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Adopting the edTPA as a High-Stakes Assessment: Resistance, Advocacy, and Reflection in Illinois

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The edTPA, a national performance assessment for teacher candidates, has seen rapid adoption across the country since its development in 2009. Against the national backdrop of high stakes testing and accountability, the edTPA was developed to be an indicator of teachers' readiness to teach. The varying perspectives and responses to edTPA in Illinois range from resistance and advocacy, to thoughtful reflection and programmatic changes to best prepare teacher candidates for success. In this paper we explore how Illinois institutions have responded to the adoption of edTPA as a high stakes assessment consequential for teacher licensure. Using a "politics of policy" (Cochran-Smith, Piazza, & Power, 2013) framework, this research aims to examine these divergent responses across the state.

Introduction

Recent education reforms have focused on teacher quality as a lever to improve student outcomes, generating ongoing criticism of traditional university teacher-preparation programs and a focus on improving preparation for teachers (Cochran-Smith, Piazza, & Power, 2012; Dillon & Silva, 2011; Feuer, Floden, Chudowsky, & Ahn, 2013; Fuller, 2014; Henry et al., 2013; Milner, 2013). The subjectivity embedded in teacher-preparation programs, the varied quality of instruction and support across institutions, and a lack of standardized measurements of teacher readiness all contribute to these criticisms. The edTPA (Teacher Performance Assessment), a national performance assessment for teacher candidates (TCs), is one of the proposed solutions to standardize teacher preparation, since the assessment provides a performance-based measurement of teacher readiness (Adkins, 2016; Barron, 2015; Pecheone & Whittaker, 2016; Sato, 2014). However, while performance-based, this standardized assessment may not measure all the necessary aspects of a developing teacher (Lalley, 2017; Parkes & Powell, 2015). An additional complex layer is the use of this tool as a high-stakes assessment in obtaining a state teaching license. A direct connection to licensure means that this tool may be the sole determinant of teacher readiness, superseding student teaching performance, academic performance, and possibly the professional judgement of teacher educators who are more contextually connected to the development of their enrolled pre-service teachers. The teacher educators' response to this policy, specifically in states where the edTPA is high-stakes, is varied, and unpacking how these responses impact their programs and support for students may also vary from one program to the next. Some institutions may be advocates for this assessment while others may view this tool with skepticism and resistance. In this article, we turn our gaze toward an analysis of how teacher-education institutions within Illinois responded to the adoption of edTPA as a high-stakes assessment in 2015.

Advocates of the assessment argue that the edTPA has the potential to be a uniform and impartial evaluation of teacher candidates' readiness to teach (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2013). Because it requires TCs to reflect on several aspects of lesson planning, lesson delivery, and student assessment data to analyze their own teaching effectiveness, it is thought to be a better indicator of actual teaching practice than previously administered tests, such as state-required teaching aptitude tests that do not measure a TC's ability to plan lessons and actually instruct K-12 students (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2013). While other measures, such as evaluation from university-based supervisors and cooperating teachers, are an important aspect of teacher performance assessment and teacher readiness, they remain subjective and vary within and across settings, and the edTPA aims to standardize and ensure objectivity of performance-based measurement (Pecheone & Whittaker, 2016; Sato, 2014). Additionally, this performance-based assessment has the potential to increase rigor in coursework and fieldwork within teacher preparation programs.

Conversely, critics recoil at the depersonalization and corporatization of teacher education licensure. Opponents argue that implementing a standardized assessment nationwide reduces the professional autonomy teacher educators have at their respective preparation programs. Additionally, submission and evaluation of the edTPA is administered by Pearson, a large corporation, and external scoring may be problematic and biased because of a disconnection to the TC and related contextual factors, such as program requirements, field placement sites, or K-12 students within classrooms (Au, 2013; Dover, Schultz, Smith, & Duggan, 2015a).

Regardless of varied perspectives of the assessment, edTPA implementation is quickly rising. As of fall 2017, the edTPA is administered at 763 teacher preparation programs across 40 states and the District of Columbia. The edTPA also is tied to state licensure in 14 of these states (edTPA, n.d.). The fast enactment of edTPA across the country has compelled some teacher educators to reflect on their programs and prepare students for success, while others have resisted implementation. Regardless of the reaction, through this shift, teacher education programs need to decide how best to support their TCs, especially in states like Delaware, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, and Wisconsin with high-stakes connections to obtaining the teaching license. As teacher educators who work with teacher candidates in Illinois, we aim to better understand edTPA implementation and the policy's consequences. It is important to note that within this paper we neither applaud nor vilify the edTPA as an assessment tool. Instead, we offer a look at Illinois' response to the policy and aim to present a balanced view of the edTPA. We specifically seek to address questions such as: How have teacher education institutions and related organizations within Illinois responded to the adoption of edTPA as a high-stakes assessment? Depending on these reactions and responses, how have they continued to support their TCs through this change? Responses have varied across the state and even within institutions, as some faculty have focused on program reflection and improvement to prepare teachers, while others have critically examined and resisted edTPA implementation. Using a "politics of policy" (Cochran-Smith, Piazza, & Power, 2013) framework, this research aims to examine these divergent responses across the state.

edTPA Background

Against the backdrop of high-stakes testing and accountability, the edTPA was developed to be an indicator of pre-service teachers' readiness to teach. It was partially developed in response to the subjectivity of teacher preparation as it creates a measure of performance for individual teachers and for teaching as a collective enterprise (Sato, 2014). The edTPA was designed to provide a common framework for defining and measuring teaching performance across teacher preparation programs in various states. Content was developed at Stanford University by the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE). The assessment itself requires TCs to plan a three to five day learning segment and related artifacts, teach and record these lessons, collect the corresponding student work, and reflect on alignment to and meeting of learning objectives and students' academic and social needs. Teacher candidates submit their edTPA portfolios via on online platform to Pearson, which charges $300 per portfolio for scoring, and they receive their score report with quantitative results within three weeks. Pearson hires current and former educators to evaluate each edTPA portfolio and provide scores without specific feedback on strengths and areas for growth.

