

# Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

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## MACTE Minute - June, 2021

In the past few months a number of MACTE members have had the opportunity to discuss the edTPA with PELSB staff and with the Increase Teachers of Color subcommittee. We know that the edTPA is on your agenda today, and I would like to spend a few minutes sharing some experiences that teacher educators, and I personally, have had supporting candidates through the edTPA.

In many ways, the edTPA is a high quality assessment tool. It does an excellent job of analyzing the complexities of teaching and describing some individual components that are present in successful teaching. The content of the edTPA is solid. The things that it asks teacher candidates to think about and write about are important parts of high quality teaching.

The edTPA's intent is to set a high bar for entering the teaching profession. In Minnesota we use it to evaluate programs and to give us data that we can use to improve our programs.

Those are also laudable goals, and the data *has* been useful for learning about our programs. I personally have made a number of changes and additions to my teaching based on my students' experience with the edTPA.

So, there are many positive things about the edTPA, but despite these positives, my overall experience supporting candidates through the edTPA has been negative. This is simply because the edTPA is too much. It's too big. It's overwhelming and it ends up dominating the student teaching experience for many teacher candidates and becoming a barrier to licensure. Completing an edTPA is an enormous task that requires candidates to write between 12 and 19 single-spaced pages (average of 30 page double-spaced paper). They have to record, analyze, and edit video. And sometimes the video doesn't work or the audio doesn't work. Sometimes they have to start over when that happens. Candidates provide written or recorded samples of student language use, upload student work samples, and upload samples of feedback given to students. If the students are too young to read, the feedback needs to be verbal, which requires more video or audio files to be uploaded. And all of these files need to be uploaded in certain file formats and often compressed.

This is all occurring during what is an incredibly stressful time for teacher candidates. Candidates are putting lessons together and navigating classroom management for the first time while trying to form relationships with students and navigate the complexities of teaching in someone else's classroom. In addition, there are enormous financial stressors on many student teachers during this time.

Many candidates finish their student teaching successfully but find it incredibly difficult to finish their edTPA. The 30 pages loom before them and this becomes an enormous barrier. This is a huge problem for candidates who struggle with writing. It is an enormous barrier to candidates for whom English is not the first language, and also for those candidates who need to return to work directly after student teaching. Finishing the edTPA is a barrier for many students, and it is disproportionately a barrier for teacher candidates of color.

This week, one of my MACTE colleagues commented that it has been so nice this year to be able to help candidates during student teaching with their teaching rather than help them with their edTPAs.

Teacher Preparation programs have learned and improved from our experiences with the edTPA, but we believe our candidates and their future students would be better served by moving away from the edTPA and to a performance assessment that is smaller in scope, more manageable, and ultimately, more equitable.