

Intentional Mergers: Invitational Educational practices and high-stakes expectations

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Abstract

With the addition of the Educative Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA) as a high-stakes, consequential standardized examination for teacher licensure, the practice of training new generations of educators using principles of Invitational Education (IE) Theory when making andragogic decisions arrives at an intersection. Teacher preparation programs preparing teacher candidates using methods and philosophies known to promote success in public school classrooms must now also support candidates' development and submission of an edTPA portfolio. Documenting the utilization of IE theory, practices, and strategies the authors describe the impact upon an educator preparation process that institutes a program for success in an intentionally inviting manner.

Keywords: Invitational Theory, assessment, edTPA, teacher preparation, teacher candidates

Introduction

The availability of studies on the impact of Invitational Education (IE) theory are few in relation to teacher preparation but diverse in regard to leadership, school climate, and potential for success. From its conception as a theoretical framework, the authors recognized the potential for IE in relation to optimizing teacher preparation. While empirical research into IE theory as a concept applicable specifically to teacher preparation may be rare, Matyo-Cepero, Varvisotos and Lilienthal (2017) do make a strong argument for its inclusion in higher education as a general approach desired by teacher candidates. Brown (2016) examined the junction of IE theory and constructivist approaches which revealed that the latter may lead teacher candidates to employ more elements of intentionally inviting practices into their own teaching. Thompson (2009) asserts that teacher education is incomplete without intentionally inviting processes aimed at increasing multicultural dispositions. At the elementary level, IE theory supports improved in-service teacher practices (Kitchens and Wenta, (2007), better organizational and leadership

approaches (Steyn, 2009, Schmidt, 2007, Egley & Jones, 2005) and improved inter-relationships between teachers (Russell, 1984). Finally, when it comes to IE theory and assessment, the field needs resources. Pignatelli (2010) expounded upon problems caused by standardization and testing in education. While invitational theory did not emerge as an explicit theme, Pignatelli referenced the courage demanded of educators and moral responsibility, which implicitly supports Invitational Education theory and practices.

For the purposes of this project, the authors considered the nature of high-stakes standardized assessments, now required in teacher preparation, in relation to IE practices that could intentionally create processes for assessment preparation that candidates would view as invitational. The concept of intentionally disinventing, while malicious at its core, implies that the processes and policies resulting from such assessments intentionally result in discouragement or discrimination. The authors herein agree it is *not* the intent of high-stakes assessments such as the edTPA to hurt or harm any teacher candidate or preparation program. In fact, some may argue that the intent is to generally increase benefits to larger systems such as our public schools and the quality of teachers specifically. However, it is not fully known how the quest to satisfy a trailing indicator such as the edTPA impacts policies or processes that may upset the balance of the remaining domains: People, places, and programs.

The purpose of documenting below the IE-based approaches and practices would encourage stakeholders in higher education and specifically professors in teacher preparation programs focus on initiatives that empower teacher candidates to view assessment preparation as intentionally inviting. These documented practices address course structure, authentic projects and seminars. Each was constructed with attention to the domains and elements of IE theory, the demands of the edTPA, and the desired positive impact upon teacher education programs and its candidates.

Review of the Literature

Emerging literature on edTPA preparation practices appear somewhat limited in scope and depth. A search for empirical data on Invitational Education (IE) theory and standardized assessments revealed zero results. A search for IE theory and assessment resulted in a few articles but none related to preparing students for success with standardized assessments. A search for IE theory and teacher education resulted in 13 articles. A search for IE theory and education revealed well over 100 documents. None of these addressed assessment preparation or assessment best-practices for success. Clearly, further research in how to utilize and provide IE theory and practices to support teacher candidates in an intentionally inviting manner for success in a world demanding high-stakes standardized testing is needed. Such research would be beneficial for education preparation programs, their teacher candidates, and their own future students.

