



Spring 2016

University of Illinois College of Education | School and Community Experiences  
<http://education.illinois.edu/sce>

Early Childhood Education

## Common Questions from Cooperating Teachers:

- What is edTPA?
- What is required of me when my student teacher completes the edTPA?
- What kind of support can I give my student teacher?
- What can I expect during the semester?

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## What is edTPA?

edTPA is a student centered multiple measure assessment of teaching. It is intended to be used as a summative assessment given at the end of an educator preparation program for teacher licensure or certification and to support state and national program accreditation. Essentially, it is designed to answer the question, “Is a new teacher ready for the job?” edTPA is part of a national effort to establish a high bar for entry into the teaching profession, and it is modeled after the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. It was developed by members

of the profession to assess, inform, and support the profession.

edTPA has grown out of the knowledge and expertise of educational researchers and practitioners, and can contribute to the furthering of professional knowledge and improved practice. The edTPA encourages student-centered thinking and instruction. The whole focus of teaching is moved from the traditional understanding of “delivering content” to the learner-centered focus of “impacting student learning. edTPA tasks require candidates to demonstrate and reflect on how their planning, teaching, and as-

essment practices draw upon and affect the learning of the students in their classroom. edTPA tasks require candidates to submit a variety of artifacts and evidence that, taken together, create a well-rounded representation of their teaching. As of July 1, 2013, teacher preparation programs throughout the state were required to begin phasing in use of the edTPA. Beginning on September 1, 2015, all candidates in teacher preparation programs will be required to complete the edTPA as a condition of licensure.

## What does edTPA assess?

The edTPA assesses the components of effective teaching, including knowledge of content and subject-specific pedagogy and knowledge of students. It assesses the ability to plan intellectually challenging tasks, differentiate for students’ needs, assess student learning, and provide feedback.

It also assesses a candidate’s ability to reflect on his/her teaching, justify teaching moves, and analyze the impact of teaching on student learning. It assesses how ready a candidate is to enter the classroom. The edTPA process is an educative process. Not only can candidates learn more

about teaching and student learning by completing the tasks, they can also gather useful feedback that can inform their professional development plans in years to come.

### Appropriate Candidate Support:

#### Do:

\*Continue to provide opportunities for your student teacher to practice teaching engaging, meaningful lessons.

\*Create an outline for the semester with your student teacher to help him or her accomplish each part of the edTPA over a period of time.

\*Help your student teacher obtain consent from students in the class for the video portion.

\*Offer assistance with videotaping, if needed.

\*Ask probing questions about your student teacher's draft responses without providing direct edits of the candidate's writing or specific answers to the prompts.

#### Don't:

\*Edit or offer advice or critiques on written commentaries that will be submitted for scoring.

\*Help your student teacher decide which video clips to submit

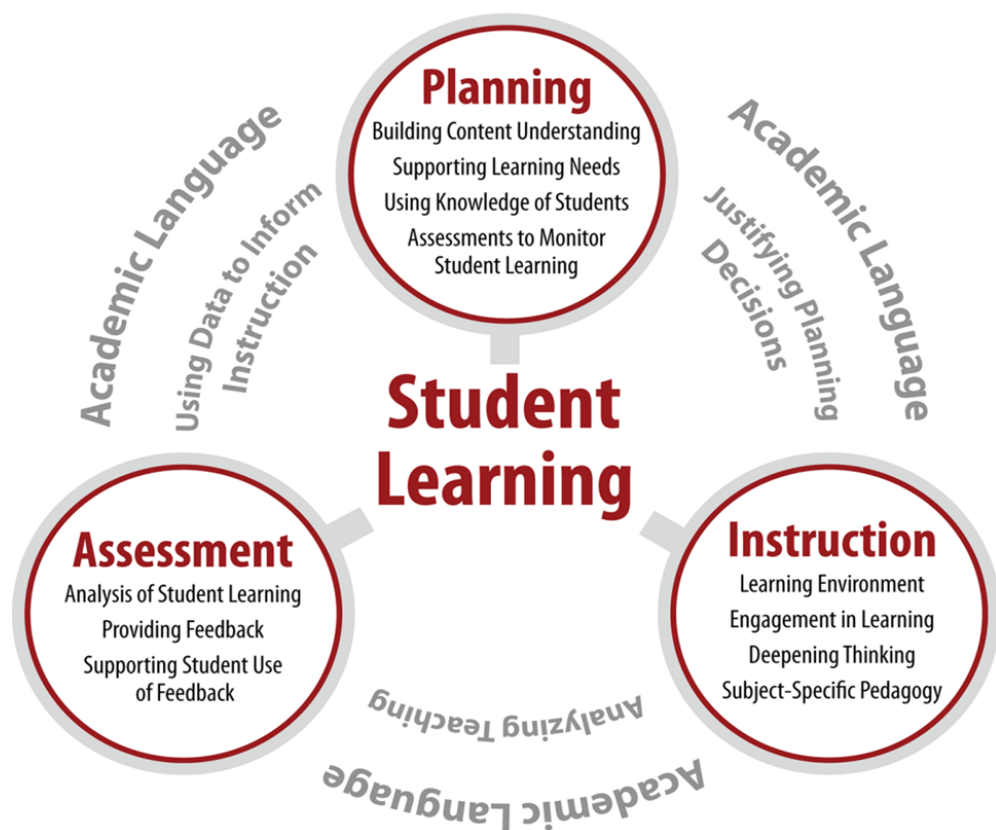
\*Upload your student teacher's edTPA components on any public access websites or social media websites.

