

*“Students are Once Again ‘Numbers’
Instead of Actual Human Beings”:
Teacher Performance Assessment and
the Governing of Curriculum and
Teacher Education*

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“For teacher education” in the United States, according to Linda Darling-Hammond (2010, p. 35), “this is perhaps the best of times and the worst of times.” On the one hand, she highlights significant policy initiatives and curriculum transformations that focus on professional standards, certification requirements, funding incentives and investments, and teacher roles and competencies. She maintains that these changes have resulted in better prepared teachers who receive higher ratings for effectiveness and contribute more to student learning. On the other hand, she notes that a “competing agenda” is challenging teacher education and is pushing for “market mechanisms that encourage more

open entry to teaching without expectations of training” (p. 36). Critics of traditional teacher preparation support alternative routes for certification and the removal of other regulatory barriers to create more pathways to enter the teaching profession. In response to critics, Darling-Hammond draws from research on exemplary teacher education programs, and articulates a vision including the “development of a high-quality, nationally available teacher performance assessment” (p. 44).

In the most recent and cohesive overview of research on initial teacher preparation and certification, Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Ana Maria Villegas (2015) chart major trends in teacher education, including the “unprecedented attention to teacher quality and accountability” (p. 9). They succinctly point out the logic of the dominant neoliberal, market-driven, and outcomes-based discourse that constitutes current education reforms: “educational success is the key to economic success, American schools are failing and need reform, teachers and schools—rather than social factors—are responsible for academic outcomes, and educational success should be measured by tests” (ibid.). Like Darling-Hammond, they note the use of performance assessments as an important feature to demonstrate the competence, quality, and effectiveness of teacher candidates and their potential value-added impact on the academic achievement of P-12 students.

Largely missing, however, in the scholarly literature on initial teacher preparation in the context of “audit culture” are rigorous analyses of curriculum in teacher education (Miller, 2014). The audit culture shapes the current climate of standardization, accreditation, and accountability

in which “producers of high-stakes testing have appropriated, directly, the areas of finance and accounting and their rituals of verification,” and curriculum is primarily perceived as content or course of study, as “predetermined, prepackaged, fixed, immutable, and testable knowledge” (pp. 18-19). Consequently, in today’s educational system, what seems to be the knowledge of most worth—to attend to the classic curriculum question—is the one that can be tested through technical and quantifiable ways. In other words, what has become normalized as curriculum in teacher education are lessons and activities with a narrow positivist orientation that, when used and followed, can supposedly generate desired results and predictable outcomes that can be tested and verified.

Janet Miller (2014) maintains that it is precisely because of the ongoing dominance of a Tylerian approach to curriculum that insights and interventions from curriculum theorizing are critically important and necessary in teacher education at this time. She suggests a rethinking of curriculum as an “interdisciplinary study of educational experience” and of theorizing as “a creative intellectual task rather than as a basis for prescription or testable and measurable sets of principles and relationships” (p. 14). Following Miller, I mobilize curriculum theorizing “not only to critique but also to dislodge the current and rampant fixation by test-makers and assessment gurus on ‘certainty’” (p. 19). How can curriculum theorizing loosen the discursive stranglehold of the neoliberal paradigm that has dramatically restructured and governed educational policies, programs, and practices? How can it challenge and

resist what has become the new normal in teacher preparation and certification?

I argue that by asking different questions, curriculum theorizing can point to other subjectivities, conditions, and practices that are excluded in the current audit culture of standardization, accreditation, and accountability. If we think about curriculum as an interdisciplinary study to understand the nature of one's educational experience, then we can ask: What are the experiences of teacher candidates in the current educational regime? How has the discourse of neoliberalism in education constituted and transformed these subjects? And how do these subjects work within and against the complex conditions and relations of teaching, learning, and assessment? By asking these questions, we can discern the ways in which candidates navigate the logics and practices that shape their educational experiences. Attending to their educational experiences is crucial in studies of curriculum and teacher education, especially since the candidates' demonstration of teaching quality, competence, and readiness are at the center of highly-charged debates. Yet these debates have largely ignored their experiences and perspectives.