The edTPA as Required Evidence of Teacher Candidate Competency

The edTPA was developed and owned by the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE). It is administered by Pearson Education Inc. For teacher candidates seeking initial certification, the edTPA is a relatively new addition to the list of exams required by most state education departments in the United States. SCALE reports that approximately 910 educator preparation programs across 44 states use the performance assessment (SCALE, 2018). The edTPA requires the submission of an electronic portfolio comprised of several documents serving as evidence of effective educational planning, teaching, assessing, rapport, and reflecting upon student learning outcomes. Candidates digitally upload their documents and videos to the Pearson

website where trained, paid scorers evaluate the teacher candidate's portfolio using 15-18 rubrics (depending on content area) to arrive at a score that many states use to determine whether a teacher candidate qualifies for an initial teaching license or certification. Successful completion and submission of an edTPA portfolio requires an in-depth understanding of both the large number of rubrics, the commentary prompts, academic language. Expected vocabulary may be unrepresentative of local school settings. The 2018 SCALE executive report reflected a pass rate of 72% among 45,300 preservice teacher candidates that submitted an edTPA portfolio.

As a high-stakes assessment, the edTPA has posed unique challenges for teacher educators who embrace Invitational Education (IE) theory and practices. Peck, Gallucci, and Sloan (2010) suggested that prescriptive state mandates and regulations created demoralizing effects with loss to faculty autonomy. Resulting rote approaches to test preparation have traditionally received criticism in K-12 contexts as being uninviting (Egley & Jones, 2005). Significant micro-political issues include faculty members with dissenting views of the philosophy of edTPA and concerns with Pearson Education Inc as an effective operational partner (Lys et al., 2014). Finally, Ressler et al. (2017) report faculty felt encumbered by an increased workload caused by the edTPA. Teacher candidates who adopt the models they experience to successfully complete the edTPA may find teaching creativity and the implementation of higher order thinking skills inhibited (Sanholtz & Shea, 2012). An extensive study done in New York, (Clayton, 2018) found that 50% of the preservice teacher candidates' responses about the edTPA experiences were coded as subtractive and that candidates generally felt the assessment kept them from trying new teaching strategies within the classroom.

Invitational Education Theory and Practices Impacting the Potential for Student Success

As advocated by Purkey and Novak (1996, 2015), Invitational Education (IE) theory presents as a linear principle and progression that posits certain factors can and do influence human potential. The consideration for, and transformation of, these factors into effective policies, practices, and processes should be invitational and the authors maintain effective implementation is an ethical process. Democratic Ethos, Self-Concept Theory and Perceptual Tradition serve as the foundation of Invitational Theory.

While a Democratic Ethos appears self-evident, Purkey and Novak (2015) note that through IE theory and practices every person's human potential is empowered so as to govern the self and respect one's community. The perceptual tradition purports that one's perceptions of events supersede the events themselves and individuals are shaped by the unique reality of those perceptions. Finally, self-concept theory reasons that individuals hold learned beliefs and ideas about themselves, which influence how and where the individual fits in the world.

The framework of Invitational Education theory is based on five key assumptions that serve as a guide to help create and maintain an inclusive and inviting climate. These systemic assumptions include intentionality, care, optimism, respect, and trust (I-CORT). The acronym I-CORT is used to emphasize the need to be intentionally inviting. Purkey and Novak (2016), further state, "an invitation is an intentional choice someone makes and an intentional chance someone takes" (p.15). Care rises to the top of the list as the most important assumption or element because it alone allows for the meaningful presence in the lives of others, without which, an invitational disposition would be impossible. Trust allows for interdependence and the ability to respond to invitations. Respect refers primarily to its traditional definition but also includes the concepts of equality and equity. Optimism within this theory recognizes that people have unlimited potential and hope always remains motivational. Finally, intentionality, simplified, means to purposefully

act within personal and professional settings in inviting ways. This means acting so that others' potential can increase.

