

A Survey to Understand Teacher Candidate Perceptions of edTPA Implementation Within the State of Connecticut During 2018-2019

Survey Respondents:

17 students who completed edTPA in 2018-2019

**Survey was sent to approximately 120 candidates who completed edTPA during this time frame. The low response rate can be contextualized by noting the survey was conducted over the winter recess from school and the presence in difficulty in contacting those that have graduated and are not presently within a SOE.*

Survey Questions:

1. Please describe your experiences with the implementation edTPA (i.e. in your coursework, support offered from your school of education or by advisors, etc.).
2. Please describe your experiences with the implementation edTPA in your student teaching placement (i.e. how completing edTPA affected your overall student teaching experience, how edTPA influenced your usage of prep and instruction time, support offered by your cooperating teacher, etc.).
3. Please describe the impact the impact edTPA had on the students in your classroom (i.e. the types of edTPA lessons you developed and implemented, the impact edTPA had on your focal students, the impact of video-taping in your placement, etc).
4. Please describe how edTPA affected you personally (i.e the time you spent inside and outside of your placement completing edTPA, any impact edTPA had on your mental health/stress levels during your student teaching placement, etc.).
5. Please describe the impact of the costs associated with edTPA on you and your preparation to become an educator (both as a stand-alone assessment and within the context of the entirety of your teacher preparation program).
6. Please provide any other thoughts you have around implementation, the costs associated with edTPA, or edTPA in general.

Common Themes:

Theme	Number of Respondents Noting the Theme	Frequency Throughout All Possible Entries
Implementation (Poor implementation; Lack of Support and Knowledge from SOE; Lack of Support and Knowledge from Clinical Placement)	13 total	15
Quality of the Metric (Confusing; Repetitive; Inauthentic; Better Perceived Options; No Perceived Benefit)	9	15
Increased Stress	14	21
Required Conformity	6	12
Created a Financial Burden	17	26
Negative Effect on Students Within the Classroom	8	10
Poor Use of Time (Time During Student Teaching; Time Outside of Student Teaching; Time During Courses)	10	21

Selected Excerpts (emphasis added):

I. Implementation

“Although they tried their best to help with the completion of edTPA, most, if not all, of my school advisors were unequipped to do so. They were often confused about the process themselves, or lacked clarity and expertise. **There were many unanswered questions, which I do not blame them for, rather the inaccessibility of the edTPA guidelines.**” (Respondent 2)

“We were offered support in our seminar class. **Here, we were supposed to discuss our experiences during student-teaching, but it felt like the class was completely taken over by discussions about edTPA formatting and other edTPA issues.** Additionally, the instructors were not very familiar with edTPA, so I did not feel confident in the help I was getting.” (Respondent 5)

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II. Quality of Metric

“Being in [School of Education], I have been trained extensively in proper lesson planning and then all of a sudden edTPA is implemented and I have to follow this totally new lesson planning format and having to create lesson objectives that catered to the edTPA format, **which were rather low-level objectives compared to the high-level ones I had been used to at [School of Education].**” (Respondent 7)

“I do not think that watching me teach for 20 minutes will help someone determine if I am or am not a good teacher.” (Respondent 12)

“Being required to do it and then not receiving feedback until AFTER student teaching was like a slap in the face after all of the work and money that it required. We talk so much about timely feedback in our practice and how feedback that comes too late is useless--this is exactly what edTPA is: useless feedback.” (Respondent 17)

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III. Increased Stress

“EdTPA dramatically impacted my mental and physical health while student teaching. In addition to completing edTPA, I was writing my honors thesis, and working 20 hours a week. I did not enjoy a full nights sleep for the entire time I was student teaching, and I felt that there was little time left in my day to do anything just for the sake of enjoyment. I think I would have felt significantly more fulfilled in my student teaching placement, had I not been burdened with the bureaucracy of edTPA.” (Respondent 4)