Toward these ends, I will examine the experiences of teacher candidates and the use of teacher performance assessment (edTPA) to measure their quality, competence, and impact. I will situate edTPA within the politically-charged debate in the United States between the defenders and reformers of teacher education who advocate for the professionalization versus deregulation of the field, respectively. Their

positions converge, however, in the collective belief and reliance on testing to measure educational inputs and outputs. Defenders are caught in a reactive stance to show through testing data the value and relevance of teacher preparation. I will also examine the perspective on edTPA of teacher candidates at a public university in the United States. My survey of candidates who completed edTPA during the 2014-15 academic year reveals an overwhelming resistance to edTPA, even though they have been disciplined in a culture of testing throughout their P-12 and university education. Their resistance foregrounds three themes: (a) time and stress; (b) outsourcing of teacher evaluation; and (c) contradictions between curriculum and assessment in teacher education. Moreover, I will mobilize Michel Foucault's concepts of governmentality and critique to analyze the ruling logic and practices in education and the candidates' resistance under difficult conditions.

Competing Agendas, Converging Governmentality

In the contentious debate on teacher quality and the effectiveness and impact of teacher preparation programs, there are two major groups in the United States.¹ The first group is committed to strengthening teacher education through institutional change and transformation, while the second group aims to develop alternative pathways to teacher preparation and certification. At stake in the debate between the "defenders" and "reformers" of teacher education are questions regarding the best way to prepare teachers who can address the

academic and personal needs of diverse students in today's P-12 schools (Zeichner & Peña-Sandoval, 2015).

The first group believes in the development of teaching as a profession and in the preparation of P-12 teachers in faculties of education located in colleges and universities (Cortese & Polishook, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2013; Roth, 1999). They promote ongoing evaluation and accreditation of teacher education programs with clear standards and objectives. They advocate for a rigorous curriculum that consists of content area and instructional methods courses as well as extensive clinical experiences in P-12 schools with diverse student populations. They push for more selective admissions criteria and an exit/licensure requirement that includes subject matter and pedagogy examinations and/or performance assessments. As "defenders" of teacher education, this first group aims to develop teaching as a profession, similar to high-status fields like medicine, law, and engineering, through "high, common standards of competence and professional practice" measured by "rigorous licensing and certification tests" (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2013).

The second group finds significant aspects of traditional teacher education rigid, outdated, and irrelevant, and is committed to the deregulation of teacher preparation and certification to facilitate alternative pathways to teaching. Arthur Levine (2006) writes a report on *Educating School Teachers* with the following section titles: Pursuit of Irrelevance, Inadequate Preparation, Curriculum in Disarray, Disconnected Faculty, Low Admission Standards, Insufficient Quality

Control, and Disparities in Institutional Quality. A former president of Teachers College at Columbia University (USA), Levine is the most high-profile academic critic of teacher education. He is joined by other “reformers” who maintain that conventional programs have not been effective in preparing teachers to meet the needs of P-12 students, especially those in urban and other hard-to-serve schools which are disproportionately populated by racial minority and low-income students. This second group consists of providers of non-university teacher education, and are directed, supported, and funded by a powerful network of business and corporate interests, private foundations and venture philanthropists (Au, 2010; Kumashiro, 2013; Saltman, 2010).

The current debate on teacher quality and impact on student learning in the United States, however, is not altogether new. Rather it is a continuation of a politically-charged debate and of the federal government’s increasing involvement in teacher education for the past 60 years after the launch of Sputnik in 1957, during the Cold War, and with the release of reports like *A Nation At Risk* in 1983 (Earley et al., 2011; Kumashiro, 2013; Ravitch, 2011; Taubman, 2010). Over time, “as pressure increased for students to be held accountable to world-class, uniform, national standards, so did the pressure increase for holding teachers and teacher education accountable for student outcomes” (Lewis & Young, 2013, p. 193).² In the mid-1990s, the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (1996) recommended that all students should be provided with their “educational birthright:

access to competent, caring, qualified teaching” (p. 10). To implement the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in the early 2000s, Secretary of Education Rod Paige (2002), under a Republican administration, proposed to meet the “highly qualified teachers challenge” by raising academic standards for teachers and lowering barriers to teaching certification. A decade later, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan (2011), under a Democrat administration, stated that “unfortunately some of our existing teacher preparation programs are not up to the job. They operate partially blindfolded, without access to data that tells them how effective their graduates are in elementary and secondary school classrooms after they leave their teacher preparation programs” (p. 1). Consequently, through Race to the Top (RttT) incentive funding, the federal Department of Education encouraged states to reform teacher evaluation policies and procedures and to develop data systems for the tracking and assessment of graduates of teacher preparation programs.