As systemic assumptions, I-CORT should be evident throughout a system's domains known in IE theory as the 5-Ps: People, places, policies, programs, and processes. These 5-Ps, comprise the various environments and systems in which individuals must function. Each of these domains may function in one of five ways that Purkey and Novak (1996, 2015) describe as either intentionally disinviting, unintentionally disinviting, unintentionally inviting, intentionally inviting, or what they call The Plus Factor.

edTPA Impact Upon Institutional and Program Support for Teacher Candidates

Following the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (1983), educator preparation, and educational institutions in general were blamed for students' dismal assessment results throughout the nation. Standards-based education and the accreditation movement soon followed that required educator preparation programs to produce data on effectiveness and continued improvement. Subsequently, accrediting agencies had a huge impact on programs and required evidence of acceptable teacher candidate preparation. As a high-stakes and consequential assessment, the evolution of the utilization of the Educative Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA) now impacts the teacher candidate rather than his or her education preparation program. This shift of purpose for the edTPA requires the institutions and preparation programs to expend resources to support their teacher candidates (Clark-Gareca, 2015; Davis, Mountjoy, & Palmer, 2016).

Research points to the necessity for curriculum mapping and restructuring of courses and content to effectively implement the edTPA as a model of teaching and learning rather than an assessment of diverse education practices (Clark-Gareca, 2015; Davis, Mountjoy, & Palmer, 2016). To prepare for edTPA success, programs have attempted to integrate scaffolding activities in already content-laden courses. For example, courses in lesson planning and pedagogical strategies have become introductions to the edTPA rubrics and commentary expectations (Barron, 2015). Educational technology courses now require instruction in videotaping, editing, compressing, and uploading of e-documents, which has compromised time for established program content (Barron (2015). Some programs have added technology support because many students have reported issues with video editing now bring required as part of their clinical practice experience (Paine, Beal-Alvarez, & Scheetz, 2016).

The P-12 classroom was once a place for gradual and incremental development for teacher candidates whereby significant learning experience for teacher preparation was situated in the clinical practice experience (NCATE Blue Ribbon Report, 2010). Since the edTPA has become consequential, clinical activities now focus on what is expected for edTPA success (Dover & Schultz, 2015). During the edTPA process teacher candidate support remains critical as many developing educators reported feeling overwhelmed with the tasks (Paine, Beal-Alvarez, & Scheetz, 2016) being required during the clinical teaching portion of their educator preparation programs. Due to the to the ethical limitations imposed by SCALE and Pearson in relation to providing direct help in writing edTPA commentaries, Heil and Berg (2017) discovered that teacher candidates felt unsupported during the writing of the edTPA tasks. In addition to feeling lost in the process, candidates have also reported fear associated with the edTPA (Clark-Garcia, 2015) which pointed to the need for additional scaffolding throughout the teacher preparation process requiring further curriculum revisions and provisions of ongoing workshops (Barron, 2015).

Through explicit instruction based on reading rubric prompts, educator preparation programs have found themselves in the position of incorporating structures designed to specifically address the demands of the edTPA in contrast to teaching about methods, theory, and high leverage instructional practices (Barron, 2015; Paine, Beal-Alvarez, & Scheetz, 2016). Dover and Schultz (2015) asserted that the edTPA structure and process required “teaching to the test” through practicing elements of the assessment. The demand for support throughout the edTPA process have moved beyond the university classroom and emerging through websites devoted to successful edTPA completion by providing online examples, YouTube videos, and Pinterest ideas (Dover & Schultz, 2015). This trend is transforming best educational experiences through authentic teaching and learning to consumer-driven activities (Attick & Boyles, 2016).