The edTPA has been touted as an effective assessment and positive move in teacher education because a performance-based assessment can provide a clearer picture of readiness to teach. Many have argued performance-based assessments are more authentic in measuring teacher readiness than written exams, and that the requirements and components of the edTPA productively measure teaching performance (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Wei & Pecheone, 2010). It is believed that the edTPA strengthens teaching preparation and quality, as in-depth reflection on lesson planning, instructional delivery, and assessment practices can transfer to stronger teaching practice as beginning educators (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Wei & Pecheone, 2010). As new teachers experience this structured and deep level of reflection on multiple aspects of planning and instruction during teacher training, they are theoretically more likely to be prepared to better meet the planning, instructional, and assessment needs of his/her K-12 students.

edTPA Implementation and Response

The edTPA has seen rapid adoption across the country since its development in 2009. It is used as a teacher performance assessment in preparation programs within 40 of the United States (edTPA, n.d.). As previously mentioned, not all states are using this assessment with a high-stakes connection to licensure, and in these cases, the edTPA is instead used as a capstone within teacher-preparation programs, for accreditation of the institution, or as one of several factors in obtaining a state teaching license. As of fall 2017, 17 states have either adopted or are considering incorporating edTPA results in their state teaching licensure policy, and it is projected that this will continue to be the upward trend with the expectation that the majority of teacher preparation programs across the nation will use the edTPA as a mandatory requirement for program completion and attainment of an education degree and/or teacher licensure (edTPA, n.d.).

While implementation of the edTPA across teacher preparation programs is relatively recent, there continues to be disparate views, including both skepticism and appreciation of the assessment, at national and local levels. Those in support of edTPA highlight teacher education

curricular reform, tighter alignment to professional teaching standards, an increase in teacher preparation rigor, and the benefits of data-driven instruction (Adkins, 2016; Barron, 2015; Pecheone & Whittaker, 2016; Sato, 2014). As previously discussed, those that name this tool as a threat to teacher educators and pre-service teachers continue to identify the academic, curricular, political, and financial ramifications (Au, 2013; Dover & Schultz, 2016; Dover, Schultz, Smith, & Duggan, 2015a; Dover, Schultz, Smith, & Duggan, 2015b; Hochstetler, 2014). Some name the edTPA as a gatekeeper, saying it limits access to becoming a teacher because of educational background, race, linguistic background, or class (Ledwell & Oyler, 2016). It is also being called a threat to social justice-oriented teacher preparation because coursework focusing on preparation for the edTPA may replace a previous focus on social justice teaching, because of the pressure to have TCs pass the test (Picower & Marshall, 2017). edTPA has also been criticized as a contributor to colonialism and racism, as the current Pearson evaluation does not focus enough on race, class, or gender identity of K-12 students (Tuck & Gorlewski, 2016) and is a deterrent from the teaching profession because prospective teachers choose another major or program to avoid having to complete this high-stakes teaching assessment (Greenblatt, 2016). Newer research assessing the validity of the assessment and the perceptions of teacher candidates claims that the edTPA is not an accurate measure of teacher readiness (Lalley, 2017; Meuwissen, Choppin, Shang-Butler, & Cloonan, 2015; Parkes & Powell, 2015). Since institutions across the United States are in the early adoption stages, (un)intended consequences are yet to be known. We have yet to see, through rigorous research, how this assessment prepares TCs to be effective first-time teachers, who is and is not passing the assessment, or what impact all this has on those deciding whether or not to enter teacher education programs.

Theoretical Framework

In an effort to explore how policy interpretation can impact decision-making and implementation, a discourse approach to teacher education was used to guide this study. Specifically, this research draws from Cochran-Smith, Piazza, and Power's "politics of policy" framework (2013), where the discourse around teacher education policies involves multiple actors with competing agendas. This framework has four components: (a) discourses and influences; (b) constructions of the problem of teacher education; (c) policy in practice; and (d) impact and implementation.

The *discourse and influences* of teacher education, the first component, are central to this study as we analyze documents to understand Illinois' response to edTPA implementation. Cochran-Smith, Piazza, and Powers (2013) argue that "discourses and influences have to do with larger political and economic conditions, agendas, ideologies, global influences, and trends that shape policy" (p. 9). The second component of the framework, *constructions of the problem of teacher education*, involves the important stakeholders and influencers behind policies, "as well as how problems and solutions are framed, stated and hidden agendas, and political strategies used to forward policies" (p. 9). Within the framework, *policy in practice*, component three, relates to how policies are interpreted by both individual and collective responses in local contexts, acceptance and resistance, and (un)intended consequences of the policy (Cochran-Smith, Piazza, & Powers, 2013). Policies within teacher education evoke various interpretations of what may or may not occur as a result of their implementation, and who may or may not benefit from the proposed decisions and actions that result. Component four, *impact and implementation*, refers to

the outcomes of policies, what individuals and groups have particular powers while others are consequently marginalized, and the (dis)empowerment of practitioners (Cochran-Smith, Piazza, & Powers, 2013). This framework is a useful tool to better understand teacher accountability policies like edTPA, as our analysis considers political and economic conditions, influences of political agendas and policies, individual and collective response in local contexts, and consequences of policy implementation on individuals, groups, and practitioners.

Policy development and decisions, reaction and response to these, and enactment are ongoing and changing, depending on those individuals involved and in which experiences they engage. The field and scope of teacher education is multifaceted and involves many stakeholders and influencers. Because policy decisions regarding teacher preparation affect various agencies, the discourse around this process is complicated and impactful.

Methods

This study employs qualitative document analysis to uncover and note trends in Illinois' response to the high-stakes implementation of edTPA for teacher licensure. Document analysis is an organized procedure for reviewing and evaluating documents and has gained increased attention in recent years as a research method. "Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge" (Bowen, 2009, p. 28). The rationale for document analysis is that documents can provide reliable and meaningful data, background information, and insight into the specific context of the issue being studied. As Stage and Manning (2003) point out, "Documents can be a rich source of information, contextually relevant, and grounded in the contexts they represent" (p. 86). We found that to be true of the documents gathered for this study. Document data can provide descriptive information from various viewpoints and document analysis minimizes the risk of the researcher changing what is being studied, unlike other qualitative methods (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Furthermore, documents are unaffected by the research process, lessening concerns of reflexivity and the investigator influence on the research. Within this study, documents provide background, context, and insight into divergent perspectives across Illinois on the implementation of edTPA as a high-stakes assessment for teacher licensure.

The first step in document analysis research is finding relevant materials that will inform the research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). With this in mind, we first identified the types of documents that would best inform our study. With our research question and theoretical framework as a guide, we created a preliminary list of potential documents and began to locate the data sources. The list includes documents such as journal articles, newspaper articles, policy briefs, meeting notes, workshop materials, course syllabi, and student support documents. The majority of documents were publicly available and accessible via the Internet, although we were not able to collect all documents we sought. For example, while university websites yielded a multitude of information including workshop information and edTPA guidelines for students, we found that not all course syllabi were readily available on university websites. Although we sought to include as many documents as possible to illustrate a clear picture of Illinois' varied response to edTPA implementation, due to limitations in finding all documents, our final document list was limited by availability.

