

Item 19:

Discussion of edTPA Pilot Updates

DISCUSSION

SUMMARY: This item provides the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) with an update on the edTPA pilot.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: The statutory authority for the classroom teacher class certificate structure is Texas Education Code (TEC), §§21.003(a), 21.031, and 21.041(b)(1), (2), and (4), 21.041(c), 21.044(a), 21.0441, 21.0418(a).

FUTURE ACTION EXPECTED: Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff anticipates presenting an edTPA pilot update to the Board at each SBEC meeting with an official review by the Board prior to September 1, 2021.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND JUSTIFICATION: This item provides an update on the edTPA two-year pilot adopted by the SBEC in July 2019. Included in this update is the status of year one, next steps for year two, an update on the parallel pilot, as well as highlights from other states involved with edTPA. The SBEC directed TEA staff to provide recurring updates of the edTPA pilot.

edTPA Year One Status Update

Since the adoption of the edTPA pilot, TEA staff has actively worked with the 27 pilot programs to implement the edTPA assessment, including 16 institutions of higher education and 11 alternative certification programs. A timeline of the year one edTPA pilot can be found in Attachment II. TEA staff anticipate providing a full analysis of the year one pilot at the October 2020 SBEC meeting, including final submission, portfolio, and perception data along with the final timeline of year two edTPA pilot.

Currently, 408 teacher candidates, from 16 EPPs participating in the edTPA pilot, have submitted edTPA portfolios this year. The demographic make-up of these teacher candidates was 7.24% African American/Black, 1.11% American Indian/AK National, 4.45% Asian/Pacific Islander, 21.44% Hispanic, 0.27% Multiracial, 3.34% Other, and 62.11% White (Non-Hispanic). The submitted portfolios represent 15 subject-specific handbook types, with Elementary Literacy with Task 4 Mathematics representing over 50% of the portfolio submissions.

The onset of COVID-19 presented challenges related to the implementation of the edTPA pilot. In response to those challenges, candidates were able to apply for approval to complete their edTPA portfolio in a virtual environment. Training and technical assistance were provided for EPPs, supporting them in identifying candidates for whom completing edTPA in a virtual environment would be a viable option and the process for receiving approval for and completing the portfolio in the virtual environment. With the pivot to the virtual learning environment, some candidates chose to opt out of completing the edTPA this spring and, given the flexibility the Board provided throughout the pilot period, these candidates were able to take the PPR instead.

Overall, 14 teacher candidates submitted portfolios this spring through a synchronous, virtual learning environment.

edTPA Year Two Update

At the February 2020 SBEC meeting, TEA staff provided an update to the Board on the second year edTPA pilot planning. In preparation for year 2 of the edTPA pilot, TEA staff opened an application window in early spring 2020 to identify programs intending to participate in the second year of the pilot. 35 EPPs, including 19 institutions of higher education (IHE) and 16 alternative certification programs (ACP) are participating in the second year of the pilot. A full overview of the programs participating, including their participation year, can be found in Attachment II.

In addition to the support structures provided in year one of the edTPA pilot, TEA staff has identified three regional coordinators, through a competitive letter of intent (LOI) grant application, who have expertise in the edTPA and who will provide ongoing technical assistance and support to EPPs participating in the pilot. These three regional coordinators are faculty members with Stephen F. Austin State University, Austin Community College, and INSPIRE Texas at Region 4 Education Service Center. Also, based on feedback from the year one pilot implementation, TEA staff has provided a grant to 9 EPPs, through a competitive LOI grant application, which supports the establishment of a dedicated edTPA coordinator role within the EPP. A full overview of the programs receiving grant funding to support their edTPA implementation can be found in Attachment II.

Parallel Pilot Update

At the July 2019 SBEC meeting, the Board adopted the edTPA two-year pilot as an optional assessment for classroom teacher candidates in lieu of the required pedagogy and professional responsibilities (PPR) examination for educator certification purposes. The SBEC also announced an open submission period for consideration of a performance assessment pilot to run parallel with the edTPA two-year pilot.

At the December 2019 SBEC meeting, the Board received information from several educator preparation programs, led by Dr. Stacey Edmonson and Dr. Christina Ellis with Sam Houston State University (SHSU), of the desire for a parallel pilot using the T-TESS evaluation tool as a performance assessment. The Board requested an alignment of the T-TESS Pilot Study with the edTPA performance assessment criteria.

At the February 2020 SBEC meeting, SBEC Chair, Dr. Cavazos requested that all interested parties requesting SBEC's consideration of a parallel pilot submit by April 1, 2020 so the pilots could run concurrently during the second year of the edTPA pilot period. Due to COVID-19, Dr. Cavazos directed TEA to move the edTPA pilot consideration item to the July 24, 2020 SBEC meeting to ensure that all parties have sufficient time to prepare and present.