“While completing edTPA, I experienced mental breakdowns weekly, and contemplated leaving the teaching profession.” (Respondent 14)

“Completing edTPA eroded away at the little free time that I had, contributed to many nights of little sleep, and placed me under an unhealthy amount of prolonged stress.” (Respondent 17)

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IV. Required Conformity

“It was hard completing edTPA as I worked within an inner city school where my teaching methods reflected the culture and needs of my students. **However, what was asked of me from edTPA did not comply with the teaching style my students needed.** My students were fully aware of the video recording and lessons I had to do for edTPA, but I felt as though my students had to act scripted (and myself act scripted) in order to meet all requirements of edTPA. How my students learned and received lessons was not compliant with how edTPA wanted me to teach and deliver lessons.” (Respondent 4)

“Thus, **when it was time to record my lessons for edTPA my students and myself had to act differently due to the requirements I had to meet for edTPA.** They were fully aware that for those video recorded lessons they had to help me meet my requirements, but it wasn't authentic and just simply wasn't how my students choose to learn and how we normally learn within the classroom.” (Respondent 4)

“There simply cannot be one set standards that every teacher must meet when teaching lessons. That is assuming that all classrooms and all groups of students learn the same way and can meet the same teaching standards edTPA requires, which is just simply not the case.” (Respondent 4)

“The lessons I had to teach for edTPA were not useful or creative, they simply met the standards. **I couldn't digress based on student needs or interests because of the things I needed to cover according to the edTPA tasks.** Picking focal students took my attention away from whole class learning. The goal seemed to switched from teaching a quality lesson to checking off edTPA boxes, which was very disheartening as a student teacher.” (Respondent 8)

“Teaching isn't about following a rubric, it's about being flexible and curious and willing to do anything to support the students in your classroom. That has to happen in authentic ways. EdTPA is an inauthentic way of evaluating teacher prep candidates.” (Respondent 8)

“It took time away from me being present with my students and I eventually had to set it aside because it meant more for me to be a better teacher rather than being a good standardized test taker.” (Respondent 9)

“edTPA did negatively affect my student teaching experience. It was out of place and did not allow me to really show who I am as a teacher. It did not fit in well with the school's curriculum so I had to take time out of what the students actually needed to do to implement this brief unit for edTPA. It was not natural.” (Respondent 14)

“Due to the stress and time involved with edTPA, my teaching experience was negatively impacted. Rather than developing meaningful lessons for students, I spent the majority of my time trying to understand edTPA, plan for edTPA, and complete edTPA.” (Respondent 16)

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V. Created a Financial Burden

“In my opinion, this is an extravagant cost for something we are obligated to do.” (Respondent 12)

“The costs for edTPA are outrageous. **As a student from a single-parent home, attending an out-of-state university and paying for my entire education alone, I currently have over \$80,000 in student loan debt.** Paying for edTPA was not helpful in this, and I had to take out more loans to be able to afford it. There are already a lot of costs that students have to pay, let alone preservice teachers, and the cost for this test that proved to negatively impact my teaching experience was not fair.” (Respondent 14)

“**As a student living in poverty, managing to save the funds for edTPA was extremely stressful and difficult.**” (Respondent 16)

“**The financial implications of edTPA, especially with consideration to all of the other costs associated with becoming a teacher within the state of Connecticut, are prohibitive, exclusionary, and damaging.**” (Respondent 17)

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VI. Negative Effect on Students Within the Classroom

“Video-taping definitely made many of students nervous. Many were extremely camera shy and self-conscious, which impacted how they would participate. **Some of my most vocal students became silent once they knew I was filming that day. On the other hand, some students craved camera time, and would become disruptive in order to get it.**” (Respondent 2)

“**One thing about the edTPA set us was that it wasn't always conducive for my emergent bilingual students. I had to scaffold their lessons different than I usually would to fit the edTPA lesson format and expectations and it didn't work for them. I had to change my scaffolds back to the normal classroom routines and just fudge what**