What is new in the debate is the convergence of a governing discourse of accountability in teacher education that relies on testing to measure educational inputs and outputs. NCLB focused on the inputs—the teacher candidates’ acquisition and mastery of academic and pedagogical content knowledge, while RttT emphasized the outputs—the teacher candidates’ and their programs’ impact on P-12 student learning and achievement. I contend that the neoliberal grammar of educational input and output has become so dominant that the two competing sides in the teacher education debate—the reformers and defenders—are actually working within the same script of accountability

and assessment. The reformers employ these tests as evidence in their claim that traditional teacher education programs and their graduates are ineffective, while the defenders believe that better preparation for these tests—through curricular and instructional revision, resulting hopefully in better scores—will demonstrate teacher quality, competence, and impact. Trapped within the governing language and practice of accountability and assessment, the defenders are caught in a reactive position to show through testing data the value and relevance of university-based teacher preparation.

In my investigation of teacher education and curriculum in the context of audit culture, I mobilize Michel Foucault's (2007) concept of governmentality. This neologism combines the notion of government with that of rationality as an analytical framework to examine both the "governmental practice" that exercises power and control over a population as well as the "governmental reason" that constitutes such practice and makes it appear normal (pp. 70, 285). In his 1977-78 lectures on *Security, Territory, Population* at the Collège de France, Foucault indicates that in modern states the "problem of population" is the government's central concern: how "to improve the condition of the population, to increase its wealth, its longevity, and its health" (pp. 104-105). To accomplish these ends, governmentality functions as an "ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit very complex, power" on the population (p. 108). In other words, governmentality as practice and reason enacts, consolidates, justifies,

and normalizes power to address the administration and control of the population for the security and enhancement of life, welfare, and prosperity.

It is commonly understood that education is essential for a nation's prosperity. When education is tied to a country's welfare and competitiveness in the global marketplace, people in schools—including teacher candidates who are prepared to educate children—become target population for governmentality. Governmentality operates on population in the aggregate or on subgroups, setting conditions, identifying deficiencies, and seeking opportunities for corrective interventions. It shapes human conduct through the “perfection, maximization, or intensification of the processes it directs,” and the population becomes “a field of intervention” and “the end of government technique” (Foucault, 2007, pp. 99, 108). In the regime of accountability in public education, governmental techniques include testing in general and teacher performance assessments in particular.

Assessing Teacher Candidates

Since the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, high-stakes testing has become the new normal in public education in the United States. Today's teacher candidates do not know what education is like without high-stakes testing. Traditional-age candidates who are currently enrolled in teacher education programs took these tests throughout their own P-12 schooling and consider them as a regular feature of their educational experience. They have been disciplined in “a

fundamental, abiding rationality” and practice of testing that is “linked by nature to the just and the good” of measuring their academic progress and achievement (Foucault, 1997, p. 62). Hence, with the governmental technique of testing as normalized, routinized, and ubiquitous in public education, teacher candidates know that their professional duties include administering standardized tests to their students. Now complete is the educational testing cycle of students becoming teachers who then administer tests to their own students.

Teacher candidates also have their share of standardized, high-stakes tests to take (Mitchell et al., 2001). For example, the state of Ohio participated in a three-year pilot in 2010 to develop a “pre-service teaching performance assessment” that would be “nationally available for states and teacher preparation programs to use in program improvement, licensure, and accreditation” (Ohio Department of Higher Education, n.d.). The teacher performance assessment, now called edTPA, draws from the Performance Assessment for California Teachers developed by Darling-Hammond and the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE, 2015), and is administered by Pearson, the world’s largest education company. edTPA typically includes 15 rubrics categorized under the three tasks of planning, instruction, and assessment.³ Teacher candidates complete their edTPA electronic portfolio during the academic period of student teaching by responding to rubric prompts and uploading self-designed lesson plans, student work samples, short teaching video clips, and written reflections. Their portfolios are then evaluated by national or local pools of

education personnel who are trained and qualified using scoring materials authored by the Stanford center.