Adequate support in the areas of both academic language and the language of edTPA have appeared as topics of significant frustration for candidates. Notwithstanding research that questions the efficacy of teaching and measuring academic language acquisition occurring in classrooms (Krashen & Brown, 2007) the concept of academic language remains central to the edTPA. Not only does the concept of academic language reign within the assessment but candidates must receive explicit instruction and support in this area (Lim, Moseley, Son, & Seelke 2014; Davis, Mountjoy & Palmer, 2016). The priority in teaching academic language over more salient content, thereby further reducing curriculum has been questioned by Kuranishi and Oyler (2017). This edTPA emphasis results in formulaic approaches rather than creative pedagogies for deeper concepts promoting critical thinking and social justice. In addition to the need to now teach *about* academic language, education preparation programs must teach the language of the edTPA since candidates find the prompts and handbook guidelines to be confusing (Heil & Berg, 2017). As evident in the work of Kuranishi and Oyler (2017), candidates must understand a language that has transitioned to the national language of edTPA as opposed to local practices and accompanying language as recommended in the framework and principles provided by the National Center on Universal Design and Learning (2017).

While the availability of studies on the effects or use of IE specifically within teacher preparation programs remain limited, those supporting the theory (Thompson, 2009; Brown, 2016; Matyo-Cepero, Varvisotos & Lilienthal, 2017) provide grounds for investigating practices within programs licensing or certifying future educators. Given edTPA preparation has become a major element in teacher preparation programs, the authors determined to focus on applying IE theory and practices from introduction to induction. The following sections explain the process the authors used to increase invitational practices related to candidate preparation respective of the edTPA as a consequential assessment of teacher candidate proficiency.

Creating an Invitational Process for edTPA Success

States that adopted the edTPA assessment as a requirement for a teaching licensure or certification established submission processes and guidance restrictions. Process established by teacher preparation programs or organizations administering the edTPA can easily be perceived by the teacher candidate as intentionally disinviting. The authors’ purpose was to build a local internal process that represents an intentionally inviting culture. First, effective change involves a community of stakeholders ready to adopt new practices and simultaneously shift attitudes from the self to a collective understanding of the practicality and need for change (Schien, 1990; Kezar & Eckel, 2002). Ginsberg and Bernstein (2011) noted that the leader for any institutional change effort should possess a clear vision and articulate that vision to successfully lead the organization.

Faculty members must be willing to use the edTPA as the assessment model with a clear understanding of the uninviting process, and then operate on an intentionally inviting level. Lys, L'Esperance, Dobson, & Bullock (2014) recommended a distributed model of leadership that leverages the role of leader, change agents, and facilitators to influence and enact change, but a positive school culture and climate must exist (the element of optimism). Stakeholders must work collaboratively (a democratic ethos) on a framework that uses practices of invitational theory to effectively prepare candidates for the edTPA.

In the remaining section of this paper, the three promising practices: Course Structure, Authentic Projects, and Seminars, developed for effective implementation of leading indicators for success with the edTPA sought to buffer the potentially disinventing nature of the high-stakes, consequential assessments through clear, invitational supports. Based on successful implementation at a regional and national accredited institution located in the Pacific Northwest since 2015, the IE practices were considered applicable to traditional undergraduate and alternative licensing programs. A need was to include collaborative work across departments and program faculty. Thus, the authors began enacting principles of IE theory within their teacher preparation programs.

Given the edTPA focuses upon assessing candidates' proficiency for planning, teaching, and assessing student learning, the authors developed practices that would support strong teaching as required by the edTPA while embracing the elements, domains, and levels of IE theory implementation. Through the following descriptions of each practice, the reader is encouraged to recognize application of I-CORT elements or consideration for the five domains. With an understanding of testing policies typically being perceived as disinventing, the teacher preparation program now implements personal and academic supports with care, optimism, and intentionality that specifically addresses expectations within edTPA handbooks. As noted by Ginsberg and Bernstein (2011), change requires strong leadership and collaborative work across the teacher preparation program.

Course Structure

All coursework should help candidates examine expectations for the performances evaluated by edTPA in meaningful and intentional ways with multiple opportunities for candidates to demonstrate understanding of those expectations. Program courses are structured to infuse content from the handbooks and rubrics so that candidates have opportunities to progress through the edTPA handbooks in low-stress environments, thereby experiencing care, optimism, and intentionally inviting people places, and processes. Candidates are given the edTPA handbook and time to examine the contents very early in their teacher preparation program. Class time is dedicated in early courses for discussing how professors will provide clarity of the expectations throughout the duration of the edTPA process, thereby establishing trust and intentionality. Making changes in course work necessitates an examination of existing content because faculty may need to retire some topics in order to make room for more-effective components of teaching and learning directly assessed by the edTPA.