I did for an edTPA score because then learning was more important to me than meeting the edTPA expectations.” (Respondent 10)

“Due to the extensive time and effort involved in edTPA, I felt that I was unable to serve my students to the best of my ability. Time that I could have spent developing lessons, providing feedback, and working one-on-one with students was devoted, instead, to edTPA.” (Respondent 16)

“The energy that I was required to give to edTPA could have been much better used receiving immediate feedback, researching new practices, or even practicing self-care (something that is imperative for ALL educators to practice but is immensely difficult for student teachers to do so with the requirements of an unpaid, full-time job--and the added stress of a mandated performance test). **The standardized requirements of edTPA negated and minimized the diversity of learners in my classes and distilled teaching into what felt like something full aligned with the banking model of education (the exact opposite of what I wanted to do in my classroom).**” (Respondent 17)

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VII. Poor Use of Time

“For me edtpa took away from valuable class time that could have been spent more effectively on gaining a better understanding of the experiences we were having in our student teaching placements. I really resented that.” (Respondent 3)

“edTPA was a waste of quality time I could have spent designing better lessons for my students or worrying about my own mental health. I spend hours and hours working on edTPA.” (Respondent 7)

“It took time and attention away from other, arguably more important, responsibilities such as lesson planning and reflection.” (Respondent 8)

“I think edTPA took up a lot of my time from planning other lessons and put a lot of pressure on a certain chunk of lessons.” (Respondent 12)

“It was hard to focus on all of the subjects that I needed to teach when the majority of my time was being taken up by planning and reflecting solely writing instruction just for edTPA.” (Respondent 14)

“Due to the extensive time and effort involved in edTPA, I felt that I was unable to serve my students to the best of my ability.” (Respondent 16)

“My student teaching experience was negatively affected by edTPA. Being required to complete edTPA during my student teaching experience was immensely burdensome, took away from the time that I could have used to lesson-plan, review my teaching with my cooperating teacher (who actually knew me and observed my growth over the semester), conference with students, or research innovative practices to implement in my classroom to continue to best support all of my students.” (Respondent 17)

Minority Opinion Feedback:

(This section provides excerpts from responses that go against the themes presented by the majority of respondents.)

“I think edTPA benefited my overall student teaching experience. I lucked out with identifying a student to work with - this process can be difficult with permission slips and scheduling within the school. For me, edTPA really just made me film myself and analyze/reflect more specifically than I would have.” (Respondent 6)

“The project as a whole took a lot of time and effort. However, I think it benefited my learning. Also, I don't think the time/resources spent doing the project is different from what you do everyday in the classroom - plan, implement, assess, reflect, and repeat. Filming was difficult but I had supports to help make it work.” (Respondent 6)

“edTPA was incorporated into my coursework, mainly focused on in one class each semester of my senior year. The professors and advisors were helpful and supportive regarding edTPA and its requirements as my program held various edTPA workshops to help set the teacher candidates up for success.” (Respondent 9)

“I was fortunate enough to have a very supportive cooperating teacher during my full-time student teaching placement. Completing edTPA in my placement was welcomed and flowed with the daily life of teaching. However, I understand that this was not the case for many of my friends in my cohort. Even in my own placement, it was extremely clear that most veteran teachers in the field (>5 years experience) have no idea what edTPA is nor its requirements. Therefore, if you don't have an understanding and supportive cooperating teacher it can make completing edTPA stressful on top of coursework and the demands of student teaching.” (Respondent 9)

“My edTPA lesson segment flowed with the natural progression of this particular group of students morning reading small group intervention. For the students there was no obvious impact other than them being aware that I was video-taping the lessons.” (Respondent 9)

“Thankfully, I did receive great support from the seminar leader that I had at [School of Education] in how to navigate some of the trickier parts of edTPA (academic language, time management, etc.) but this was not universal for everyone in my program.” (Respondent 14)