Defenders of teacher education, in pursuit of the field's professionalization, promote edTPA as sure warrants of the classroom readiness of teacher candidates and the high quality of teacher education programs. They consider edTPA as a national bar-like exam for teaching: "Just as in professions widely recognized for having a set of rigorous professional standards, such as law or medicine, teaching must raise standards for entry into the profession through a process similar to the bar process in law or the board process in medicine" (American Federation of Teachers, 2012, p. 3). At this time, edTPA is used in over 630 teacher preparation programs in 35 states in the United States (AACTE, n.d.). Ten states—California, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, New York, Tennessee, Washington, and Wisconsin—currently require the passage of edTPA (or edTPA as one of the assessment options) as a prerequisite for teaching certification. Two other states, Hawaii and Oregon, will mandate the passage of edTPA for licensure starting in 2017. Other states, like Ohio, are participating in edTPA, but do not require it for initial teaching licensure.

Critical scholars and practitioners of teacher education, however, do not endorse edTPA (Madeloni & Gorlewski, 2013; Singer, 2015). They view standardized, high-stakes tests like edTPA in teacher education—similar to those in P-12 schools—as part of a concerted effort to undermine public education and privatize the education enterprise (Au, 2010; Kumashiro, 2012; Ravitch, 2011). They challenge the rise and

proliferation of value-added models and accountability systems with limited research support and questionable validity and reliability constructs (Amrein-Beardsley, 2014). They push back against the reduction of teaching to quantifiable evaluation of behaviors and its consequent failure to capture the nuance and complexity of teaching and learning (Hursh, 2008). They are also concerned about edTPA's impact on the curriculum of teacher preparation programs, which pressures teacher educators to revise courses and teach to the test in order to support and enhance their candidates' performance and their programs' standing in edTPA (Burns et al., 2015). They are troubled by the outsourcing of teacher candidate evaluation to a for-profit company, question the qualifications of test evaluators, and assert the role and expertise of local faculty and supervisors (Dover et al., 2015). Moreover, they point out how edTPA undermines diversity and equity in education by "privileging the teaching practices of the dominant culture," promoting teaching as "a process of obedience to prescribed mandates rather than critical thinking and empowerment," and "imposing a common and pre-determined curriculum on teacher education" that curtails faculty ability to address "critical multicultural education, social justice, and democratic citizenship" (NAME, n.d.).

To document the experiences and perspectives of teacher candidates on edTPA, I pursued a case study research on the institution where I work, Miami University in Ohio, USA, and on candidates who completed and submitted their edTPA e-portfolios during the 2014-15 academic year (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 1998). A nationally renowned,

public university with a focus on undergraduate teaching, Miami is located in a state that does not require the candidate's passing of edTPA as a prerequisite for teacher licensure, yet decided to make it mandatory for program completion and licensure eligibility. Miami candidates must pass edTPA in order to successfully complete student teaching and their program.⁴ Those who do not take or pass edTPA are able to graduate from the university, but are not eligible for teacher licensure. Miami mandated the candidates' passing of edTPA in anticipation of a possible shift in state policy to make it a licensure requirement. Some teacher education faculty members have revised their course curriculum to integrate various elements of edTPA to help prepare candidates, including the use of standardized lesson plans and academic language as well as the practice of videotaping and reflection writing. University faculty, field supervisors, and cooperating teachers have participated in workshop sessions and/or received information materials on edTPA, and student teachers have been provided with seminars and designated writing days to complete their portfolios. By the time the research took place, the use of edTPA at Miami was in its third year.

My research objective is to provide what Foucault (1997) calls an "explanation from below" in order to "turn the traditional values of intelligibility upside down" (p. 62). The debates on teacher quality and impact have not fully accounted for the experiences and perspectives of teacher candidates who bear the brunt of policy and program changes. Hence, to get their views on edTPA, I designed an online survey (Rea & Parker, 2014), in consultation with faculty colleagues and distributed to

all candidates completing their student teaching and edTPA portfolios in Fall 2014 and Spring 2015. The survey consisted of 28 questions that were primarily Likert scale and yes/no types with an open-ended question at the end. Aside from the candidates' demographic information, it asked for their views on the edTPA tasks of planning, instruction, and assessment; its impact on student teaching and their knowledge of subject matter, academic language, and student learning; and the mandatory use of edTPA as a licensure requirement. The last question asked them to "elaborate on [their] responses or share other comments about [their] experience with edTPA." At least a week after submitting their edTPA portfolios, I sent an email to the candidates explaining the purpose, benefits, and voluntary nature of the study with a weblink of the online survey. The data collection lasted for one week each semester, and before the semester ended, I followed up with the candidates and shared a composite result of the survey.