With regards to locating journal articles about edTPA, we limited our search to articles specific to Illinois and utilized Boolean search terms such as edTPA, teacher performance assessment, teacher education assessment, and Illinois. We employed electronic databases as EBSCO, ERIC, and Google Scholar to guide our inquiry. We expanded our search of articles to non-scholarly articles as well, using the same search terms to locate policy briefs, opinion editorials, and newspaper articles. Finally, we followed up with a read-through of each document to ensure that it focused on edTPA implementation specifically within the context of Illinois and the relevant timeframe from 2010 to 2017. While some articles focused on a national message, they were informed by the local context of teacher education within Illinois. If an article did not focus specifically on edTPA implementation in Illinois, it was excluded from our analysis. The list of final documents (see Table 1) guided our data analysis.

Table 1
Document List

Document Type	Quantity	Description
University websites	59	University teacher education programs within Illinois • edTPA related pages; syllabi; workshops and other student support
Non-university websites	4	Illinois Coalition for edTPA Rule Change Illinois Teacher Performance Assessment Consortium Illinois State Board of Education Illinois edTPA On-boarding • edTPA implementation; policy information; support materials
Journal articles	9	Academic journal articles that focus on edTPA implementation within the state of Illinois.
Newspaper articles or policy briefs	10	Non-academic articles in newspapers, online, or policy briefs focusing on edTPA implementation within the state of Illinois
Meeting notes	28	Notes from IL-TPAC Steering Committee Meetings 2012-2017
Additional resources focused on supporting TCs	78	Workshop flyers Support documents Retake guidelines Academic language supports Workshop and edTPA bootcamp materials

Data collection and analysis were concurrent and ongoing throughout the research process, with repeated reflection about the data (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). Our document analysis proceeded with the iterative process of skimming all documents, reading each with a thorough examination and finally with interpretation. In this way, we combined elements of both content and thematic analysis (Bowen, 2009). Our analytic process included making sense of data within documents and yielding excerpts and quotations that were aligned to our themes. Furthermore, each author read through documents and coded data individually first, followed by a check for inter-rater

reliability to demonstrate consistency between the researchers. A system for coding, theming, and cataloging the documents was then created.

The next step in the qualitative analysis was coding the data. As Rossman and Rallis (1998) put it, "Coding is the process of organizing the material into chunks before bringing meaning to those chunks" (p. 171). In an effort to streamline and enhance the data analysis process, the data was imported into Dedoose data analysis software. Highlighting codes within Dedoose, qualitative data were coded to gain insight into divergent perspectives across Illinois on the implementation of edTPA as a high-stakes assessment for teacher licensure. The data were reviewed to locate and assign codes to text segments in an effort to "form descriptions and broad themes in the data" (Creswell, 2012, p. 243). The codes helped organize and uncover patterns, and highlighted both critics' and advocates' responses to edTPA, including critics' concerns about edTPA depersonalizing and corporatizing teacher education, and advocates' focus on integrating student and faculty supports into teacher education programs. The next step in data analysis was to make a list of the emerging codes and cluster similar topics together (Tesch, 1990). As we sorted through the codes, we looked for similar phrases, commonalities, differences, and relationships. These categories became the major themes that represent the various perspectives "supported by diverse quotations and specific evidence" (Creswell, 2003, p. 194). The themes were organized into two major headings: critics of edTPA and advocates of edTPA. Relevant text documents were created for each theme and saved as new files. The relevant text documents were then reviewed and analyzed to reflect divergent perspectives of edTPA implementation in Illinois.

Finally, with the intention of explaining, elaborating and contextualizing the data, we looked at the data to realize the "lessons learned" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is important to identify which data truly provide evidence to answer the research questions. Lincoln (2002) has argued that there is a difference between qualitative data and qualitative evidence. Qualitative data is simply information, while qualitative evidence is comprised of data that is analyzed through the theoretical lenses and experiences with respect to the guiding research questions. This process helped us to draw conclusions about how Illinois institutions responded to the edTPA implementation.

Findings

Acknowledging that the discourses and influences surrounding teacher education have informed both the development of and response to edTPA, in this work, we draw upon the "policy in practice" component of Cochran-Smith, Piazza, and Power's (2013) theoretical framework. They suggest that "Policy in practice is concerned with how policies are interpreted and remade in local contexts, especially in terms of individual and collective responses, acceptance and resistance, and (un)intended consequences" (p. 9). Like all education policies, edTPA has elicited varied interpretations and responses across the state of Illinois. It is important to note that while the findings are organized into critics and advocates sections, these responses are not mutually exclusive. In fact, in many instances, organizations and universities are simultaneously opposing edTPA as a high-stakes policy and proactively supporting students in navigating the assessment.

edTPA Buy-in, Program Reflection, and Student and Faculty Supports

While there have been divergent responses to edTPA across Illinois, many teacher educators and policymakers have responded to its implementation with enthusiasm. The responses from proponents of the edTPA that emerged from document analysis have revealed a focus on seeing the intrinsic value of edTPA and fully embracing it; reflecting on ways edTPA can be used to improve teacher education programs; and integrating student and faculty support options into teacher education programs (Adkins, 2016; Adkins, Spesia, & Snakenborg, 2015; Demystifying edTPA, 2015; Dohrer, 2016). These responses were seen across the state while faculty responded to the use of edTPA as a required assessment for licensure. Each of these key themes will be discussed below.

edTPA buy-in. Undoubtedly, there are Illinois teacher educators and policymakers who see intrinsic value in edTPA as an assessment and policy tool for teacher candidates (Adkins, 2016; Adkins, Spesia, & Snakenborg, 2015; Demystifying edTPA, 2015). Even before the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) approved edTPA as a requirement for licensure, there was advocacy and buy-in from groups across the state. Notably, the Illinois Teacher Performance Assessment Consortium (IL-TPAC) was formed in collaboration with the national TPAC and the Illinois Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (IACTE) (IL-TPAC, n.d.). The IL-TPAC website states "IL-TPAC is a consortium of higher education and policy leaders working together to address the implementation support needs as the edTPA becomes a consequential assessment for teacher candidates" (IL-TPAC, n.d.). The group has continued to support teacher educators in implementing the edTPA through hosting conferences, webinars, and local training, and sharing edTPA resources.