TEA staff met with Dr. Edmonson and Dr. Ellis in February and May 2020 to clarify the T-TESS Pilot Study performance assessment timelines and goals, as well as to support their efforts in providing the SBEC the necessary information for their consideration of a parallel pilot. During the collaboration, it became evident that the intent of the T-TESS Pilot Study was not designed to run "parallel" as an examination instrument with the second year edTPA pilot, but rather for

the SBEC to consider the results of the pilot as a “parallel” tool for certification purposes at the conclusion of the study. Attachment III reflects information regarding the T-TESS pilot study provided by Dr. Edmonson and Dr. Ellis. Dr. Edmonson and Dr. Ellis clarified that the T-TESS Pilot Study requires the collection of data over a three-semester time period at which they would present their findings to the SBEC to demonstrate validity and reliability of the performance assessment as a tool for certification purposes. Therefore, rather than the pilots running concurrently, the results of both would be considered concurrently, which would be at the conclusion of the second year of the edTPA pilot period, summer 2021.

Dr. Edmonson and Dr. Ellis intend to present an update to the SBEC at the October or December 2020 SBEC meeting with Board action at a future meeting and have offered to be available at any upcoming SBEC meeting to provide an update or answer any questions that the Board may have. TEA staff will continue to collaborate with Dr. Edmonson and Dr. Ellis as they prepare to submit their findings to the Board.

edTPA Update in Other States

While the Board makes its own decisions on what is best for Texas educators in service of Texas students, TEA staff will be providing updates on recent policy decisions in other states that may be of interest to the SBEC at future Board meetings.

edTPA Next Steps

The Board approved a two-year pilot of the edTPA, with the expressed purpose of gathering data on the impact of edTPA implementation on Texas candidates. The Board has directed TEA staff to collect and analyze data related to the implementation of the edTPA across both years of the pilot in order to make decisions grounded in Texas data related to edTPA implementation going forward. Staff plans to update the Board on the outcomes of the first year edTPA pilot in October 2020 and provide an analysis of both years of the edTPA pilot in Fall 2021.

PUBLIC AND STUDENT BENEFIT: The public and student benefit anticipated as a result of the recommendations and assessments would be more rigorous, relevant, and reliable requirements for the preparation, certification, and testing of classroom teachers upon entry into the profession, and retention of these qualified professionals for years to come.

Staff Member Responsible:

Jessica McLoughlin, Director, Educator Standards and Testing

Attachments:

Attachment I: edTPA Pilot Year 1 Timeline

Attachment II: edTPA Pilot Year 2 Program Participants

Attachment III: T-TESS Pilot Study Overview, June 2020

ATTACHMENT I

edTPA Pilot Year 1 Timeline

Date	Action
May 3, 2019	Notification of acceptance sent to participating EPPs
May 10, 2019	TEA Webinar: edTPA Orientation
June 7, 2019	TEA Webinar: Cycle of Effective Teaching and Role and Responsibilities
July 15, 2019	TEA Webinar: Task I Deep Dive—Planning for Instruction and Assessment
Before August 1, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Onsite introductory sessions titled edTPA 101 provided by edTPA Program Managers at Pearson. These sessions will be open to faculty, supervisors, and P–12 partners designed to build an understanding of the purpose, development, and structure of the assessment. • Collect candidate demographic data and district partner data • Regional workshops provided by members of the edTPA National Academy. These sessions are intended for methods and foundations faculty, university supervisors, and mentor teachers who support or supervise candidates and will cover the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A close examination of edTPA tasks and rubrics, including what candidates are asked to think about, do, and write for each task as well as how portfolios will be evaluated ○ Sharing of instrumental resources and best practices from successful implementation plans ○ Guidelines and best practices for supporting candidates completing their edTPA portfolio
August 9 and 12, 2019	TEA Webinar: Task II Deep Dive—Instructing and Engaging Students in Learning
September 1, 2019	TEA staff collect the following data from programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic information • Faculty training documents • Curriculum alignment information • Materials used to determine which candidates are recommended for edTPA (versus PPR)

Date	Action
September 13 and 16, 2019	TEA Webinar: Task III Deep Dive—Assessing Student Learning
October 31, 2019	Release of year 2 edTPA pilot applications
October 11, 2019	TEA Webinar: Task IV Deep Dive
October 24, 2019	First window closes for submission of edTPA portfolio.
November 10, 2019	First window closes for pilot reimbursement.
November 15, 2019	TEA Webinar: Submission Logistics and Results Analyzer
January 10, 2020	TEA Webinar: TBD based on Program Needs
February 13, 2020	TEA Webinar: TBD based on Program Needs
February 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus group of teacher candidates who submitted the edTPA portfolio. • Survey to collect perception data from EPPs, principals, and districts • Analyze edTPA rubric scores from portfolios submitted October through March
February 2020	Tentative announcement of year 2 edTPA pilot participants
March 13, 2020	TEA Webinar: TBD based on Program Needs
April 10, 2020	TEA Webinar: TBD based on Program Needs
May 8, 2020	TEA Webinar: TBD based on Program Needs
May–June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus group of teacher candidates who submitted the edTPA portfolio. • Survey to collect perception data from EPPs, principals, and districts
June 30, 2020	Analyze edTPA rubric scores from portfolios submitted April through June