Given the belief that a democratic ethos promotes respect and community, and that learning happens socially, courses provide ample opportunity for candidates to work together. Students spend time in small groups within the courses discussing the edTPA guidebooks and analyzing the prompts; comparing them to the formative assessment principles they have already learned. This initial utilization of a professional learning community embraces the IE domain whereby people impact perceptions. Recall that Brown (2016) revealed that constructivist approaches in teacher

preparation were most likely to result in new teachers then implementing invitational elements into their future teaching. Because learning happens in community and modeling best practices for teaching allows candidates to adopt them as their own, candidates working in small groups for common purpose increase opportunities for implementing constructivist practices and the intentionality of invitational practices. For example, some edTPA prompts read as a single question, but embed several constructs that candidates must address. Within their small, professional learning groups teacher candidates can analyze the prompts and then make connections to course content and their own edTPA portfolio. As community is created, teacher candidates work together on a common task. The practice also reinforces the best-assessment principles regarding clear questioning. Simultaneously, this approach also deepens understanding of the guidebook prompts. After these activities, candidates can move into content pedagogy courses with a foundation for planning instruction and how to deliver learning, which intentionally invites comfort with the process involved with edTPA programs. The structure of these early courses then supports concepts developed in later courses.

To be intentionally inviting, programs should evaluate their courses and determine when and where to introduce planning, teaching, learning, and assessment practices emphasized by edTPA tasks. Given teaching and learning is a developmental process, content must be introduced, practiced, and mastered (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Candidates need access to edTPA handbooks earlier rather than later so that they have adequate time to review criteria and expectations while gaining confidence efficacy in their knowledge and skills. Optimistic integration of the edTPA handbook requirements with foundational, instructional and assessment courses make the tasks evaluated by the edTPA more accessible for candidates. Therefore, some programs might need to let go of some course content to work in time for instruction directly related to the edTPA. Regardless of the arrangement or mapping of their teacher preparation coursework, it is critical that course or seminar content exist as leading indicators for success as eventually evaluated by the edTPA as a trailing indicator of teacher candidate proficiency and preparation program success. Whenever faculty plans to teach content, rubric expectations, and academic language directly related to edTPA tasks, the course becomes essential and candidates should be intentionally invited to review applicable edTPA handbooks, rubrics, templates, and empowered to seek additional information or clarity on the edTPA portfolio processes. In addition, students working collaboratively feel more empowered and confident when faced with any consequential assessment. Thus, application of an I-CORT mindset throughout course structure allows teacher candidates to experience their human potential through effective people, places, policies, programs, processes.

Authentic Projects

Authentic projects, also known as signature or key assessments in less inviting accreditation terminology, are quite useful for identifying and measuring student outcomes and therefore mapping or planning program course structure. However, without additional support during edTPA seminars these may not always be helpful for completion and submission of a successful edTPA. The supportive potential of edTPA seminars will be described in the next section.

However, authentic projects that mirror the three tasks evaluated by the edTPA tasks provide opportunities to develop solid foundational pedagogical skills. Here, the authors situate the approach in the foundation of self-concept theory and make use of the projects and course work

to build the candidates' beliefs that they can confidently complete and submit a successful edTPA portfolio.

Authentic course projects should be designed to support the tasks evaluated by the edTPA with the detail and specific language used in rubrics (Miller et al., 2015), therefore, seminars remain essential and paramount. While candidates may complete a collaborative project in which they conduct research to identify learning theories, the collaboration utilizes interpersonal care and respect but does not adequately prepare them to justify their educational choices through research or theory when writing responses to related edTPA prompts. Developing effective task-based commentaries need to be part of an authentic project.

