

# WHAT WE'VE LEARNED: IMPLEMENTING A STANDARDIZED PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT DURING CLINICAL TEACHING

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## Abstract

*From 2016 - 2019, candidates in Trinity University's Master of Arts in Teaching program completed the Praxis Performance Assessment for Teachers (PPAT), as one requirement for successful program completion. In doing so, faculty learned important lessons about implementing performance assessment during clinical teaching. Unlike traditional measures, standardized performance assessments purport to predict teacher effectiveness while supporting the candidate and institutional learning. This can happen only if the process does not negate the product. Keys include identifying, communicating, and educating stakeholders; redefining roles; integrating coursework and clinical teaching; realigning program curriculum; scaffolding experiences for learning early and often; and supporting candidates and cooperating/mentor teachers.*

*Keywords:* clinical teaching, standardized performance assessment, teacher effectiveness

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Educator preparation programs are being held increasingly accountable for the quality of the teachers they produce. This follows a growing trend in higher education challenging assumptions around return on investment and pointing out common mismatches between graduates' knowledge and skills and employers' needs (Dusst & Winthrop, 2019). Like never before, teacher education must justify its value and relevance in an environment that has shifted the focus from inputs and processes to outcome measures (Cochrane-Smith, Piazza, & Power, 2013). Searching for ways to ensure that beginning teachers will be effective in the classroom and establishing evidence that formal preservice education contributes to this effectiveness is critical. As a profession, we know preparation matters, but we have struggled to provide strong evidence of program impact on teacher quality that makes a difference in student learning (Goldhaber, 2019).

Most measures of teacher effectiveness are only loosely tied to actual classroom teaching (Crowe, 2010; Mitchell, Robinson, Plake, & Knowles, 2001). In teacher education, measures of basic skills, content knowledge, and pedagogy have been used in combination with degrees and content hours to evaluate what teachers know. Such measures are often linked to definitions of teacher quality (NCLB, 2001). The problem is that while traditional assessments identify what teachers *know*, they do a poor job of measuring what they can *do* in classroom settings. Darling-Hammond (2010) points out that "highly qualified" does not equal "highly effective" when it comes to teachers and their impact on student learning. Moreover, Peck, Singer-Gabella, Sloan, and Lin (2014) argue that relying on traditional and local measures of unknown reliability and validity is in effect "driving blind," leaving programs without outcome measures to predict teacher effectiveness and guide program improvement. The development of performance assessments that evaluate candidates' readiness to teach purport to fill this gap and move the profession toward valid measures of teacher effectiveness.

Standardized teacher performance assessments, such as the Educative Teaching Performance Assessment (Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity, 2013) or edTPA, and Praxis Performance Assessment for Teachers (Educational Testing Service, 2016) or PPAT, require candidates to complete a series of tasks and reflections around planning, instruction,

and assessment that include unedited video of classroom teaching (Table 1). Portfolios are scored externally by trained raters. Unlike traditional assessments, such measures are concrete and contextualized, more closely representing conditions experienced during inservice teaching. Proponents suggest that performance assessments be one of multiple measures used to evaluate beginning teachers' readiness to teach (Cantrell & Kane, 2013). Data generated can create strong feedback systems, informing program improvement. Darling-Hammond (2010) suggests that "when assessments both predict teacher effectiveness and support individual and institutional learning, they can help to create an engine for stimulating greater teacher effectiveness in the system as a whole" (p. 21).

**Table 1****edTPA and PPAT Task Comparison**

<b>edTPA (Pearson)</b>	<b>PPAT (ETS)</b>
Task 1: Planning for Instruction and Assessment	Task 1: Knowledge of Students and the Learning Environment (internally scored)
Task 2: Instructing and Engaging Students in Learning (includes teaching video)	Task 2: Assessment and Data Collection to Measure and Inform Student Learning
	Task 3: Designing Instruction for Student Learning
Task 3: Assessing Student Learning	Task 4: Implementing and Analyzing Instruction to Promote Student Learning (includes a teaching video)

From 2019-21, the Texas Education Agency is piloting edTPA as a possible alternative to the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities traditional licensure assessment. The move has invoked heated discussion throughout the state around questions of instrument validity, program impact, and candidate cost. To inform the conversation, this paper shares what one Texas institution has learned about implementing a standardized teacher performance assessment (PPAT), including the value and potential pitfalls of using performance assessment during clinical teaching.