Date	Action
Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monthly implementation calls with edTPA Program Managers and/or members of the edTPA National Academy• Collect data during monthly calls about retention, perception, and additional costs related to edTPA• On-demand virtual supports from edTPA Program Managers and/or members of the edTPA National Academy• Academy to address questions and concerns and determine next steps• Statewide implementation support webinars for edTPA coordinators with edTPA Program Managers

ATTACHMENT II**edTPA Pilot Year 2 Program Participants**

Program	Implementation Year	Grant Recipient
ACT RGV	2 nd year	
Austin Community College District	1 st year	Regional Coordinator LOI
Excellence in Teaching	2 nd year	
Houston Baptist University	1 st year	edTPA Coordinator LOI
Houston ISD	2 nd year	
Inspire Texas, Region 4 Education Service Center	2 nd year	Regional Coordinator LOI
iTeach	1 st year	
McLennan Community College	1 st year	
Our Lady of the Lake University	2 nd year	edTPA Coordinator LOI
Region 10 Education Service Center	2 nd year	edTPA Coordinator LOI
Region 19 Education Service Center	1 st year	edTPA Coordinator LOI
Region 20 Education Service Center	1 st year	
Rice University	2 nd year	
Southwest Adventist University	2 nd year	
Stephen F. Austin State University	2 nd year	Regional Coordinator LOI
Tarleton State University	1 st year	edTPA Coordinator LOI
Teacher Builder	2 nd year	
Teaching Excellence (Yes Prep)	2 nd year	
Teachworthy	1 st year	
Texas A&M University	1 st year	edTPA Coordinator LOI
Texas A&M University—Commerce	2 nd year	edTPA Coordinator LOI

Program	Implementation Year	Grant Recipient
Texas A&M University—Corpus Christi	2 nd year	
Texas A&M International University	1 st year	edTPA Coordinator LOI
Texas A&M University—San Antonio	1 st year	edTPA Coordinator LOI
Texas Southern University	1 st year	
Texas Tech University	2 nd year	
TNTP Academy	2 nd year	
Trinity University	2 nd year	
University of Houston—Victoria	1 st year	
University of Mary Hardin-Baylor	1 st year	
University of Texas at Dallas	2 nd year	
University of Texas at El Paso	2 nd year	
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley	1 st year	
University of Texas at San Antonio	2 nd year	
Urban Teachers	2 nd year	

ATTACHMENT III

T-TESS Pilot Study Overview, June 2020

2020

Measuring and Evaluating Effective Teacher Candidate Performance to Inform State and National Policy

AN INVESTIGATION OF T-TESS AS A TEACHER
CANDIDATE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT
CHRISTINA ELLIS & STACEY EDMONSON

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Executive Summary

The role of teacher candidate performance assessment has been widely debated by practitioners and policymakers across the nation. Most recently, Texas has begun to consider the utility of performance assessments in Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) and is currently examining performance assessments that can be used as part of teacher candidate certification. In order to inform this discussion, researchers need to examine the current use of teacher candidate performance assessments in Texas. These data are imperative to informing effective practice and policy and to creating an improvement mindset in EPPs. To that end, a collaborative group of Texas Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) have developed the enclosed research study.

Research Questions

The purpose of the study is to (1) determine the degree to which T-TESS can be used to inform teacher candidate and EPP improvement, (2) identify and develop best practices for implementing T-TESS in EPPs, and (3) ascertain the degree to which reliable and valid scores can be obtained using T-TESS as a measure of teacher candidate performance. The following research questions guide this study:

1. Are the scores obtained from T-TESS a valid and reliable measure of teacher candidates' teaching performance and ability?
2. Is T-TESS an appropriate assessment to inform educator preparation program and teacher candidate growth?

Significance and Contribution to Education

Most EPPs in Texas adopted the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) instrument as a performance assessment for preservice teachers after it was adopted as the state's inservice teacher evaluation system. Since the initial implementation, data have not been systematically collected or analyzed in the state, which makes it difficult for educators and policymakers to be informed about the performance of preservice or in-service teachers. This study seeks to collect these much-needed data so that teacher performance can be described accurately.