Likewise, teacher candidates may work in small groups to become proficient with the process for planning a learning segment. Yet, he or she can still struggle with integrating academic language. Additionally, when it comes to student learning, candidates may excel at finding common errors in student work and even providing excellent feedback, but the ability to create an artifact from the analysis of student learning may underdeveloped and therefore will be insufficient in relation to the expectations of the related edTPA rubric criteria. Therefore, programs must intentionally address potential ambiguity within the edTPA rubrics and create authentic projects that allow teacher candidates to generalize course assignments for successful edTPA portfolios. Thus, the teacher candidates' learning is incremental, developmental, and builds self-concept and efficacy. In short, while authentic projects or formative assessment can intentionally invite development of foundational skills, in and of themselves are not adequate preparation for documenting one's proficiency to complete the three tasks evaluated by the edTPA.

Candidates need opportunities to practice related content evaluated by the edTPA with course assignments that adopt locally developed rubrics that parallel those found in the edTPA guidebooks. When locally developed rubrics are strategically used to formatively assess the planned authentic projects. This intentionality allows teacher candidates to be optimistic about any evaluation of their developing proficiency based on assignments designed to prepare them for success. By creating an intentional process for using formative authentic projects teacher candidates increase trust in their own abilities as well as the improved perceptions of their professor's intentions to prepare them well. Teacher candidates experiencing authentic projects designed to measure proficiency related to tasks assessed by the edTPA learn to utilize academic language and become more aware of the tasks required by the subsequent edTPA. The process intentionally creates a climate filled with care, optimism, respect, and trust.

edTPA Seminars

Candidates attend seminar sessions early in their program and view these as the most important intentionally invitational process in the preparation for successful completion and submission of an edTPA portfolio. The perceptions candidates hold about their ability to succeed carries immense weight and consequence. This part of the teacher preparation program is structured to build confidence and skills in an accessible format. Candidates report that the edTPA seminars provide invaluable support during the stressful time of planning and completing an edTPA portfolio for submission. This support is readily perceived as care exhibited by the teacher preparation programs and its faculty.

The edTPA seminar sessions provide in-depth instruction on the individual tasks within the edTPA handbooks. Teacher candidates again are intentionally provided the opportunity to rely upon their small group of peers for ongoing support both during and outside the actual seminar sessions. Each session focuses on a single task evaluated by the edTPA. Candidates begin working

together to summarize the requirements of each task and then creating a checklist to use against their own work. Once the checklists are completed, teacher candidates share their work in progress and each member of the cohort then provides feedback. Feedback is discussed within the peer group and compared against the edTPA rubrics. This process is repeated for each section of each of the three tasks evaluated by the edTPA. Some groups use peer expertise for advice, mentorship, and writing units of learning when appropriate. Candidates report that the edTPA seminar sessions deepened their understanding of the expectations to exhibit planning, teaching, and assessing proficiency as well as thinking about student engagement. Moreover, critical instruction occurred during the edTPA seminar sessions as prompted by teacher candidate questions, inquiries, and insights.

The edTPA seminars embraced all five domains of Invitational Education (IE) theory. Specifically, as teacher preparation policy, seminars are required of all teacher candidates and embedded within coursework so that they become defensible and consistent for everyone. Crucially edTPA seminar sessions are facilitated by regular faculty who know the students, thereby trust is inherent but also obvious. Embracing the democratic ethos, while collaborative activities are part of the process teacher candidates have choice of where to focus some of their time. The edTPA seminar program is designed as an interactive and engaging time to build confidence and self-concept. As a place established to promote success, the climate exhibits an I-CORT mind set so teacher candidates feel welcomed, relaxed and capable. This strategic practice promotes candidates' understanding while helping them to make connections for collegial analysis and feedback; improving their interpretations with quantitative and qualitative evidence; increasing their critical thinking about instruction; and developing authentic conversations about teaching and learning. Regardless of edTPA requirements, this develops effective, self-reflective educators.