**Program Context**

The Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) at Trinity University is a post-baccalaureate program leading to initial certification in Texas. Designed as a five-year (4+1) program, the MAT utilizes a Professional Development School (PDS) model and graduates 20-25 candidates each year. As undergraduates, students complete a bachelor's degree in a content field, while taking 11-17 hours of prerequisite education courses. These include traditional

courses and field-based experiences. Students then apply to the MAT program their senior year. Once admitted, candidates are grouped into cohorts (elementary and secondary) and begin each July with six hours of coursework. In fall, candidates are paired with a master mentor teacher at an urban PDS and spend four days a week in clinical placements, with one day at the university for courses. In spring, candidates spend five days a week in clinical placements, with two evening courses at the university. Candidates participate in a full week of August inservice, as well as experiences such as out-of-state student field trips, attendance at professional conferences, and professional development related to specific PDS initiatives.

Several aspects of program design are supportive of performance-based assessment, including year-long clinical teaching, PDS partnerships, and faculty who teach graduate courses and concurrently serve as field supervisors. These conditions promote coherence and the integration of candidates' knowledge and skills across the program. Courses are

connected with one another and with culminating field experiences; similarly, faculty, PDS coordinators, and mentor teachers collaborate around curriculum and clinical teaching.

Trinity University is one of seven programs included in a recent study of high-quality teacher preparation. Therein, Darling-Hammond and Oakes (2019) identified performance assessment as one of four practices that prepare candidates for deeper learning and echo research findings around effective teaching:

- A coherent vision and set of integrated experiences,
- Modeling of effective practices that provide concrete examples and tools for candidates,
- Strong clinical experiences, and
- Performance assessments. (p. 324)

In 2015, Trinity University piloted and later adopted the Praxis Performance Assessment for Teachers (PPAT), an evidence-based performance assessment of beginning teachers’ readiness to teach. The move from an internal teacher work sample to an externally-evaluated measure was partially in response to new CAEP assessment requirements. We also valued the opportunity to participate at the pilot level of instrument development with Educational Testing Service (ETS). In 2016, the MAT program began requiring candidates to pass PPAT, using the nationally recommended cut score of 40. This became one of several criteria for MAT program completion. Grant funding was secured to cover the candidates’ cost of the assessment.

PPAT, developed by ETS in 2015, is similar to edTPA; however, it has two substantive differences that made it a good fit for the MAT program (Table 2). Similar to the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS), PPAT consists of one universal rubric rather than 28 subject-specific rubrics. MAT faculty are generalists rather than specialists, who work with small numbers of candidates in diverse teaching fields. In this context, the use of multiple rubrics can be challenging. Scoring along with the timing of task submissions also differs. edTPA’s three tasks are weighted equally and submitted concurrently; PPAT’s final task (Task 4) comprises 50 percent of the overall score, with tasks submitted at varying intervals. This permits candidates to receive scores on earlier tasks before submitting the final task, allowing for growth-over-time. One debate regarding teacher performance measures is whether they can be, as many suggest, both a formative tool for learning *and* a summative assessment of candidate readiness (Paugh, Wendell, Power, & Gilbert, 2017; Reagan et al, 2016). If so, the structure of PPAT may lend itself to this assumption to a greater degree than edTPA.

**Table 2**

**edTPA and PPAT Scoring and Rubric Comparisons**

	<b>edTPA (Pearson)</b>	<b>PPAT (ETS)</b>
<b>Scoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All tasks equal weight</li> <li>- Rolling submission dates</li> <li>- All 3 tasks scored at one time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Task 4 is weighted double (allows for growth)</li> <li>- Task-specific submission dates</li> <li>- Tasks 1, 2 &amp; 3 due first with scores received before Task 4 is due (allows for feedback)</li> </ul>
<b>Rubrics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 28 content-specific handbooks/rubrics</li> <li>- Content-specific &amp; general academic vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 rubric (similar to T-TESS)</li> <li>- General academic vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2-3 focus students in one class</li> <li>- 3-5 days of continuous learning</li> <li>- Teaching video (2 clips of up to 10 minutes each - unedited)</li> <li>- Authentic artifacts - planning, instruction, and assessment</li> <li>- Analysis of student learning for feedback and next steps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 focus students in one class</li> <li>- Tasks do not have to be from the same unit/lessons</li> <li>- Teaching video (1 15-minute clip or 3, 5-minute clips - unedited)</li> <li>- Authentic artifacts - planning, instruction, and assessment</li> <li>- Analysis of student learning for feedback and next steps</li> </ul>