Rationale

Because performance assessments are perceived to be superior assessments of teacher candidates, 18 states now require teacher candidates to successfully complete a performance assessment prior to being awarded teacher licensure (SCALE, 2019b). However, researchers have noted unintended consequences of using performance assessments in teacher candidate certification decisions and have observed racial and linguistic bias in scoring (Burns, et al., 2015; Cannon & Donovan, 2018; Cronenberg, et al., 2015; Dover & Schultz, 2016; Greenblatt & O'Hara, 2015; Kissau, et al., 2017; Ledwell & Oyler, 2016). Additionally, researchers have recently questioned the validity and reliability of the most widely used teacher candidate performance

assessment, calling into question the ethics of using it to make consequential decisions such as teacher certification and EPP accountability (Gitomer et al., 2019). Additionally, policymakers in some states that have historically required a performance assessment for teacher certification, have begun the process to remove this requirement, noting the negative impact these policies have had on the profession (Connecticut General Assembly, 2020; Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2020; Illinois General Assembly, 2020; Wisconsin Legislature, 2020).

The ongoing debate regarding teacher candidate performance assessment indicates that further investigation into performance assessment use is necessary. This study seeks to build upon previous research by implementing a teacher candidate performance assessment that aligns with in-service teacher evaluation, allows teacher candidates the opportunity to grow over time, bases the evaluation on multiple sources of evidence, and takes into account the school context. We seek to determine the extent to which T-TESS is a valid and reliable measure of preservice teacher performance so that teacher performance can be measured consistently through all stages of a teacher's career.

Method

All EPPs in Texas were invited to participate in this study, and 15 EPPs that represent a range of EPP types have agreed to participate. Based on enrollment in participating EPPs, the researchers anticipate collecting data regarding 2,000 teacher candidates per year. During clinical teaching or internship, candidates will be observed using the T-TESS rubric. The researchers will also collect edTPA scores from a subset of teacher candidates, TExES exam scores, value-added model (VAM) scores, employment records, self-reflections, teacher candidate and EPP surveys, interviews, and focus groups. A mixed-methods design will be used to evaluate the psychometric properties of T-TESS and to assess the potential for using T-TESS for candidate improvement and certification. The researchers will analyze these data using mixed-methods approaches because quantitative approaches allow for the psychometric evaluation of T-TESS and qualitative approaches lend themselves to a rich understanding of the formative processes associated with the complex and multi-faceted nature of teaching.

Project Overview

Practitioners and policymakers across the nation have contemplated the role of performance assessments in the teacher certification process. Some states now require teacher candidates to complete standardized performance assessments in order to receive teacher certification, arguing that these assessments help ensure that only quality teachers become certified (SCALE, 2019b). Some educators also advocate for the use of performance assessments in teacher certification and have researched the efficacy of multiple performance assessments implemented during the clinical teaching experience (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Goldhaber et al., 2017; Okhremtchouk, 2009).

Texas is the most recent state to consider the utility of performance assessments in Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) with both policymakers and practitioners contributing to the discussion. Throughout this process, EPP leaders have felt compelled to present data that can inform these discussions. Unfortunately, research regarding the current use of teacher candidate performance assessments in Texas does not exist. These data are imperative to informing effective practice and policy regarding the teacher certification process. Additionally, an empirical examination of teacher candidate performance assessment is critical to creating an improvement mindset in EPPs and to informing teacher education practice.

At recent Texas State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) meetings, board members encouraged the investigation of performance-based assessment methods with a specific request to pilot the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS), the current Texas in-service teacher evaluation, as a performance assessment for teacher candidates. Texas State Board of Education (SBOE) members echoed this request at a subsequent meeting, specifically requesting updates and results from this study as it proceeds and at its conclusion.

Research Questions

The goal of every EPP should be to ensure that their candidates are ready to teach on their first day in the classroom. In order to achieve this goal, programs must consistently evaluate and improve their curriculum and promote growth in their candidates. Programs should also be assured their teacher candidate evaluation instruments are valid and reliable so they can trust inferences made from the data collected. Ideally, these same evaluations would be used to determine if a teacher candidate qualifies for certification or licensure. As such, the following research questions guide this study:

1. Are the scores obtained from T-TESS a valid and reliable measure of teacher candidates' teaching performance and ability?
2. Is T-TESS an appropriate assessment to inform educator preparation program and teacher candidate growth?

Significance and Contribution to Education

In 2013 the Texas Education Agency created and adopted T-TESS as the state approved teacher evaluation and support system. Subsequently, most EPPs in Texas adopted the instrument as a performance assessment for preservice teachers. Since then, no studies have been conducted that collect or analyze state-wide T-TESS data for in-service or preservice teachers. Additionally, the TEA is legislatively prohibited from collecting in-service teachers' T-TESS observations as these observations are considered protected human resources records (Texas Education Code § 21.355). Because researchers have not yet collected state-wide T-TESS data and TEA is prohibited from collecting these data, it is difficult for educators and policymakers to be informed about the performance of preservice or in-service teachers. This study seeks to collect these much-needed data so that teacher performance can be described accurately.