Integrating edTPA into existing teacher education programs has been imperative as the assessment has become necessary for licensure, and many teacher education programs have done so eagerly. For example, Kate Liston, director of field experiences and student teaching at DePaul University in Chicago, said, "It's a beautiful tool that's going to help students be the very best teachers they can be" (Demystifying edTPA, 2015). Illinois State University (ISU) has been a leader in promoting the message that edTPA is a positive tool to support student learning. Aimee Adkins, ISU Associate Dean, suggests "We have experienced many positive results using the edTPA. Our program faculty have found reviewing edTPA score reports to be extremely valuable for highlighting areas of strength and areas where we need additional focus" (Adkins, 2016, p. 56). In a rebuttal to an edTPA criticism published in *Teachers College Record* in 2015, Adkins, along with Spesia and Snakenborg (2015), state:

> We have been committed to moving beyond compliance with state policy to using edTPA as a positive force to support critical faculty inquiry into teaching and learning. When Illinois State University faculty first reviewed the edTPA rubrics in 2009, it was clear that the rubrics put student learning at the center of this process. We also saw an innovation that provided clear, concise, and precise descriptors for key features of effective instruction, suitable for beginning practice. We have continued to engage more deeply because of its intrinsic value to help us achieve the practice we want in all our institutions." (p. 1)

While ISU has been the leader in the state in championing edTPA as an effective performance assessment for teachers, other universities have also seen edTPA as a positive tool to improve teacher preparation (Chatman-Nelson, Waechter-Versaw, Mitchener, & Chou, 2014; Dohrer, 2016; Northern Illinois University College of Education, n.d.; Northwestern University, n.d.; Stathakis & Stone, 2014). Dohrer (2016), explaining edTPA implementation at Northwestern University, suggests:

> The use of the edTPA as a local assessment has many advantages. Certainly, it gives us feedback on how we are doing as a program at the critical moment when candidates are graduating. From a program perspective, training each of our instructors on the rubrics and assuring reliability has meant that all instructors and staff understand the edTPA and can incorporate it into their courses. It has also led to incredibly rich conversations about theory and practice, as well as opportunities for us to bond and build relationships with each other. (para. 10)

Additional teacher educators agree that there are advantages to edTPA implementation. The Illinois Coalition for edTPA Rule Change (ICRC) sponsored statewide surveys in 2017 to gain feedback about edTPA implementation.

While the survey results largely highlight concerns about the edTPA itself, one university supervisor commented, "I believe that the teaching profession has needed a tool of this kind for many years . . . I think it takes the licensing out of the hands of the ED Departments and makes licensing more professional" (ICRC, n.d.-a). Similarly, Mary Lynn Doherty, coordinator of music education at Northern Illinois University, suggests that edTPA encourages effective teaching, "The edTPA promotes good teaching in that it expects teacher candidates to engage all learners fully, scaffold learning experiences, to teach and assess in multiple ways and to critically reflect on the student experience and ways to improve it" (McGowan, 2016, p. 1). These responses illustrate how universities have focused on the inherent value of edTPA as a useful assessment tool to reflect on programmatic improvement.

As edTPA pass rates are reported each year, many universities have responded with publishing and applauding students' high scores, essentially connecting edTPA success with a reflection of program quality. Northwestern University reported, "Our planning and preparation paid off as 100% of our candidates passed the edTPA, most well above the cut-off score set by Illinois and above the national score of 42 suggested by Stanford" (Dohrer, 2016, para. 11). Likewise, on the Northern Illinois University website, it states, "One hundred percent of graduate students and 98 percent of undergraduates passed the mandatory assessment required to obtain teacher licensure in Illinois . . . continuing the college's success story of posting numbers well ahead of state and national results" (edTPA Encore, 2017, para 2). Illinois State University also publishes their pass rate on their website, noting that across the University's entire education program, 99 percent of teacher candidates passed the assessment, far exceeding the national average of 85 percent (Navickas, 2016). The connection between edTPA pass rates and the validation of teacher preparation programs is echoed across the state. Chris Roegge, executive director of the Council on Teacher Education at the University of Illinois, suggests "Statewide, the success rate is about 94 percent, which is good. Because edTPA is a rigorous assessment, the high pass-rate validates the quality of teacher preparation in Illinois" (Forest, 2016, para. 5). In other words, if edTPA is

an indicator of teaching effectiveness, and students within a teacher education program are successful on the assessment, these high pass-rates are offered as an indicator of program quality.

Reflection and programmatic changes. Many teacher educators across Illinois have responded to edTPA implementation with thoughtful reflection and programmatic changes. Seeing the edTPA as a catalyst for change, teacher education faculty across the state have focused on approaches to support teacher candidates, including the examination of teacher education programs to inform improvement and the critical collaboration between teacher preparation educators and school educators (Cangro, 2014; Price, 2016; Snyder, 2014). Focusing specifically on music education, Cangro (2014) suggests that ongoing professional development and reflection can help in implementing evolving policies like the edTPA: "It's a process that requires constant renewal and a stream of current ideas from all parties involved, with the goal of developing best practices in music education for all students in the state of Illinois" (Cangro, 2014, p. 20). Illinois State University in Normal has been foremost in leading edTPA integration and program alignment. For example, their website lists a course called IDS 274: Preparing for the edTPA.

The course is offered online and the description states "This course explores aspects of the edTPA, including planning, instruction, assessment, identifying evidence of practice, analytical writing, and supporting edTPA resources" (Illinois State University, n.d.). Likewise, St. Xavier

University has created edTPA courses "to support teacher candidates in exploring and building an understanding of the edTPA performance assessment of teaching quality and effectiveness" (St. Xavier Elementary Education Course Descriptions, n.d.). Creating courses to support student success on edTPA has been a trend across universities within the state. Document analysis reveals that at least 13 universities have created edTPA focused courses. This number could potentially be higher or on the rise, as we had limited public access to program and syllabi information.