My research received a solid response rate of 58.5% (199 out of 340 total candidates) and a fairly representative sample of teacher candidates at Miami.⁵ The participating respondents were mostly white (91.5%) and female (84.9%). They were enrolled in various teacher education programs across the university: early childhood education [PreK-grade 3] (36.7%), middle childhood education [grades 4-9] (15.1%), adolescent and young adult education [grades 7-12] (23.1%), master of arts in teaching [grades 7-12] (4.0%), special education [grades K-12] (14.1%), and art education and music education [grades K-12] (7.0%).

Participating candidates did not receive any compensation, and their identities were kept confidential.

Resisting edTPA

The overwhelming majority of participating teacher candidates at Miami University did not endorse edTPA: 92.5% indicated that the university should not continue the mandatory completion and passing of edTPA as a program requirement; and 95.0% indicated that the state of Ohio should not make the passage of edTPA a mandatory requirement for initial teaching licensure. Nine out of ten teacher candidates (93.0%) did not believe that edTPA was a fair and effective summative assessment of their capability and readiness to teach. Their rationale ranged from its negative impact on their student teaching experience, to its failure to adequately improve their abilities to accomplish teaching tasks. Most of them believed that edTPA interfered with their student teaching goals and responsibilities (88.4%) and it did not enhance their student teaching experience (72.3%). In fact, only 21.7% to 33.0% of the participants saw edTPA enhancing their ability in planning, instruction, and assessment (see Table 1).

The participants' responses to the open-ended question at the end of the survey provided qualitative data to substantiate and extend their critiques of edTPA. Seven out of ten candidates (70.4%) wrote to elaborate on their survey responses or share other comments on their experience with edTPA. Their feedback ranged from a couple of lines to a single-spaced, half-page. Several participants agreed that the

Table 1
Participants' level of agreement that edTPA enhanced their planning, instruction, or assessment skills displayed as a percentage of the sample (N = 199).

edTPA enhanced my...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Planning: effective lessons	1.0	32.0	18.8	30.0	18.2
Instruction: critical thinking and content understanding	1.5	20.2	25.3	33.3	19.7
Assessment: feedback to support learning	1.5	23.6	20.1	33.2	21.6

“acceptance and licensure process for teachers should be rigorous,” and understood “the big picture of completing the edTPA.” They appreciated how edTPA makes them “critically think about [their] lesson plan and makes [them] look at data from assessments.” They also valued the “prompt questions ... about key elements of the classroom that [they] might forget about sometimes, like academic language or student backgrounds.” However, from the vantage point of teacher candidates, the disadvantages far outweighed these benefits. My analysis of their comments reveals three major concerns: (a) time and stress; (b) outsourcing of teacher evaluation; and (c) contradictions between curriculum and assessment in teacher education.

First, teacher candidates raised grave concerns regarding the inordinate amount of time and stress incurred while completing edTPA, a finding that is aligned with other research on teacher performance assessments (Burns et al., 2015; Meuwissen et al., 2015; Okhremtchouk et

al., 2009). When describing edTPA, many participants used phrases, such as “time consuming” and “took away from student teaching.” They viewed completing the portfolio as “busy work” with “repetitive” questions and as a “hoop to jump through.” A candidate wrote, “I scrambled to find time, even with preparing weeks in advance of the due date, to complete this assignment and I know I wasn’t able to submit my best work.” “It is not realistic,” another candidate stated,

“to ask a student teacher to solely focus on the edTPA for the first (almost) two months of school and then take full responsibility of the classroom for the final month and a half. This does not provide ample time for the student teacher to grow in their skills and performance.”

Many considered edTPA as an “unrealistic” and “flawed” “burden” which added “extra pressure” to an already stressful period in their academic and professional development. A third candidate wrote,

“Student teaching is overwhelming and stressful on its own. Learning the school’s procedures, getting to know my cooperating teacher and the students, teaching on my own for the first time, and developing quality and realistic lesson plans were my first priorities during student teaching. Having to worry about the edTPA on top of those things was majorly stressful and absolutely prevented me from giving 100% as a student teacher.”

In completing edTPA, teacher candidates strongly relied on their peers, cooperating teachers, and field supervisors for guidance and assistance.