Rationale

Summary of Relevant Research and New Knowledge Gained

Little research exists that documents the impact EPPs have on teacher effectiveness and student learning, resulting in speculation that EPPs place too much emphasis on theory while disregarding practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Hagans & Powers, 2015; Korthagen, 2010; Okhremtchouk et al., 2009). Additionally, researchers have documented shortcomings in teacher candidates' clinical experiences including infrequent observations, poorly trained field supervisors, and vague observation tools (Sandholtz & Shea, 2012). Coupled with EPP-created measures' inability to predict teacher effectiveness, criticism of EPPs compound (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2010a; Sandholtz, 2012). Because of the narrative that EPPs are ineffective, policymakers and accrediting bodies have required state departments of education and EPPs to develop and implement assessments in an attempt to increase program accountability (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Hagans & Powers, 2015; Okhremtchouk et al., 2009).

Performance assessments have been proposed as a way to accurately assess teacher candidates' effectiveness without diminishing teacher candidates' clinical experiences (Chung, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Sandholtz, 2012; Sandholtz & Shea, 2012). Teacher candidate performance assessments (e.g., edTPA, PPAT, FAST, Teacher Work Sample) are widely used in EPPs to inform candidate and program improvement decisions. These assessments contain similar elements in that teacher candidates' effectiveness is evaluated based on the submission of classroom artifacts (i.e., lesson plans, work samples, teaching videos, narratives) curated by the teacher candidate (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Okhremtchouk et al., 2009; Pecheone & Chung, 2006; Sandholtz, 2012; Sandholtz & Shea, 2012). Because of their purported strengths, 18 states now require teacher candidates to successfully complete a performance assessment prior to being awarded teacher licensure (SCALE, 2019b).

However, the use of performance assessments in teacher candidates' clinical experiences is not without flaws. States that mandate performance assessments have seen a sharper decline in teacher production than states without such policies (Marder & Rhodes, 2018). Researchers have also noted that students of color and students representing linguistic minority groups fail edTPA at disproportionate rates (Goldhaber et al., 2017; Greenblatt & O'Hara, 2015). Implementing performance assessment during clinical experiences can also negatively impact the teacher candidate/cooperating teacher relationship, teacher candidate/field supervisor relationship, and teacher education curriculum (Burns, et al., 2015; Cannon & Donovan, 2018; Cronenberg, et al., 2016; Greenblatt & O'Hara, 2015; Kissau, et al., 2017).

Additionally, professional disagreement has been documented regarding the validity and reliability of the most widely used teacher candidate performance assessment (Gitomer et al., 2019; SCALE, 2019a). Researchers have also noted a need for funding for training related to performance assessments and difficulty establishing the impact other factors (e.g., mentor teacher, classroom context, time) have on teacher candidates' performance. Teacher educators have also questioned whether it is ethical to make such high-stakes judgements (teacher licensure and EPP accountability) based on a single assessment (Teske, 2018). Additionally, none of the existing teacher candidate performance assessments are directly linked to in-service teacher evaluation systems, resulting in disconnect between preservice and in-service expectations and evaluation measures. This ongoing conversation indicates that further inquiry into teacher candidate performance assessments is crucial to the profession.

Policymakers have also taken an interest in unintended consequences of using performance assessments as part of teacher certification and EPP accountability. Recently, policymakers in four states have introduced legislation or rule to remove edTPA (the most widely used teacher candidate performance assessment) as a requirement for teacher certification or licensure. After nearly 8 years of use, on June 11, 2020 the Georgia Professional Standards Commission unanimously voted to repeal rule that required candidates to pass edTPA to become certified (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2020). Similarly, the Wisconsin legislature voted June 8, 2020 to repeal legislation that mandated edTPA as a teacher certification assessment (Wisconsin Legislature, 2020). Both of these bodies have cited increased cost of certification, testing bias, failure to improve teaching effectiveness, and unnecessary workload during clinical teaching as reasons for their decisions (Georgia State Superintendent, 2020; Wisconsin State Superintendent, 2020). Legislators in Connecticut and Illinois have also introduced similar legislation that will be considered this year (Connecticut General Assembly, 2020; Illinois General Assembly, 2020).

This study seeks to respond to the problems noted by researchers and policymakers by implementing a teacher candidate performance assessment that aligns with in-service teacher evaluation, allows teacher candidates the opportunity to grow over time, bases the evaluation on multiple sources of evidence, and takes into account the school context. We seek to

determine the extent to which the existing Texas in-service teacher evaluation and support system is a valid and reliable measure of preservice teacher performance so that teacher performance can be measured consistently through all stages of a teacher's career.

Conceptual Framework

Grounded in the teacher evaluation conceptual framework developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2009), this work aims to address the complexity of teacher candidate evaluation (see Figure 1). Used as a guide in designing this study, the framework has six mutually complementary dimensions: unit assessed, feedback and assessment use, aspects assessed, evaluation technology, purposes, and agents involved. The researchers used this framework to initially evaluate the efficacy of T-TESS as a performance assessment for teacher candidates. We began by identifying teacher candidates as the center of the evaluation process, with a specific focus on improving candidates' instruction. The T-TESS instrument fit the evaluation tool specification outlined in the conceptual framework because of its focus on the central tenets of teaching: planning, instruction, learning environment, and professional practices and responsibilities.