Document analysis reveals that teacher education programs have spent considerable time rethinking and redesigning programs and courses to best align with edTPA (Cangro, 2014; Dohrer, 2016; Price, 2016; Snyder, 2014). Maureen Kincaid, associate professor and chair of education at North Central College in Naperville, noted, "The redesigned elementary education program at North Central College is aligned with the Danielson Framework for Teaching. It provides a systematic approach to preparing future elementary education teachers to meet the rigorous demands of the edTPA, the new performance-based assessment for student teachers in Illinois" (Kincaid weighs in, 2014, para. 3). Similarly, in the journal *Music Teacher Educator*, David Snyder of ISU states:

> Future classes at ISU will actually see examples of previous students' written commentaries, sample assessments, and lesson plans. All of the music education faculty will require their students to use standardized lesson plans that address the required elements in the edTPA, and they will also require reflective writing assignments during their clinical teaching events that align to the various prompts in the portfolio. It is hoped that this added preparation will both strengthen the instructional skills of future teacher candidates and continue the trend of passing scores on this evaluation. (2014, p. 4)

Our document analysis showed that the trend of integrating edTPA language, requirements, and support was seen across multiple colleges and universities (Cangro, 2014; DePaul University College of Education, n.d.; Forrest, 2016; Navickas, 2016). For example, DePaul University in Chicago created a steering committee to develop principles, practices, and components of the edTPA throughout the educational program, including clinical experiences and pedagogical courses (DePaul University College of Education, n.d.). New edTPA course development and incorporating edTPA supports within existing coursework has been a common response to edTPA implementation within the state.

Student and faculty supports. With the pressure of a high-stakes assessment, faculty across the state have developed organizational support structures to integrate edTPA into existing programs and to help students pass the assessment. In addition to course integration, many colleges of education assigned an edTPA coordinator, convened edTPA advisory committees, developed edTPA boot camps or workshops, and encouraged teacher candidates to organize edTPA study groups (Cangro, 2014; Chicago State University, n.d.; Northern Illinois University, n.d.; Price, 2016; University of Illinois at Chicago College of Education, n.d.). The University of Illinois at Chicago's Council on Teacher Education website includes pre-edTPA preparation resources, such as edTPA101, Uncovering edTPA Rubrics, and Integrating Research and Theory in edTPA (University of Illinois at Chicago College of Education, n.d.). Similarly, Northern Illinois University's resources on its website are extensive, and include tips like "Put aside some time every week to work on the edTPA. Whether it is an hour each night or a couple of hours every weekend, it will most likely help to relieve stress and improve results" (Northern Illinois University College of Education, n.d.). National Louis University in Chicago has full remediation support plans in place for those who need extra support and/or do not pass, and students also have access to an edTPA coach (National Louis University, n.d.). At Northwestern University, students attend a full day workshop that explains edTPA, have access to ongoing support via a campus website, and sit down with an edTPA coordinator after scores come back to best understand how their edTPA performance can inform their teaching (Dohrer, 2016). The majority of university websites suggest that offering student support has been a common response by universities to edTPA implementation.

Even before edTPA became necessary for licensure in Illinois, higher education faculty and policy leaders came together to address implementation support needs (Chatman-Nelson, Waechter-Versaw, Mitchener, & Chou, 2014; IL-TPAC, n.d.). The strongest example of this is IL-TPAC, the Illinois Teacher Performance Assessment Consortium, an organization formed to work together to support faculty in edTPA implementation. The consortium consists of members from Illinois colleges and universities as well as the Illinois State Board of Education. Meeting notes reveal that Andrea Whittaker, from the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE), has also been involved in faculty support through IL-TPAC. Referring to IL-TPAC, Chatman-Nelson, Waechter-Versaw, Mitchener, and Chou (2014) state:

> Most notably, Illinois College, Illinois State University, and the University of Illinois at Chicago were pioneers in the state, having been selected to participate in the pilot for edTPA. Working closely with the national TPAC, these institutions joined with representatives from ISBE staff and the Illinois Association of Colleges for Teacher

Education (IACTE) to form the Illinois Teacher Performance Assessment Consortium. (p. 9)

The consortium quickly became a powerful resource for Illinois faculty as they faced edTPA implementation. The IL-TPAC website states:

Illinois colleges and universities have begun using edTPA as a capstone assessment of their teacher candidates. It is important that we communicate its role and value in preparing candidates who are ready to teach and details about the assessment and its process so that we have a common understanding of edTPA (what it is and how it works). (IL-TPAC, n.d.)

IL-TPAC has a steering committee, webinar committee, annual state conference committee, and regional planning committees charged with organizing local opportunities for collaboration focused on edTPA topics and trainings. The organization holds annual conferences centered on overcoming challenges in implementing edTPA. Workshops and webinars include topics like Deep Dive into the edTPA Rubrics; Planning for Retake Support; and Integrating the edTPA into Our Programs: Backwards Mapping, Using Score Profiles, and Closing the Loop (IL-TPAC, n.d.-a). These workshops, webinars, and conferences have undoubtedly been sources of support for teacher educators as they work through how to best integrate edTPA into teacher education programs. In addition to workshops and conferences, the organization has created an additional edTPA onboarding website designed "to provide those new to Illinois and/or new to the edTPA assessment a resource for learning about the assessment and a ready reference for getting up to speed with edTPA in Illinois" (IL-TPAC, n.d.-b). The website includes foundational documents, information about the edTPA process and rubrics, and links to external websites. These resources would undoubtedly be useful for faculty who are not familiar with edTPA.

edTPA Critics: Policy Resistance and Focus on Negative Consequences of edTPA Policy

In considering resistance and unintended consequences, the voice of critics of edTPA have been loud and strong in Illinois (Ayers, 2015; Dover & Schultz, 2016; Dover, Schultz, Smith, & Duggan, 2015a; Dover, Schultz, Smith, & Duggan, 2015b; Gillette, Jessee, & Neal, 2014; ICRC, n.d.; Steinhaus, Asimow, Dauksas, & Sheridan, 2013). Document analysis reveals key themes related to the perceived negative or unintended consequences of edTPA: advocating for policy change, and concerns about the edTPA contributing to the depersonalization and corporatization of education as well as the potential deleterious impact on teacher candidates and teacher education programs, including the impact of the assessment as a gatekeeper. These key themes in Illinois reflect concerns of critics within the national conversation surrounding edTPA policy as well (Ledwell & Oyler, 2016; Parkes & Powell, 2015; Picower & Marshall, 2017; Tuck & Gorlewski, 2016). The high-stakes nature of the assessment has been interpreted by some as mirroring the privatization and corporatization of public education. Opponents argue that edTPA has made teacher education into a business enterprise and depersonalized teacher preparation. Opponents further argue that the assessment is not a valid assessment of teacher candidates' readiness to teach, has a negative impact on student teaching placements, and marginalizes local experts who know teacher candidates. These themes will be discussed in detail below.

Advocating for sound state policy. Within Illinois, ongoing political activism has pushed back against the ISBE in response to edTPA becoming consequential for teacher licensure. In May 2014, the Illinois Coalition for edTPA Rule Change (ICRC) was created in response to the ISBE passing policy that secured edTPA as the sole assessment consequential for licensure, and this group has largely led the resistance against edTPA. The ICRC is comprised of educators, parents, and students who oppose the high-stakes use of the edTPA in Illinois. Their website states, "Although we represent a variety of viewpoints about the edTPA, as well as the best way to pursue changing edTPA policy in Illinois, we oppose using the edTPA as the one and only evidence-based high-stakes assessment of student teachers" (ICRC, n.d.).