Second, teacher candidates expressed apprehension about the outsourcing of performance assessment, a concern also raised by critical teacher education scholars and practitioners (Dover et al., 2015). A participant said, “It makes no sense to me that Pearson gets to determine if we pass or not. They haven’t seen us teach in the classroom everyday.” Understanding the political economy of teacher education and evaluation, another participant wrote, “Pearson is not in the business of education. They are in the business of profiteering from so-called ‘reform.’” Instead of distant and impartial evaluators of their portfolios, many respondents preferred to be assessed locally by those who regularly observed their teaching and interactions with students and who conferred with their cooperating teachers and student teaching supervisors. This preference was consistent with their comments that edTPA was not an effective tool to assess their teaching quality and competence. In the survey, the majority of participants (58.3%) stated that edTPA did not provide a meaningful and holistic representation of their capability and readiness to teach. Since candidates only receive rubric, task, and total edTPA scores from Pearson, they do not get qualitative feedback on their portfolios. “The most growth I had as a budding professional,” one respondent wrote, “was with the sage advice and instruction that I received from my professors at Miami and my host teacher who had 20 years in the classroom.” Another respondent indicated that being assessed externally was “insulting” to student teaching supervisors because it demonstrated a lack of trust in their supervisors’ ability to objectively assess their performance. With

“extremely limited feedback,” it becomes “impossible to learn anything” from completing edTPA.

Third, teacher candidates were troubled by the contradictions between the constructivist and inquiry-based approach to curriculum in teacher education at Miami and the positivist, standardized model of teacher performance assessment promoted by Pearson and SCALE. The following statements from the candidates showcase these contradictions:

- “As developing teachers we are taught to not teach to the test and use inquiry. The edTPA was the opposite of this.”
- “Our program has encouraged us to teach and assess learners in multiple ways and to never judge a child [based on] a single score. However, I feel that Miami will likely do this to us as they determine if we pass or fail student teaching and go on to graduate.”
- “Student teaching is a time to make mistakes and learn from them. With the edTPA I felt like I was not allowed to make those mistakes. [E]verything I did had to be perfect and follow the standards of the test.”

As a result, many candidates realized that if they wanted to complete Miami’s teacher education program and receive their teaching license, they would need to pass edTPA by “playing the game.” The numerous years of participating in high-stakes testing in P-12 schooling and university-based teacher education—in fact, the entire educational trajectory of today’s teacher candidates—have produced a subjected population who view education as a game with rules, directions, and

goals. Candidates wanted to determine “what the assessor wanted to read and that is what [they] included in [their] edTPA.” One participant noted that “most of my writing of the edTPA did not reflect what happened in the classroom, but what I knew would get me a good score.”

Hence, from the perspective of teacher candidates, what does edTPA actually test? Their responses were: “it is reflective of how well [teacher candidates] can meet Pearson’s requirements under pressure”; and “it measures how well [they] can write a paper to cater to the rubric and the people scoring it.” In short, edTPA “measures [their] ability to write about [their] teaching, not about how [they] actually teach.”

To Not Be Governed Quite So Much

How does one navigate the politically-charged terrain of high-stakes testing under the neoliberal regime of educational standardization, accreditation, and accountability? How does one work within and against such conditions that are tied to national welfare and prosperity as well as global ranking and competitiveness? Frankly, today’s teacher candidates are caught between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, they would have to play the game and pass edTPA in order to complete their teacher preparation program and receive their teaching license. On the other hand, by not taking or passing edTPA, they would forfeit their eligibility for a teaching license. For many candidates at Miami University, they could not afford to take the risk of not passing edTPA since it is a requirement for program completion. They had invested too

much already in their education to not benefit from their hard work. Yet they also recognized the disadvantages and limitations of edTPA, and utilized the survey as an opportunity to voice their disagreement and concerns. Even though they had to pass edTPA to become a licensed teacher, they almost unanimously rejected edTPA as a mandatory requirement to complete their teacher education program at Miami and receive their teaching license from the state of Ohio.