T-TESS satisfies the evaluation "technology" aspect of the framework because it includes multiple sources of evidence to evaluate teacher performance including conferences, observations and walkthroughs, classroom artifacts, student growth processes, student data analysis, goal setting, and daily interaction. The implementation of T-TESS will link best preparation practice with clinical teacher assessment, provide EPPs with tools to support candidates, connect coursework with fieldwork, map pre-service activities to in-service teaching, support the development of well-prepared teachers, and prepare more consistently responsive and reflective teachers, ready to meet the demands of the classroom. Finally, the conceptual framework asserts that teacher evaluation systems should involve all stakeholders including teacher candidates, EPPs, school leaders, and policymakers in the development and implementation of teacher evaluation and assessment policies. In response to this, the researchers established an advisory board and developed a dissemination plan to ensure that each of these groups are informed of the findings from this study.

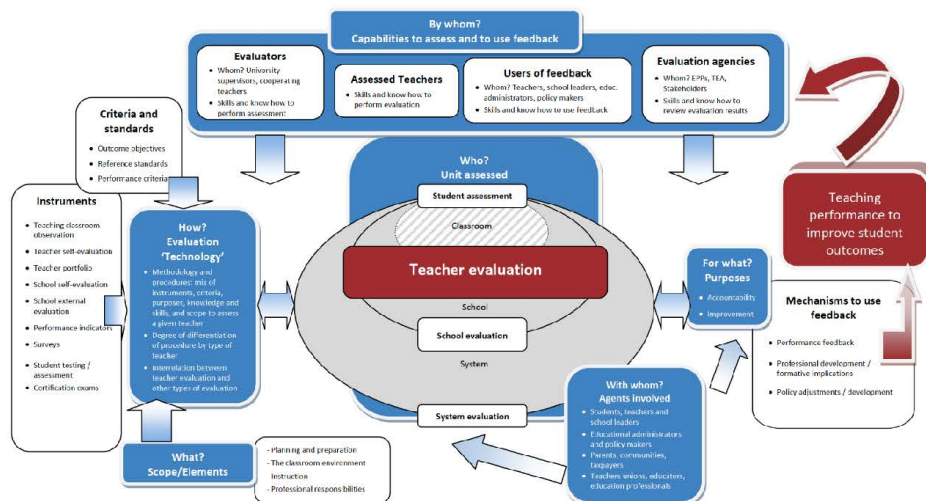


Figure 1: A Conceptual Framework for Teacher Evaluation

Method

This study will collect and analyze data to explore the efficacy of using T-TESS to inform teacher candidate and EPP improvement. The findings from this research will also be used to inform policy and practice as Texas policymakers craft the selection and implementation of performance assessments to be used as a consequential component of teacher certification. The purpose of the study is to (1) determine the degree to which T-TESS can be used to inform teacher candidate and EPP improvement, (2) identify and develop best practices for implementing T-TESS in EPPs, and (3) ascertain the degree to which reliable and valid scores can be obtained using T-TESS as a measure of teacher candidate performance.

A mixed-methods design will be used to evaluate the psychometric properties of T-TESS and assess the potential for using T-TESS for candidate and program improvement. Quantitative approaches allow for the psychometric evaluation of T-TESS and qualitative approaches lend themselves to a rich understanding of the formative processes associated with the complex and multi-faceted nature of teaching. Collecting both quantitative and qualitative data will also allow the researchers to take into account the context of Texas, the only state in which the majority of teachers are certified through alternative routes.

Participants

All EPPs in Texas were invited to participate in this study. To date, 13 EPPs have agreed to participate in the study, representing a range of EPP types including public and private universities, region service centers, and alternative certification programs. Any teacher candidate enrolled in a participating EPP is eligible to be included in the study during the clinical

teaching or internship phase of the program. We anticipate collecting data regarding 2,000 teacher candidates per year. A pilot study is being conducted in Spring 2020 with 733 teacher candidates. Findings from this pilot will be used to inform future data collection processes and procedures.

