin, 2008).

A second example of a threat to face validity relates to the teaching context in which the edTPA performance is situated. Assessing teacher candidate performance within a school context that is stressed by poverty and low student performance could be viewed at face value as unfair to the candidate when other candidates are teaching in contexts that are perceived to be “easier” or “less challenging.” This threat can be lessened through strong practices of non-biased scoring based on context, strong support by the preparation program in preparing the candidate to teach successfully in the particular context where the candidate is placed, and strong communication practices by the assessment designers and psychometricians about the success and non-success of candidates across a wide variety of teaching contexts so that stakeholders can make informed judgments about assessment administration in differing contexts.

A final example of a threat to face validity could be candidates or other stakeholders, such as teacher educators, perceiving the scoring of the assessment to be unrelated to the candidates’ development or performance as a teacher. This threat can be mitigated through strong communication about the relationship of the assessment constructs to candidate development and the purpose and use of the assessment results. All of these examples of threats to the face validity will need time to develop data sets that will allow evidence of candidate performance and evidence of use of the assessment results to be developed. It will also require ongoing communication and negotiation within the community of stakeholders who will be closely using the assessment instrument. During the adoption and use of the PACT assessment in California, researchers (Peck, Galluci, & Sloan, 2010) found that the joint examination of the candidates’ performance data

and their artifacts within the assessment by members of the teacher education community over time led to better program alignment and program changes that were viewed as improvements. These conversations did not assume that each member of the teacher education community held a strong commitment to the face validity of the assessment. Much negotiation around divergent perspectives on the assessment, maintaining important local values and priorities while meeting external licensing requirements, and deciding how to integrate the assessment within program coursework and assignments were documented by the researchers. These conversations had to take place not only within the teacher education program but also with other stakeholders such as school partner teachers and administrators.

In some instances, the face validity of the assessment in terms of capturing the authentic nature of teaching may be threatened in ways that may require the teacher candidate to make compromises in his or her practice to be compliant with the assessment expectations. This would happen when the conception of teaching that underlies the edTPA is in conflict with the conception of teaching that is supported in the host classroom, school, or teacher education program. For example, if a candidate is teaching in a school context with highly scripted curriculum that does not respect the pre-assessment of students, does not allow classroom discourse in which the teacher probes for understanding, or does not allow for feedback loops for student revision of work, then the candidates’ successful performance could be jeopardized unless he or she can “teach against the grain” (Cochran-Smith, 1991, 2001) of the school and engage the students in the intellectual work that the edTPA expects of the P-12 students. Similarly, as described above, if the teacher candidate is teaching in a context that supports a critical pedagogy approach in which the learning goals are not pre-determined and knowledge construction is not the main outcome of instruction, the face validity of the assessment would be in question and the candidate may have to compromise his or her pedagogical assumptions to complete the edTPA based on its three-part instructional design that emphasizes learning goals and learning outcomes.

Content Validity of the edTPA

A question of content validity is whether the assessment represents the entire range of possible items the assessment should cover. This section will discuss the relationship between expectations for teaching that have been established by leading bodies of educational practitioners and researchers such as the CCSSO and the NBPTS and what the edTPA intends to measure. Because both CCSSO and NBPTS seek an agenda of teacher professionalism, the alignment of the edTPA to these expectations of teaching is congruent with the underlying conception of teaching of the edTPA discussed earlier.

Seeking descriptions of “good” or “effective” teaching to guide teacher education curriculum and performance assessments has been approached in several ways over the past 100 years in the United States. For example, the Commonwealth Teacher Training Study (Charters & Waples, 1929, as cited in Zeichner, 2005) sought to establish a clear definition and a comprehensive description of the work of teaching to align the education of teachers authentically to the work of teaching. Through a job analysis using mailed surveys to experienced teachers across the country, 1,001 teacher activities were identified. The Competency / Performance Based Teacher Education in the 1960s and 1970s also applied a job analysis of teaching to help determine the curriculum and design of teacher education programs. The job analysis was based on specific and observable skills of teaching, which were assumed to be related to student learning. These highly detailed systems of teaching tasks proved to be too costly and difficult to manage as a set of performance expectations and have successfully been used to guide performance assessment development in rare instances (Zeichner, 2005).