The foremost argument of the coalition is that edTPA should not be the sole measure of student teacher performance without sufficient evidence or research to support the validity and effectiveness of the assessment. The coalition submitted a petition for an edTPA rule change in April 2015, asking ISBE to consider changing the policy of requiring teacher candidates to pass the edTPA during student teaching as a requirement for Illinois teacher licensure. The petition outlines several concerns about the assessment, including insufficient data to support implementation, the impact on student teaching placements and student teachers, the inappropriate use of the assessment as a summative assessment, and the impact on Illinois' pipeline of teachers (ICRC, 2015.). With regards to the inappropriate use of the assessment, the petition states:

> Approved teacher preparation programs typically use multiple evidence-based assessments to recommend teacher candidates for licensure rather than a single, high-stakes assessment which will be scored by a person hired by an outside entity (Pearson) who does not know the teacher candidate, the students in the classroom, the setting, or other nuances of student teaching. (ICRC, 2015, p.1)

This argument speaks not only to the perceived inappropriate use of the assessment, but also the misgivings about the corporatization of teacher education the depersonalization of teacher education, and the need for multifaceted assessments for teacher education and licensure, themes that will be discussed in detail below. The coalition's concerns paint a picture of how resistance to edTPA in Illinois has focused on the numerous consequences of shifting the assessment of teacher education out of the hands of local teacher educators and the potential unintended consequences of the policy. ISBE responded to the petition in a letter from State Superintendent of Education Tony Smith and Chairman James Meeks, stating:

> In order to acknowledge the work that must occur at the institutional level, ISBE has provided teacher preparation programs with a required pilot period, scoring vouchers, guidance documents and permission forms in multiple languages, and a score roll-out that, for the first two years, is one error of measurement below the recommended cut scores. (Smith & Meeks, 2015, para. 2)

This response acknowledges the concerns about edTPA, but focuses on support systems the ISBE put in place to improve the transition to edTPA policy.

While ICRC has led the charge against edTPA policy, there are additional groups within Illinois that have been working to overturn current edTPA policy within the state. For example, in 2013, the Illinois Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators (IAECTE) wrote a letter to State Superintendent Christopher Koch, outlining their concerns over edTPA implementation policies. The letter (Steinhaus, Asimow, Dauksas, & Sheridan, 2013) highlights their stance on the high-stakes nature of the assessment:

> Our primary concern is the nature of Illinois' edTPA implementation, which makes the assessment high stakes. The authors of the edTPA assessment have clearly articulated, when questioned in person, that the assessment is intended to be used as only one assessment among several which would determine a candidate's level of readiness for the teaching profession. The edTPA is not intended to be used as a high-stakes test that prevents candidates who have completed their teacher preparation programs from acquiring teacher licensure. Our stance and the edTPA design are supported by the body of assessment research, which provides strong evidence that high-stakes assessment is inconsistent with best practice in the teaching-learning process. (para. 3)

ISBE responded to this letter, with Division Administrator in Preparation and Evaluation Division Vicki Phillips asserting, "The integration of edTPA with other teacher education assessments provides guidance and support for program improvement. It constitutes a summative capstone assessment which evaluates a candidate's readiness to teach" (Phillips, 2013, para. 4). Like the letter from Smith and Meeks (2015), this response focuses on the support for program improvements and the potential benefits of edTPA, rather than the actual concerns being raised. Additional groups across the state have acknowledged that the edTPA does include components important to developing effective educators, but at the same time, they also caution against using it as the sole assessment of student teacher quality. Specifically, two key educational leadership groups within Illinois, the Council of Chicago Area Deans of Education (CCADE) and the Deans of Public Colleges of Education (IADPCE), also submitted a petition in June 2014 asking ISBE to delay the use of edTPA as a high-stakes assessment for licensure. In the petition, the groups describe the problem of edTPA:

> Its limited history and use as a consequential assessment, now mandated in Illinois' as the primary source of evidence-based impact on student learning in the capstone experience and required by Public Act 90-361, potentially could have serious negative consequences for candidates for the first several years of use without adequate and comprehensive testing, preparation, and research to ensure a fair and equitable outcome. (CCADE/ IADPCE, 2014, p.1)

Overall, ISBE responded to petitions from ICRC, CCADE, and IADPCE with letters highlighting the advantages of edTPA and the supports in place to ease the transition.

Depersonalization and corporatization of teacher education. Echoing critics nationwide (Ledwell & Oyler, 2016; Parkes & Powell, 2015; Picower & Marshall, 2017; Tuck & Gorlewski, 2016), Illinois teacher educators and scholars have maintained that edTPA further pushes forward the agenda on depersonalizing and corporatizing teacher education. This has been

voiced not only by the ICRC, CCADE, IAECTE, and IADPCE as outlined above, but also by additional teacher educators across the state.

Dover and Schultz (2016) have continually argued that teacher performance assessments "shift the evaluation of teacher candidates from experts with localized, comprehensive knowledge of candidates' classroom readiness to anonymous external scorers" (Dover & Schultz, 2016, p. 95). Critics argue that while local assessments tend to be multifaceted and take into consideration teaching context, edTPA scorers lack a connection to teacher candidates and the students who they teach. In a 2015 blog post entitled, "Smacking Down the Opposition: edTPA Advocacy in Illinois," Rick Ayers (2015) notes:

> The edTPA, like other corporatized education reforms, is part of an intensely lucrative assessment marketplace. As such, one must all question the degree to which local and national implementation campaigns are influenced by private interests. The bullying about edTPA in Illinois is both deeply troubling and unsurprising: after years of teacher blaming, even supposed educational advocates are adopting the rhetoric of assault and placing teacher candidates in the crosshairs of ill-conceived policies." (para. 15)

Indeed, edTPA opponents in Illinois argue that outsourcing the scoring of edTPA to Pearson is problematic for many reasons, including depersonalization and corporatization (Ayers, 2015; Dover & Schultz, 2016; Dover, Schultz, Smith, & Duggan, 2015a; Dover, Schultz, Smith, & Duggan, 2015b; Roosevelt University College of Education, 2015). In an open letter to ISBE, Roosevelt University College of Education faculty argue, "Student teaching assessments should be conducted by educators who are a part of the candidate's learning community" (p. 1). While the corporatization of education is not a new movement, it is a shift from long-standing teacher education practices that have valued localized knowledge and expertise, and many Illinois educators take issue with this (Ayers, 2015; Dover & Schultz, 2016; Dover, Schultz, Smith, & Duggan, 2015a; Dover, Schultz, Smith, & Duggan, 2015b).