### **Implementing Performance Assessment**

When shifting to any standardized performance assessment, stakeholders must be identified and brought into the implementation process. At minimum, these include district personnel, school administrators, mentor/cooperating teachers, field supervisors, university faculty, candidates, and P-12 students. All need to understand the rationale for the change and how it may impact the broader school mission and individuals' roles. It is critical to thoughtfully include stakeholders from the beginning, proactively involving them in the planning process, rather than reactively addressing questions and concerns. Although unexpected situations always occur, intentional planning and communication builds trust, prevents confusion, and minimizes stress around programmatic shifts.

### **Informing District and School Leadership**

We began by hosting meetings with district and campus administrators to explain the rationale behind the use of performance assessment and what it would mean for the campus, teachers, students, and parents. Positively reiterating that adopting a standardized performance assessment for teacher certification more closely measures what we expect candidates to be able to do once they enter the classroom while helping to professionalize the field of teaching, was a consistent message in these meetings. While sharing research on teacher effectiveness and student achievement, we also emphasized how the PPAT process can help inservice teachers deeply examine and articulate their own practice. This opened opportunities for sharing at campus faculty meetings, advisory councils, and with campus improvement committees, inviting Q&A while soliciting feedback and suggestions around implementation. For example, discussion included initial planning to appropriately space tasks across the program, considering district and schools' scope and sequence and benchmark/testing windows, as well as setting deadlines early enough to allow for mishaps and unforeseen circumstances (e.g., video recording failures, focus student absenteeism, candidate illness). Throughout the process, we committed to developing and providing ongoing training and support for cooperating/mentor teachers and, as always, to listen to their voices regarding the impact on the candidate and P-12 students.

Before the academic year began, administrators from two districts collaborated with the university to develop an approved parent permission form for videotaping that included how materials would be collected, stored, and shared (English & Spanish). We included an optional cover letter with the permission form, cosigned by the principal and field supervisor, to provide parents with context and legitimacy for use of student data (Figure 1).

**Figure 1**  
**Sample Cover Letter for Permission Form**

Date

Dear ISA Family,

The International School of the Americas has had a long-term relationship with Trinity University. Graduate students studying to be teachers complete internships in our school. Ms. TEACHER CANDIDATE is an intern working with Mr. MENTOR TEACHER, your child's mathematics teacher; she began working with ISA in August and will continue through April.

As part of the teacher education program, interns complete a project called the Praxis Performance Assessment for Teachers or PPAT (<https://www.ets.org/ppa/test-takers>). PPAT requires beginning teachers to plan, teach, and assess lessons to ensure student learning. We are writing to request your permission to allow Ms. TEACHER CANDIDATE to use *anonymous student work samples* from her internship for the PPAT project. This will include analysis of one video clip of teaching and student work samples. *All names and other identifying information will be removed from the work samples.*

Please complete and return the attached permission form by October 1 to Ms. TEACHER CANDIDATE and Mr. MENTOR TEACHER. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either of us.

Sincerely,

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL  
 Principal  
 email

UNIVERSITY FIELD SUPERVISOR  
 Professor, Trinity University  
 email

### Training of Cooperating/Mentor Teachers

Perhaps the most important factor when implementing performance assessment is the quality of the clinical teaching or internship experience. Unlike traditional measures of assessment, performance assessments are

completed in context during clinical teaching, shifting the role of the cooperating/mentor teacher (C/MT). C/MTs must not only understand the assessment instrument but also consistently model best practices around the cycle of planning, instruction, and assessment. This cannot be overemphasized. C/MTs are not able to support what that they themselves do not espouse and practice.

The MAT program dedicates considerable time to identifying quality mentor teachers and providing training and support around myriad aspects of teacher development, such as dispositions, coaching skills, instructional practices, curriculum development, and PPAT. In so doing, we developed a handout for C/MTs that specified the objectives, timeline, and the role of the candidate and C/MT for each task (Appendix A).