Their strategic act of resistance—using the survey to express their concerns and urge university teacher educators to stop imposing this standardized, high-stakes requirement—is exemplary of what Foucault (1997) calls critique or “the art of not being governed quite so much” (p. 29). The survey served as a platform for their critique “as an act of defiance, as a challenge, as a way of limiting these arts of governing and sizing them up, transforming them, of finding a way to escape from them” (p. 28). They responded to the survey, trusting that their identities would remain confidential and that I as a teacher educator and researcher would share their individual and collective message, to contest the governmentality of assessment pervading teacher education. They felt and could foresee the effects and eventual consequences of continuing to use high-stakes testing in their lives and careers as teachers. edTPA “took the joy and fun out of my teaching,” one respondent wrote, “It was a constant worry, which made it hard for me to be fully present in the classroom.” Another respondent sarcastically saw the value of edTPA since

“it requires student teachers to prepare for the massive amount of busywork they will do as actual teachers. Meaning, the students are once again ‘numbers’ instead of actual human beings and have to be categorized in a variety of assessments as a way of guaranteeing teacher ability.”

Through their critique, Miami’s teacher candidates sought after a “critical ontology of ourselves” (Foucault, 1997, p. 127). According to Foucault, this critical ontology demands a type of work that we carry out by ourselves upon ourselves, a practice that will “separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, thinking what we are, do, or think” (p. 125). The possibility of no longer being what we are functions as a way of resisting what education subjects in general and teacher candidates in particular have become within the governmental regime of neoliberalism in education. So if we become different, might we act differently? “I think we should use our status to take a stand against the edTPA,” declared one of the participants daringly, “We all know that students are more than test scores and that test scores alone are not accurate representations of our students, so why do we think that they would be for us pre-service teachers?” Through their astute critique, mindful of the risks and constraints of their subject position, teacher candidates mobilized to their advantage an opportunity for resistance in order to take a divergent stance and create other possibilities for future candidates.

Conclusion

So what are scholars, researchers, and practitioners of curriculum studies and teacher education to do? I contend that we need to strongly support the concerns of teacher candidates on high-stakes testing and advocate for a new future in education. The governmentality of high-stakes testing has been employed to define student achievement and teacher readiness in narrow positivistic ways that severely limit what can be said in discussions regarding educational quality and impact. So-called reformers have controlled the national policies and financial investments on educational inputs and outputs, while defenders have largely taken a reactive and protective position. We need to loosen the discursive stranglehold of the neoliberal paradigm which only provides the oppositional binary of professionalization versus deregulation as the only options for teacher education. As a product of the professionalization camp, edTPA is an untenable tool for the future of teacher education. Resisting edTPA is largely dismissed by so-called defenders of teacher education because they fear that is the only weapon they have against reformers. The governmental reason and practices that constitute edTPA regulate curriculum and teacher education, transforming what it means to be a teacher candidate in today's context. The long-standing tensions between the democratization and corporatization of education are displaced onto teacher candidates who, as a result, become disciplined subjects caught between two polar positions. Ultimately, the question of what knowledge is of most worth

tested is as much about curriculum, teacher preparation, and assessment as it is about the present and future of education.

Notes

¹ The debate between the professionalization and deregulation of teacher education is not altogether unique to the United States. For instance, Walker and von Bergmann (2013) provide an insightful tracing of these dual forces in Canada.

² A similar trend took place in Ontario with the creation of the Education Quality and Accountability Office in 1995, which coordinated the province's participation in national and international assessment programs (Volante, 2007).

³ The exceptions are licensure areas with fewer or more than 15 rubrics: world and classical languages have 13 rubrics, while elementary education has 18.

⁴ Since each rubric is scored on a scale of five points, a typical edTPA portfolio with 15 rubrics can have a total maximum possible score of 75. Even though the state of Ohio currently does not require passage of edTPA as a licensure requirement, Miami University has an edTPA cut score of 37 for program completion and licensure eligibility. During the 2014-15 academic year when the survey took place, Miami required

teacher candidates to attain the edTPA cut score or higher in order to pass student teaching.

⁵ Fall 2014 had a response rate of 75.3%, and Spring 2015 had 41.7%. I attribute the lower response rate in Spring to the late distribution of the survey. Whereas the Fall survey was administered during the 12th week of the semester, the Spring survey was administered at the end of the 15th week, right before commencement. Due to cancelled classes during snow days and mandatory student testing in the schools, Miami's teacher candidates did not submit their edTPA portfolios until later in Spring, which affected the timeline when they received the survey. I also decided to present the aggregate survey responses for the entire year since the differences in the survey responses between the two semesters were statistically insignificant. The aggregate provides a one-year view of the teacher candidates' perspectives on edTPA.

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