## Task Overviews

When thinking about effective teaching, three components are in place in successful classrooms: thoughtful, student-centered plans; engaging instruction; and meaningful assessments, which then guide further planning and instruction. Students will complete tasks related to those three core areas and will then reflect on their abilities to plan, instruct and assess effectively. These tasks

will relate to their specific content area, and are outlined in content area handbooks available to students. Each subject-specific handbook guides candidates through the process of creating a portfolio of artifacts and commentaries. The handbooks are clearly organized. Headings guide candidates to think about the task, collect the required artifacts, and respond to the prompts.

Handbooks also include all of the rubrics, clear specifications for artifact and commentary formats and lengths, and a helpful, subject-specific glossary. Additionally, student will need to think about and discuss academic language, which takes candidates beyond content-area vocabulary and makes language demands obvious to the students, so they can succeed in the lesson.



## Task 1: Planning

### What is required of student teachers:

The planning task documents **intended** teaching and attends to how candidates use their knowledge of students and knowledge of content to design appropriate lessons. Candidates must consider and describe what their students bring to the classroom-- including prior academic learning; lived experiences; and personal, cultural, and community assets-- and

explain how they use that knowledge to plan effective lessons. Candidates then justify their planning based on their knowledge of the context and their knowledge of their students. As part of the edTPA, they submit lesson plans for 3-5 consecutive lessons (referred to as a learning segment), along with relevant instructional materials, such as assignments and handouts.

### How you can help:

Hold conversations with your student teacher about the coming week, as well as long-range plans for the entire semester. Share planning rationales and decision making with your student teacher. Help him or her understand why you use the methods, materials and grouping you do, and how it benefits your students. Be open to new ideas your student teacher might share. Ask him or her to create les-

son plans anytime he or she teaches, and ask deep, probing questions about the plans. Have your student teacher explain why they are teaching a lesson in a certain way. Encourage your student teacher to think deeply about how to engage all learners and differentiate instruction to meet student needs.

## Task 2: Instruction

### What is required of student teachers:

The instruction task documents **enacted** teaching and examines elements such as the learning environment, student engagement, and pedagogical choices. This task involves filming and uploading 1-2 unedited clips of classroom instruction. Prompts in this section ask candidates to

discuss how they create a positive learning environment and engage students in learning. They also reflect on what they would change about their instruction and justify their responses with evidence from the videos.

### How you can help:

Help your student obtain active consent from parents for their child's participation. Allow your student teacher to conduct a few practice videos before taping the edTPA lessons. If needed, offer to help your student teacher with the videotaping of the lesson. Throughout the semester,

after each lesson your student teacher directs, ask him or her to critically reflect on the experience and think about what he or she might change for future lesson.

## Task 3: Assessment

### What is required of student teachers:

The assessment task documents the **impact** of teaching on student learning by requiring an analysis of student learning and examination of feedback provided by the candidates for his/her students. Candidates must select one assessment from the learning segment, submit the evaluation criteria for that assessment,

and analyze whole-class and individual student learning. Artifacts include a summary of patterns in whole class learning, samples of work from three students, and the feedback given to these students. The commentaries include an explanation of how the assessment data will inform next steps for instruction, both for the class and for the individuals.

### How you can help:

Expose your student teacher to the different forms of assessment you use, and the different types of feedback you give students. Encourage your student teacher to develop meaningful assessments and evaluation criteria related to the lessons he or she teaches.

## **School and Community Experiences**

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### Important Early Childhood edTPA Dates

The following dates are meant to offer a guideline toward completion.

January: Discuss long-range semester plan, complete Context for Learning

Early March: Complete lesson plans for edTPA Learning Segment and Planning Commentary (Task 1)

Early April: Teach, record and complete Instruction Commentary (Task 2); Complete Assessment Commentary (Task 3)

Mid- to-Late- April: Submit edTPA

All materials were gathered from information found on the AACTE edTPA website.

<http://edtpa.aacte.org/>

Dear Cooperating Teacher,

Thank you for all you do for our candidates. The field of education is continually changing and improving to meet the diverse needs of the many students in your classroom. Sometimes it is hard to keep up. As the State of Illinois implements a new requirement for teachers to earn licensure, we thought we might be able to summarize this new assessment and clarify exactly what is expected of you as a partner in this experience.

The edTPA is a performance-based assessment that will ultimately help us determine if teaching candidates are ready to handle the demands of the teaching profession, which you know first-hand are many. The main concern we hear from everyone involved is, "How much more will this require of our cooperating personnel?" Thankfully, not much more will be required. In order for students to be successful in this assessment, they need to be in classrooms where certain activities are taking place: planning in advance; meaningful, differentiated instruction; and assessments that drive instruction. More than likely, this is happening in your classroom! Because this is already taking place, it will be easy for candidates to have a strong understanding of effective teaching that they will then carry into their edTPA portfolio through their own teaching experiences.

As a cooperating teacher, you know that regular planning time and collaboration are essential to the success of your student teacher. This still remains essential. Your probing questions and meaningful dialogue will allow your student teacher to grow in his or her understanding of the world of education. Not only does this help them with edTPA preparation, but it also helps them in their quest to become a professional educator.

So, as you begin this new semester, please know how much we appreciate you and all you do, not only for our candidates, but also for the children who have the pleasure of being part of your class. Thank you.