It is important that C/MTs understand their role is one of *support and scaffolding*, not task completion. Many examples distinguishing between acceptable and excessive support can be explored in early trainings. We held feedback meetings with C/MTs regularly. These meetings are the perfect opportunity to emphasize that, more than ever, C/MTs are co-teacher educators with university faculty in the process of educator preparation. With trained and supported C/MTs on board, who are knowledgeable about the requirements, the process, and available for the candidate, the probability of successful demonstration of practice via the performance assessment increases (Kissau, Hart, & Algozzine, 2019).

The potential exists for deeper learning on the part of all involved. One mentor teacher reflected:

The most helpful part of the PPAT was the deep analysis of the students in the class being used for the PPAT process, as well as discussions about the school environment and culture and how that might impact learning. I also felt it was

helpful to assist and observe my intern through the process of designing, analyzing, and reflecting on data from an assessment.

Another mentor teacher shared:

The most helpful part of PPAT was helping the interns think explicitly through their lessons. The PPAT requires novices to choose a few focus students to accommodate for, and articulating accommodations I give particular students, as well as brainstorming accommodations with interns helped bring clarity for me to what we do as teachers each day.

That said, there were challenges along the way. One mentor stated:

A few of the logistics were challenging as a mentor. For example, helping the intern video tape, making sure not to be in the video at all or help the students during that time (when they often come up to you anyway). It was also challenging to make sure that we were keeping on schedule with each of the tasks of the PPAT. We made sure to meet weekly to look at what was coming up for PPAT as well as our classroom instruction for students. We wanted to make sure that PPAT didn't interfere, and with advance planning it didn't, but I can see this being difficult, and it definitely took some time.

Another shared “the most difficult aspect of PPAT has been helping my intern to manage his time and stress level around PPAT assignment due dates. Other than that, I think interns have always learned a lot by completing the process”. This final statement lends support for implementing micro-assignments that mirror the process early and often so candidates are not only familiar with the expectations but have worked through the cycle with the C/MT prior to submitting an externally scored lesson. C/MTs faced issues as well. For example, it became evident that not all C/MTs utilized pre-assessments. It may be that they were not accustomed to the practice, but we also found that, since they often had a solid feel for what students know or do not know, they felt this step could be skipped. Still, it was important to work with C/MTs to ensure space and time was created in the teaching process for pre-assessments (baseline data). Additionally, once post-assessment data were collected to demonstrate mastery of objectives, candidates needed designated time to re-teach, ensuring all students reached mastery. Given existing scope and sequences for various districts, we found some placements did not allow the full process to take place. A strong understanding of what the performance assessment required as well as what that meant for classroom pacing and implementation supported successful completion of the performance assessment.

### **New Responsibilities for Field Supervisors**

Since standardized performance assessments are embedded in clinical teaching, the model designates the field supervisor (FS) as the key point person, ensuring consistency of information and scheduling across stakeholder groups. Moving from traditional to performance assessments may, therefore, require changes in the role of FSs.

Shifting from an internal assessment of candidates' work to include a consequential, external assessment required in-depth training in the standardized performance assessment instrument (i.e., PPAT). This included workshops provided by ETS to learn rubrics, figure out timelines, and identify common candidate issues, such as responding to all parts of a prompt, understanding differences in verbs such as *describe*, *explain*, *justify*, and writing responses for the intended audience (external reviewers rather than faculty or peers knowledgeable about context and program). Some FSs became scorers for PPAT to better grasp the process and expectations. Training at the institutional level was also necessary to define how the assessment would be integrated into programmatic requirements. For example, identifying and teaching acceptable feedback was an area that required discussion and consistency across programs. There is a fine line between scaffolding and support versus editing and specific feedback (i.e., “this is unclear” vs “you need to say ‘critical thinking’ not ‘learned’ in this paragraph). Our method of feedback ultimately resulted in one of three categories: Complete, Complete with Concerns, Not Complete. Note that while FS/faculty are not allowed to critique or edit candidate work, peer feedback is not restricted and can be a rich, often untapped source of learning.