During each edTPA seminar session, teacher candidates work in triads to support each other and to analyze each other's work against the edTPA rubrics that guide their portfolio development and commentaries. Faculty are present to answer specific questions about the prompts, but often act as a guide to assist them to find answers within their designated edTPA handbook. Teacher candidates serve as mentors to each other thus solidifying the professional learning community and sense of belonging through common goals. The triad's true success is evident by deep professional relationships that were developed and the collegial conversations that continue long after successful completion of the edTPA process and graduation. Graduated teacher candidates have commented that they learned more from the professional learning community activities intentionally provided during the edTPA seminars involving teaching and learning as related to the tasks assessed by the edTPA than through any other teacher preparation activity.

Discussion of Findings

Teacher candidates reported that the IE-based model of edTPA seminars and small group collaboration made a significant difference for them in terms of understanding the requirements and making sure all elements of the rubric-assessed tasks were addressed in their edTPA commentaries. As intentionally inviting educators, the authors believe optimizing human potential is our mission. Data revealed that our teacher candidates scored an average well above the minimum requirement for proficiency as evaluated by edTPA scores. The edTPA seminars proved essential to candidate success by providing the 5-Ps and elements of I-CORT. The authors will build upon successes and continue to make improvements to its teacher preparation program

through ongoing monitoring of course structures, utilization of authentic projects, and intentionally inviting edTPA seminars.

Regardless of the success experienced by the authors' teacher preparation programs implementing IE theory and practices to improve student outcomes, conversations around the use of the edTPA as a consequential measure of teacher candidate proficiency and requirement for initial licensure or certification must continue. While owning her bias, Sato (2014) made a strong case for the validity of the edTPA as a reliable evaluation of critical teaching skills. Yes, clear planning, effective delivery of instruction, and reliable assessment of student learning represent the core competencies that should be exhibited by licensed or certified teachers. The authors merely question the prudence, validity, and ethics of any single consequential assessment. Reliance upon a high-stakes, consequential, and commercialized product at the expense and exclusion of educator preparation programs reduces the innovation and choice that historically created better practices for teaching and evaluating teacher candidate skills and dispositions. The ability of its teacher candidates to successfully plan, effectively teach, and reliably assess should always be the hallmark of excellent teacher preparation programs. Unfortunately, in a diverse and expansive discipline accepting and succumbing to the edTPA as a consequential measure of teacher proficiency, educator preparation programs may run the risk of minimization and homogenization rather than elevating the profession through variety, innovation, and a focus on local need.

Finally, given the absence of empirical data related to higher education programs, high-stakes assessment, and the impact of Invitational Education (IE) theory and practices, the authors encourage further research in these interdependent areas. As teacher educators who embraced IE theory, a comparatively minimal amount of effort to intentionally invite positive changes produced great gains. It is easy to wonder about courses in other disciplines that rely upon traditional instructional methods too common in higher education. Research and investigation of those pioneers bringing IE theory and practices into their courses, regardless of modality, would serve to bolster the existing body of literature.

Conclusions

To conclude, the authors have presented an IE-based model of educator preparation believed to enhance the preparation and educational experiences of teacher candidates that will need to satisfy the requirements for proficiency as evaluated by the edTPA. Intentionally designed edTPA seminars, authentic projects, and curriculum mapped course structures merged IE theory and practices with the need to experience success with the consequential edTPA. Using I-CORT and examining its 5Ps allowed reflection of current programming, analysis of its policies and processes, and ongoing conversations with its people to ensure it was a place always seeking continuous improvement. This allowed an honest evaluation of any personal philosophy or approach that failed to align with current need for the educator preparation program and its teacher candidates.

Considerations for Future Practice

Given every educator preparation program and its teacher candidates are unique in demographics and context, such an endeavor needs the systemic structure inherent in IE theory. Invitational Education theory put into practice will encourage interested stakeholders to examine its places, policies, programs, processes, and themselves to determine where I-CORT is deficient. Current and future teacher candidates in the pursuit of their human potential deserve our desire for continuous improvement.

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