Data Collection

Participating EPPs will assess teacher candidates using the T-TESS rubric during their clinical experiences. To establish reliability and validity, the researchers will also collect edTPA scores from a subset of teacher candidates, TExES exam scores, value-added model (VAM) scores, and employment records. To evaluate the utility of T-TESS as EPP and teacher candidate improvement tool, the researchers will collect self-reflections, teacher candidate and EPP surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

Instruments

T-TESS. As the current evaluation system for in-service teachers in Texas, T-TESS is also the most relevant and meaningful performance assessment for pre-service teachers. The T-TESS observation protocol was developed by the Teacher Effectiveness Workgroup comprised of educators from the TEA, the Texas Comprehensive Center, Educate Texas, and Region XIII Education Service Center. The workgroup examined literature on teacher evaluation, relying heavily on the work done by the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality. The committee's aim was to create an evaluation system that supported professional growth, destigmatized teacher observations, and provided feedback with support. Implementing T-TESS as a pre-service teacher performance assessment will provide data to inform candidate and program improvement, measure effective teaching within the state context, promote an aligned approach to teacher evaluation from pre-service to in-service, and provide feedback that supports candidates' readiness for the classroom.

T-TESS is comprised of four domains (planning, instruction, learning environment, and professional practices and responsibilities) with 16 dimensions assessed on five performance levels (Distinguished, Accomplished, Proficient, Developing, and Improvement Needed). See Appendix A for the complete T-TESS rubric. The IES National Center for Educational Evaluation and Regional Assistance analyzed data collected as part of the T-TESS pilot conducted in 2014-2015, which revealed that T-TESS differentiates between teacher performance levels, and the researchers noted its potential as a tool for supporting teacher growth (Lazarev et al., 2017). The rubric also demonstrated internal consistency at both the domain and dimension levels with each of the dimensions uniquely contributing to a teacher's overall rating (Lazarev et al., 2017). Additionally, the relationships between teachers' ratings and their schools' characteristics were limited, indicating that the instrument predominately measures teachers' performance, not school characteristics (Lazarev et al., 2017). These findings based on data collected with in-service teachers indicate that T-TESS is a promising instrument for use with teacher candidates.

For this study, field supervisors and mentor teachers will evaluate teacher candidates using the T-TESS rubric during their clinical teaching, year-long residency, or internship experiences. Data from three observations and a summative evaluation will be collected. Each observation will be preceded by a pre-conference to assist teacher candidates in planning and preparing for the lesson and will be followed by a post-conference to allow the candidate and evaluator to reflect on the teacher's performance and set goals for continuous improvement. All observers will be trained in the T-TESS instrument via TEA's approved field supervisor observation training or T-TESS appraiser training. Additionally, teacher candidates will video record the final observation conducted by their field supervisor, which will be submitted to a third-party T-TESS evaluator for external independent scoring.

Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TExES) exams. All candidates seeking initial certification must take the content area TExES exam relating to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in the field(s) of certification. Additionally, all teacher candidates must take the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) TExES that corresponds to the pedagogy standards for each grade band. Each TExES examination is criterion-referenced and is designed to measure a candidate's level of content knowledge and skills appropriate for teachers. Scaled scores on each TExES exam attempt for each participating teacher candidate will be collected.

Value-Added Model (VAM). Beginning in Spring 2020, the TEA will publish VAM scores for each first-year teacher in the state. This measure will indicate the degree to which novice teachers have contributed to their students' growth. The VAM is currently under development, and two members of this study's research team are serving on the state-wide committee that will design this measure.

Employment records. The researchers will ascertain timely entry into the workforce and retention in the profession and district by collecting participating teacher candidates' employment records. Teacher candidates who are employed as a teacher of record in the academic year following their clinical teaching will be classified as entering the workforce in a timely manner. We will also track participating teacher candidates' employment for 5 years following their clinical experiences to ascertain 2-year, 3-year, and 5-year retention.

edTPA. The edTPA is a teacher candidate performance assessment developed by the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE) and administered by Pearson. It is currently used by 920 EPPs in 41 states as either an EPP-required performance assessment or as a prerequisite for teacher licensure. edTPA is a subject-specific assessment that consists of 3 tasks (planning, instruction, and assessment) that are scored using 15 rubrics.

Self-reflection protocol. Teacher candidates will video record their final observation and watch the video to reflect on their practice. Teacher candidates will use the T-TESS aligned self-reflection protocol to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. The protocol is available in Appendix A.

Teacher candidate and EPP survey. All teacher candidates and each EPP will complete a survey regarding T-TESS and its educative usefulness in measuring candidate performance. Questions will include a focus on actionable feedback, how data were used for improvement, how feedback and scoring were received, and overall strengths and weaknesses of the process. These surveys will be designed by the research team after the pilot study in Spring 2020.

Interviews and focus groups. Interviews and focus groups will be used to support conclusions drawn from quantitative data analyses. The researchers will interview candidates from the highest and lowest profiles of T-TESS performance, as well as mentor teachers, field supervisors, and 3rd party evaluators. The interview protocol will be designed by the research team after the pilot study in Spring 2020.

Data Analysis

Research question 1. The first research question seeks to investigate the validity and reliability of T-TESS as a component of Texas teacher certification, asking “Are the scores obtained from T-TESS a valid and reliable measure of teacher candidates’ classroom readiness?” To address this question, multiple sources of validity and reliability evidence will be explored. These data will allow the researchers to evaluate utility of T-TESS scores to inform teacher candidate and EPP improvement.