In the MAT program, faculty and PDS coordinators concurrently co-teach courses and serve as FSs. In fall when candidates teach four days a week, PPAT instruction and support largely takes place during the one day (six-hour block) of coursework at the university. In spring, candidates teach five days a week and take a two-hour evening seminar for dedicated time with program faculty. Still, we have learned that candidates need additional protected writing time to successfully complete performance assessment work. What we refer to as “writing time” includes compiling, analyzing, and reflecting on one's work, in addition to creating written responses for PPAT prompts. To do so, we take candidates out of their field placement for a full

day just before each task is due (e.g., Friday writing day for a Monday task due date). In the morning, candidates spend 3-4 hours “writing” with faculty and PDS coordinators available for just-in-time support. After lunch, candidates are grouped into peer feedback groups, where they read and critique one another's work using protocols. For FSs whose role involves primarily

observation, an instructional component may be needed. For example, FSs may work with a small cohort of candidates in the field while concurrently teaching them a seminar course, where instruction, writing, and feedback on the performance assessment tasks can take place.

Somewhat unexpectedly, FSs found themselves tasked with technology support. This included providing hardware such as recording devices (i.e., iPADS, video cameras), ensuring these were returned and charged, and training individuals to video lessons in order to capture the most relevant content, while ensuring students without permission were not recorded. This took more time than expected yet was key to successful task completion.

The consequential nature of standardized performance assessment also thrust FSs in the role of quasi-testing coordinator, with the need to understand testing timelines, their impact on candidates' recommendation for certification, and district hiring schedules and requirements. For example, standardized performance assessments need to be completed, submitted, and scored early enough to allow those not passing time to resubmit and receive results before recommendation for certification, graduation, and job fairs; at the same time, candidates needed sufficient time in clinical placements to understand the context and develop relationships with C/MTs and students before beginning work on performance assessments. The two-semester clinical teaching provided sufficient options; however, negotiating this dance while keeping the needs of various stakeholders in mind can be complex.

### **Helping Faculty Realign Program Curriculum**

Adopting a consequential performance assessment provides both the charge and the opportunity for faculty to reexamine and realign program curriculum. This includes intentionally connecting coursework and clinical practice. Research suggests that candidates are more successful on culminating performance assessments when there is opportunity to practice similar tasks throughout the duration of the teacher preparation coursework (Hildebrandt & Swanson, 2016; Kissau & Algozzine, 2017). We approached this need through a full program curriculum audit and asked ourselves the following questions:

- Where are candidates already getting the content within each task?
- Where are the gaps? Where is there overlap?
- What academic language are we using - where and why?
- How can tasks be scaffolded into the authentic work of teaching?

These questions, along with the use of varied additional resources (see Appendix B) led to a more efficient and integrated program. It is at this point where intentional and meaningful scaffolding began to take place. We identified where to systematically employ academic vocabulary (i.e., baseline data = pre-assessment, defining the difference between an approach and a strategy). Then, elements of the performance assessment were strategically woven into early courses and field experiences.

Microteaching assignments were developed to mirror smaller segments of each task in prerequisite coursework prior to the actual performance assessment. For example, we created assignments in summer courses that set the foundation for candidates to build proficiency with planning, data analysis, videotaping, teaching analysis, feedback protocols, and written reflections in a low-stakes, repetitive context. This practice, built familiarity with the process, common language, and structure of the performance assessment.

One early assignment was School and Community Exploration (Table 3). While learning about the community, school, and students, candidates simultaneously built excitement and knowledge about their upcoming placement by gathering contextual information. Purposeful scaffolding and integration created confidence once faculty introduced the performance assessment and candidates realized they already had much of the information needed to complete the first PPAT task.