More recently, research on the core activities of teaching has shifted away from identifying behavioral competencies through job analysis surveys and has established descriptive standards of professional performance. Standards of performance specify what teachers should know and be able to do when they are performing their job effectively. For example, the Interstate (New) Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Model Core Standards were first released in 1992 by the CCSSO and were recently updated in 2011, and the NBPTS established its first set of teaching standards in the early 1990s. These types of teaching standards have successfully led to the development of a national certification assessment process for teachers and dozens of state-wide assessment systems for teacher education and practicing schoolteachers.

Standards delineate performance of a particular element of classroom practice without specifying the teacher behaviors that lead to that performance. For example, InTASC established 10 professional standards, 3 are associated with teachers’ knowledge of learners and their ability to create learning environments for students; 2 define teachers’ content knowledge and how it is applied during instruction; 3 establish the core instructional tasks of teaching as planning, using a variety of instructional strategies, and assessment; and 2 describe teachers’ professional, ethical, and collegial responsibilities. These standards are developed by drawing on a research literature of effective teaching (Youngs, 2011) and by engaging expert panels of educators to define and describe the professional practices that are both currently in place in schools and that are desired to advance the profession (CCSSO, 2011). By combining the normative expectations of what teaching “should” look like based on the views of current educators and the empirical research base on effective teaching, the InTASC standards represent a widely

accepted description of the practice or performance of teaching.

The edTPA is built on three core instructional tasks of teaching—*planning* lessons around a central subject-matter-specific learning goal; *instructing* students in ways that engage and deepen student learning; and *assessing* how well students learned the subject-matter learning goal. The content validity of these tasks—whether they capture what the field thinks is the full range of the practice of teaching—can be argued by examining other widely used assessment of teaching instruments. These same tasks of teaching are core tasks identified in the NBPTS performance portfolio assessment that assesses planning, instruction, and student learning, and the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching that assesses planning, classroom environment, instruction (which includes assessment), and professional responsibilities (Danielson, 2013). The edTPA does not directly assess professional responsibilities through a separate task but includes a section on professional responsibilities in the candidate handbook to guide the candidate in ethical choices about completing the assessment.

The content validity of these tasks can also be argued by aligning these tasks with the InTASC standards, which have already been established as a comprehensive description of teaching vetted by the education community and supported by a research base (Youngs, 2011). The edTPA development team at SCALE examined the alignment of the edTPA rubrics with the InTASC standards as summarized in Figure 1 (Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity, 2013a).

The alignment shows that of the 10 InTASC standards, 9 are captured in the edTPA assessment. The standard that is not assessed in the edTPA is Standard 10: Leadership and Collaboration. Because the edTPA is focused on the instructional tasks that occur in the classroom between teacher and students, the absence of teacher collaboration and leadership in this assessment poses a minimal threat to the content validity of the assessment. It is important for users of the assessment to recognize that this aspect of teaching is not represented in the assessment so that it can be addressed in other curricular activities and assessments within a candidate’s overall preparation experience. Thus, the edTPA can be represented as an assessment of teaching that primarily focuses on classroom interactions.

The alignment of the edTPA tasks with the InTASC standards could be qualitatively viewed as a strong alignment. The planning task aligns with 9 of the 10 standards, the instruction task aligns with 6 of the 10 standards, and the assessment task aligns with 7 of the 10 standards. When we examine the alignment based on each of the 15 edTPA rubrics, we see that of the 9 standards, each is assessed on a minimum of 4 rubrics (Standard 5: Application of Content, and Standard 7: Planning for Instruction) and maximum of 9 rubrics (Standard 8: Instructional Strategies). Notably, 2

InTASC Standards	edTPA Rubrics														
	Planning					Instruction					Assessment				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Learner Development															
2. Learning Differences															
3. Learning Environments															
4. Content Knowledge															
5. Application of Content															
6. Assessment															
7. Planning for Instruction															
8. Instructional Strategies															
9. Professional Learning & Ethical Practice															
10. Leadership & Collaboration															

Figure 1. Alignment of InTASC standards to edTPA rubrics. Gray shaded boxes indicate the InTASC standard is adequately represented in the edTPA rubric and indicates conceptual alignment.
 Source: Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (2013a).
 Note. InTASC = Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium.

standards are represented in 8 different rubrics (Standard 2: Learning Differences, and Standard 4: Content Knowledge).