Validity evidence. Validity refers “to the degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretations of test scores for proposed uses of tests” (AERA, APA, & NCME, 2014, p. 11). To support the interpretations of T-TESS test scores and in accordance with the AERA, APA and NCME (2014), a unified approach focused on evidence of the relationship between the assessment, scores, interpretation, and use will be offered (Bandalos, 2018). An initial exploration of the factor structure of the T-TESS dimensions will be conducted using exploratory factor analysis (EFA; Thompson, 2004). Exploratory as opposed to confirmatory factor analysis will be conducted because to our best knowledge, no prior studies have explored the factor structure of T-TESS (Gorsuch, 1983). The critical decision of how many factors to retain will be supported by the use of confidence intervals for eigenvalues (Larsen & Warne, 2010).

We will use three assessments (edTPA, T-TESS summative evaluations, and TExES scores) as references to provide convergent validity evidence of the T-TESS. Convergent validity evidence provides that test scores should be related to scores from other tests of the same or similar construct (McDonald, 1999). The edTPA is currently being used by over 920 EPPs across 41 states (AACTE & SCALE, 2020). Similar to the T-TESS, the edTPA is used to measure teaching holistically. Thus, prospective teachers who score well on the edTPA would be expected to score well on the T-TESS. The second form of convergent validity evidence will be the classroom readiness summative evaluation in which field supervisors and mentor teachers evaluate the suitability of the teacher candidate for the classroom. The final form of convergent validity evidence will be with the TExES scores that assess the pre-requisite content and professional knowledge that teachers are expected to have.

Predictive validity evidence will be provided by exploring the extent to which two workforce related criteria and a student performance criterion can be predicted based on T-TESS scores. The two workforce related criteria are entry into and retention in the teaching workforce. The student performance criterion is a VAM score that is currently under development by the TEA.

Reliability evidence. Reliability generally refers to the consistency of scores. As noted by the AERA, APA and NCME (2014), “the reliability/precision of scores is always important. However, the need for precision increases as the consequences of decisions and interpretations grow in importance” (p.33). As the consequences of evaluations of a teacher candidate’s readiness for the classroom have serious implications, the reliability of the scores of the T-TESS are of considerable importance.

Multiple evaluators (mentor teacher, field supervisor, and external reviewer) will be evaluating the teacher candidates. To understand the extent to which there is consistency among the raters, interrater reliability will be calculated using Cronbach’s alpha (Stemler & Tsai, 2008). Cronbach’s alpha provides a consistency estimate, which was preferred instead of a consensus estimate such as Cohen’s Kappa because of its noted disadvantages including overly conservative estimates and reduced statistical independence of the ratings (Stemler & Tsai, 2008).

Research question 2. The second research question is “Is T-TESS an appropriate assessment to inform educator preparation program and teacher candidate growth?” Investigating this research question will require the researchers to describe the ways that T-TESS is currently being used by EPPs. Additionally, the researchers will determine the degree to which T-TESS is educative for EPP and teacher candidate improvement. Finally, the researchers will investigate the ways that EPPs use T-TESS data to inform program changes and improvements and the ways that teacher candidates use these data to inform their professional growth.

Using 16 dimensions from the four domains of the T-TESS as indicator variables, latent class analysis (Collins & Lanza, 2010) will be used to identify clusters of teacher candidates with similar response patterns (i.e., similar classroom readiness). Latent class analysis is a person-centered model-based approach that will be used to holistically identify teacher candidate profiles. The variable-centric approach that offered evidence about the validity and reliability of the scores from the T-TESS is complementary to the person-centered approach that provides candidate profiles. Candidate profiles will be used for three purposes. First, because multiple EPPs will be part of this study, there is opportunity to explore the generalizability of the candidate profiles across settings. As noted by Halpin and Kieffer (2015), “once the parameters of the model have been estimated, no special software is required to apply the scoring method to new observations” (p.266). Second, because of concerns in the literature regarding detrimental effects on teacher candidates of color regarding a widely-used teacher candidate assessment (Goldhaber et al., 2017), profiles will be explored by ethnicity to examine the

distribution of candidates across the various candidate profiles. Again, because of the person-centered nature of the analysis, explorations can be made more holistically. Third, an understanding of candidates' profiles can provide EPPs with the ability to provide targeted support systems.

To further explore the utility of T-TESS as a tool to support teacher candidate and EPP growth, the researchers will analyze responses to the EPP and Teacher Candidate Survey. Interviews and focus groups will also be used to support conclusions drawn from quantitative data analyses. The researchers will interview candidates and EPP personnel to gauge perceptions of self-improvement and the value of the T-TESS process. The transcripts from these interviews will be analyzed using constant comparison analysis following the steps suggested by Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007) to create codes and themes.

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