Without a doubt, eliminating localized knowledge and ignoring school community context have been major critiques of the edTPA by many teacher educators in Illinois (Ayers, 2015; Dover & Schultz, 2016; Dover, Schultz, Smith, & Duggan, 2015a; Dover, Schultz, Smith, & Duggan, 2015b; Roosevelt University College of Education, 2015). This criticism has been perhaps best communicated by Dover, Schultz, Smith, and Duggan (2015a; 2015b) from Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago, who argue that "the rise of teacher performance assessment undermines teacher preparation by marginalizing the local experts best situated to evaluate candidates' performance, transforming student teaching from an educative experience to a prematurely evaluative one" (2015b, p. 1). This concern is elevated in urban education programs, where some (Ayers, 2015; Roosevelt University College of Education, 2015) have argued that there are disproportionate adverse consequences on minority teacher candidates and low-performing schools. Dover, Schultz, Smith, and Duggan (2015b) state, "As faculty in a public, Hispanic-Serving Institution that prepares culturally and linguistically diverse candidates for careers in urban education, we are troubled by the potential for a disparate impact on our candidates" (p. 2).

Similarly, a graduate student edTPA boycott at the University of Illinois at Chicago highlighted the problematic nature of the edTPA and the potential negative consequences on urban teacher

education with these same critiques in mind. The graduate student petition suggests, "Student teaching assessments should be conducted by educators who are a part of the candidate's learning community. . . . These hired educators have no connection to the communities in which we teach and learn" (Radical Faggot, 2015). Speaking specifically to the disproportionate consequences on minority teacher candidates in low-performing schools, the petition further states, "Student teaching assessments should encourage candidates to teach in all schools, regardless of need. The edTPA discourages candidates from performing the assessment in high-need schools, where challenging classrooms may reflect poorly on the candidate's score" (Radical Faggot, 2015, para. 12). Roosevelt University faculty make the same argument (Roosevelt University College of Education, 2014, para. 9). These teacher educators have focused on how many contextual factors of classrooms, students, and schools are taken out of the picture when evaluation is shifted from local control and outsourced to Pearson.

Potential negative impact on teacher education. Teacher educators and higher education faculty have been vocal about the potential unintended consequences and concerns about how the edTPA will impact Illinois teacher candidates and their experiences in teacher education programs (Dohrer, 2016; Peters & Sondler, 2013; Vigon, 2015). One strong argument against the edTPA as an assessment is a concern that student teaching placements can affect teacher candidates' ability to complete a quality portfolio. As Dohrer (2016) points out,

> The quality of the candidate assessment can be affected by multiple factors such as the school context, support by teachers and administrators, support provided by the teacher preparation program, the amount of time the candidate can spend on the portfolio, school schedules that can disrupt lessons, unclear language of the assessment itself, and technological problems. (para. 3)

ICRC echoes these concerns in their petition: "Student teaching occurs in a wide variety of contexts which cannot always provide a consistent or supportive environment for a high-stakes assessment like the edTPA" (ICRC, 2015, p. 2.). Similarly, in the ICRC survey, one university supervisor suggested, "The edTPA does not address the very heart of education—the development and culture of caring for the students" (ICRC, n.d.-a). ICRC further suggests that completing the edTPA during student teaching can be problematic because many cooperating teachers do not have sufficient training to best support students in the logistics of completing the assessment (Illinois Coalition for edTPA Rule Change, n.d.).

Document analysis also reveals concerns about the edTPA not assessing a holistic picture of effective teaching, leaving out key components such as working with families (Dohrer, 2016) and professional responsibilities including collaboration with colleagues and communities (Ayers, 2015; Dohrer, 2016; Vigon, 2015). This sentiment is shared in the ICRC (2015) petition for rule change, noting, "It is our belief that the edTPA is not yet sufficiently developed for use as a high-stakes assessment for licensure, damaging to the purpose and goals of student teaching, and too costly to our students and institutions of higher education" (para. 1). While these Illinois educators recognize the potential positive aspects of the edTPA and are committed to preparing effective educators, they do not believe the use of the edTPA as such a consequential assessment is the ideal way to assess teacher candidates.

Revisiting the politics of policy framework (Cochran-Smith, Piazza, & Power, 2013), the varied responses to implementing the edTPA highlight how the policy is interpreted in local contexts, especially in terms of acceptance and resistance, as well as the potential unintended consequences. It is clear from our document analysis, that within Illinois, there has been acceptance and buy-in along with resistance and political advocacy simultaneously, and in many cases, at the same institutions. These differing perspectives about the edTPA implementation go beyond the performance assessment itself. The tensions surrounding the assessment are rooted in political perspectives and personal ideologies and the ongoing debate will likely continue as teacher educators grapple with how to identify, measure, and assess effective teaching and learning.

Discussion and Implications

In an effort to better understand edTPA policy implementation within Illinois, this study examined the early years of edTPA implementation in Illinois,, as reflected in public documents. Findings revealed that institutions and teacher educators responded in varied ways, some with criticism of the edTPA, while others embraced the assessment. Regardless of the varied reactions, responses, and potential benefits or drawbacks, using a teacher performance tool as a high-stakes assessment, one that determines whether an individual becomes a teacher or not, carries significant weight and should be thoughtfully considered when working with teacher candidates. The discourse around perceptions of the effectiveness of teacher education shaped the implementation of the edTPA policy, which in turn has shaped an important shift in how we prepare and assess teachers.

edTPA supporters argue that this shift is necessary in an effort to ensure that all teachers are fully qualified to increase the quality of educational opportunities for all students, while critics of the edTPA posit that the assessment devalues localized knowledge and has countless negative consequences. Yet, the full impact of the edTPA as a high-stakes assessment on teacher education programs and the future teaching force is yet to be seen. At best, the edTPA acts as a catalyst to both standardize and raise the bar for effective teacher education practices and improve the teaching force, and thus benefits teaching and learning in schools across the country. At worst, the edTPA contributes to the depersonalization and corporatization of teacher education, devalues localized knowledge of candidates and instructors, and has a negative impact on who decides to become a teacher, increasing the disparities in teacher demographics and in the highest needs schools. The reality likely lies in between these extremes.