Finally, the content validity of the edTPA can be argued normatively by examining the process by which it was constructed. The design of the edTPA included input from more than 1,000 educators (Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity, 2013b) who have held a license to teach, have been practicing teachers, or who have engaged in the preparation of teachers. They provided substantive feedback about the task structure and content of the edTPA. These educators work in a wide variety of contexts, including public and private institutions, schools and higher education, teachers and policy makers, and across 29 states and the District of Columbia. The overall edTPA design has been strongly influenced by the input of this stakeholder group, making content validity stronger than it would be if the assessment had been designed in isolation from the professional community.

A continuing threat to the content validity of the edTPA will be the agreement of stakeholders on the selection of edTPA tasks and rubrics. This threat can be mitigated by continuing to engage the stakeholder community in the continuous updating of the edTPA tasks, rubrics, and scoring process, and creating spaces for ongoing dialogue about the value of these selected tasks and their alignment to the community's expectations of teaching performance.

Construct Validity of the edTPA

To establish whether the edTPA is actually measuring the content that it purports to measure, or to establish its construct validity, more empirical work will need to be done. The Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (2013b) has conducted an analysis of the internal structure of the edTPA tasks using factor analysis and reported their findings in a Summary Report in 2013. Based on analyses of candidates' scores on the field test, the results support the hypothesis that the task structure of the edTPA is measuring distinct tasks of teaching and that the set of rubrics within each of the three tasks has an internally related structure.

Another approach to establishing construct validity would be to find additional measures of the same construct and correlate edTPA performance with those additional measures. For example, Billington (2012) demonstrated that secondary science teacher candidates who scored well on the edTPA *Task 2: Instructing and engaging students* also scored well on other measures of their understanding and enactment of inquiry-based science teaching such as written reflections and interviews that probed in detail about inquiry-based instruction. Those who scored poorly on this edTPA task did not elaborate on inquiry-based instruction even when prompted. This finding supports the argument that the edTPA is measuring a construct of science-specific inquiry-based

pedagogy. Further independent work will need to be done to strengthen the arguments for construct validity that are subject-matter specific and to expand into validity arguments for consequential use and predictability of future occurrences such as performance of the teacher candidates' students on measures of achievement.

Closing Remarks

In this article, I set out to examine underlying assumptions of the edTPA with regard to the conception of teaching on which it is structured and built. I chose seven preminent authors who have written extensively about conceptions of teaching. I chose authors who represent a variety of theoretical perspectives to challenge and examine the edTPA in light of differing conceptions. The “professionalizing” conception of teaching within the edTPA is now more evident. The criticisms of the edTPA by the membership of the NAME organization who have stated a position of non-support for the edTPA can be better understood when examined as an ideological conflict between the professionalizing efforts of the AACTE membership working in collaboration with the development team at SCALE and the conceptual ideals of critical pedagogy held by the NAME members.

The differing assumptions about fundamental definitions of teaching can manifest themselves in position statements that take up political and ideological perspectives. They also are manifest through technical arguments for the soundness of the assessment instrument through discussions of validity. In the discussion in this article, we can see that content and construct validity can be argued as being technically sound in the edTPA—when these arguments are also based on other professionalizing efforts such as the establishment of InTASC teaching standards and the performance assessment model of the NBPTS. The face validity of the assessment, however, will continued to be called into question by those teacher educators and teacher candidates who hold a fundamentally different conception about what teaching is or ought to be. The question to continue to explore will be “Is the field of teacher education ready to agree upon a common conception of teaching that underlies performance expectations for teaching?” Or do we continue to bear with the tensions and strife (as Philip Jackson predicted) that variety and difference in our conceptual assumptions create?

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