On the one hand, the edTPA has the potential to increase teacher education rigor, raise standards for teacher quality, and be used as a reflective tool to improve the outcomes of teacher education for teacher learning, professional practice, and student learning.

Course-related readings and assignments that better prepare TCs to effectively plan lessons, engage students during instruction, and analyze student assessments could enhance curriculum and learning opportunities. Furthermore, providing edTPA-related workshops on the task components of lesson planning, instruction, and assessment, along with additional technology support, also has the potential to strengthen the teacher-preparation process, while tightly connecting to the necessary skills of an effective teacher. If the edTPA really does push the rigor of teacher preparation programs and push Illinois teacher educators to provide explicit support to

help their TCs become more developed and thoughtful about their lesson planning, lesson delivery, and assessment design and analysis, there is potential for the state's teaching force to be pedagogically stronger and more reflective. These qualities would better prepare them for the demands of teaching and would contribute to their success in positively impacting their students' learning as a beginning teacher.

On the other hand, the high-stakes nature of the assessment has been used to suggest the advancement of the privatization and corporatization of public education, essentially depersonalizing teacher education and marginalizing local experts. To be sure, mandating a passing score of a standardized test to receive teacher licensure, along with the high cost of submission and resubmission, could limit the actual number of those who become teachers. Relatedly, this may limit traditionally marginalized students (lower income, urban, and/or non-white) from licensure access. While Illinois' edTPA passing rate of 94% is relatively high after the first couple years of implementation, this could change as the cut-off score increases (from 35 to an eventual passing score of 41 in 2019). Additionally, aligning coursework and assignments to the edTPA may potentially narrow the curriculum. While it is extremely important to prepare TCs around areas of planning, instruction, and assessment, a teacher educator may feel limited because of the demands of edTPA preparation and the specificities of the edTPA commentary prompts and rubrics, and they may subsequently omit other topics many consider critical in teacher education, such as culturally responsive pedagogy, social justice, and anti-racist pedagogy. While the edTPA does require TCs to plan the learning segment with connections to students' personal, cultural, and academic backgrounds, local and national critics (Au, 2013; Dover, Schultz, Smith & Duggan, 2015a; Picower & Marshall, 2017; Tuck & Gorlewski, 2016) claim that this is not measured at a deep enough level; hence preparation focusing on this area has the potential to be limited. This may have serious repercussions on not only teacher education curriculum and instruction, but also the future teaching force, as insufficient support around culturally responsive and social justice education may affect teaching (Picower & Marshall, 2017; Tuck & Gorlewski, 2016). For example, without sufficient focus on culturally responsive teaching and multicultural education, TCs may feel unprepared for planning culturally relevant lessons that empower and engage their students, limiting the criticality of teaching many deem necessary.

In short, analysis of the data from this study suggests that—keeping these competing influences and potential consequences in mind—teacher educators need to find a balance between engaging in strategic and meaningful preparation of teacher candidates while also considering the socio-critical, cultural, and political implications of the edTPA.

The outcomes and consequences of teacher education and teacher assessment are critical as we continue to grapple with how to assess teacher education regarding teacher learning, professional practice, and student learning. It may become difficult to recognize the value of the actual assessment, and its connection to effective lesson/unit planning, engaging instruction, authentic and aligned assessment design, and overall reflective teaching practices, if the high-stakes, consequential nature of the edTPA clouds its potential contribution to quality. Beyond the supports offered to candidates, increased advocacy for both TCs and teacher education at large is required, along with a continued focus and additional study on how this high-stakes measure is impacting the quality of teacher preparation and the future teaching force. Teacher educators

need to continually be engaged in strategic and purposeful preparation of all teachers, as they are better positioned to prioritize community needs specific to the socio-critical, cultural, and political spaces in which they work.

Our analysis considers political and economic conditions, the influences of political agendas and policies, individual and collective response in local contexts, and the consequences of policy implementation on individuals, groups, and practitioners. In doing so, it is an important reminder that underlying agendas and ideologies should be considered alongside more empirical evidence and research about how the edTPA can or should be used to assess teacher candidates' readiness to teach. Otherwise, the assessment has the potential to undermine the work of teacher educators committed to providing quality teachers for America's schools. We will make little progress in understanding and improving teacher education and teaching unless we examine both the competing discourses and the consequences of policy choices in conjunction with evidence and research.

The edTPA has been welcomed by some as an assessment that increases accountability for teacher education, sets rigorous standards for teachers, and enhances the quality of the teaching profession (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2013; Wei & Pecheone, 2010); yet, the political debates surrounding the assessment continue to be increasingly prevalent as the edTPA continues to be implemented. In the first two years as a high-stakes assessment, Illinois is beginning to see some impact. These effects may be short-term, however, and will evolve and develop as we see how various programs respond to the high-stakes nature of the policy, examine and note trends on who is and who is not successfully passing the assessment, and make program changes accordingly. Moving forward, ongoing research and discourse is critical in terms of emerging trends in the edTPA implementation, especially as a growing number of states adopt it as a high-stakes assessment. Ongoing evaluation of the current edTPA policy is necessary to know if the policy is yielding the intended outcomes. While the edTPA has indeed spurred changes in teacher education programs across Illinois, the question remains if these changes will ultimately be seen as improvements.

Limitations and Future Research

While this study offers a glimpse into Illinois institutions' responses to the edTPA, documents may not necessarily reveal the whole story or what actually happened throughout the implementation process. We had access only to select public documents. A greater exposure to preparation program meeting notes, course revisions, course syllabi, and edTPA workshop agendas would have given us a more detailed examination of Illinois teacher educators' response to the edTPA and helped us understand the decisions that were made in attempting to best support teacher candidates with the edTPA. It is also important to note that document analysis does not necessarily equal implementation. These documents reveal how teacher educators and institutions have responded in writing, on websites, and in articles; obviously, unpublished responses were not included in this analysis.

Further studies should explore how institutions/programs have responded to the edTPA through varied qualitative or quantitative data collection. For example, what do the teaching practices and support for TCs look like from those resistant teacher educator voices that are heard loudly and

clearly through prolific academic literature? This could be further examined by more data collection through surveys, interviews, and/or focus groups. Interviewing program faculty and observing teacher education courses and/or edTPA workshops would better illuminate these edTPA-aligned support systems and program changes. Further research is required to explore how the edTPA is being implemented in Illinois to fully flush out implementation. As states look to other states where the edTPA is already consequential to potentially inform their own policies, it is imperative that the positive and negative consequences of the assessment are effectively researched and examined thoroughly.

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