**Table 3**

**School and Community Exploration**

<p><i>Community:</i> Five miles in all directions around the school  <i>District:</i> (see online information)  <i>School:</i> Name and address</p> <p>To complete this project, you may expansively sketch/draw, map, take pictures, talk to people, take notes, and research online. We encourage you to eat lunch in a local restaurant and/or talk to people in a restaurant working or eating there. Pay attention to what you see from the city bus, talk to the driver and others on the bus about the community. Ask questions such as - How would you describe this community? What do you know about the district? What is your impression of “x” school? What are the strengths? Areas for improvement?</p>	
<p><b>Community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● urban/suburban/rural</li> <li>● socioeconomic information</li> <li>● census data</li> <li>● historical aspects</li> </ul> <p>(Later for your individual entry, you will select one factor to connect to an instructional strategy and learning activity)</p>	
<p><b>District</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● enrollment</li> <li>● percent of students receiving free/reduced lunch</li> <li>● graduation rates</li> <li>● ethnicities</li> <li>● percent of students with IEPs</li> <li>● percent of students who are ELLs;</li> <li>● per-pupil expenditures</li> </ul> <p>State School Report Card Data <a href="http://tea.texas.gov">http://tea.texas.gov</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hover over “Reports/Data” at top of page</li> <li>- Under “School Performance” click on “Texas Academic Reports”</li> <li>- Click on most recent TAPR</li> <li>- Select “District” for district data</li> </ul>	
<p><b>School</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● enrollment</li> <li>● percent of students receiving free/reduced lunch</li> <li>● AYP data</li> <li>● ethnicities</li> <li>● percent of students with IEPs</li> <li>● percent of students who are ELLs</li> <li>● teacher-to-student ratio</li> <li>● average years of teaching for faculty</li> </ul> <p>State School Report Card Data <a href="http://tea.texas.gov">http://tea.texas.gov</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hover over “Reports/Data” at top of page</li> <li>- Under “School Performance” click on “Texas Academic Reports”</li> <li>- Click on most recent TAPR</li> <li>- Select “Campus” for school data</li> </ul>	

As with all assignments that are the culmination of multiple, smaller parts, it is beneficial for the learner to tease apart the major elements. One way we supported candidates in the process of writing PPAT responses was to create fillable formats that broke down the prompts and elements into the individual skills evaluated in the scoring rubrics. Some candidates struggled with reflective writing skills, and this alone can result in difficulties crafting narratives necessary for successful completion. Alternately, candidates may craft knowledgeable and descriptive responses that truly capture the spirit of the prompt, but if certain parts are excluded (overlooked), the resulting score can be substantially lower than needed to demonstrate mastery. Research suggests the use of more explicit reflective writing practice to support those candidates with less developed writing skills (Troyan & Kaplan, 2015). We found this helpful for those who were good writers but became bogged down in the quantity of the material being addressed. One candidate stated:

The most difficult aspect of the PPAT was the redundancy and general format. I felt as though the questions could get repetitive, and I would lose motivation to write answers because either the previous questions or the previous tasks asked the same thing. The PPAT prompts were not necessarily extremely difficult, but the whole system could get overwhelming.

Scaffolded response structures helped ensure that all elements were addressed carefully, individual segments were not overlooked, and candidates paid close attention to the large number of details required in the narratives.

The process of change took time, compromise, and a willingness to grow. One faculty summed it up:

The process forced us to examine what we were doing and why. We had to let go of some things we were doing to make space for PPAT and make some difficult choices. There were definitely trade-offs, but in the end, it brought us together as a team with common goals around what we want our candidates to walk away with.

### Promoting Candidate Buy-In

The main factor we discovered in getting candidate buy-in and minimizing resistance was to establish relevance. Candidates' main questions were - Why do I have to do this? How will I have time to complete this assignment and still learn to teach? Being transparent about the deliberate integration of the performance assessment, while promoting *teaching as intellectual work* (Darling-Hammond, 2000), was not a new approach, but we found the need to be explicit about Planning-Instruction-Assessment as an ongoing, circular process that requires thoughtful reflection, revision, tools, and repeated practice. In other words, the performance assessment and learning to teach are one and the same. Pointing out best practice's candidates had learned previously as we came to each PPAT task helped build this understanding and belief. One candidate stated:

The most helpful aspect of the PPAT was Task 4, where we were required to film an entire lesson for submission. I have used this video multiple times for reflection, mastery entries, and job applications. I plan on adding portions to my employment portfolio, so prospective employers can see me in action.

Another shared:

The PPAT helped me plan a purposeful assessment cycle and measure the data, and this was probably the most helpful aspect. I learned how to better align my pre-, formative, and post assessments and then use the data meaningfully.

One music candidate summed up the benefits of using performance assessment with large numbers of students:

The most helpful thing about PPAT to me was the ability to get to really know my students in my target PPAT class and thus shape my teaching style towards their particular growth. We need to be able to do this with all our students, but given I was teaching elementary music in a school with around 630 students total (the numbers of which would fluctuate consistently during my time at my elementary placement), it was a challenge to be able to effectively teach and differentiate for all the students at the same time. At the heart of PPAT, there was an urge to first know your students in your particular class (e.g., sending out a student survey and then analyzing the results in Task 1) and then specifically plan for the class in following lessons and assessments (which included differentiation with the two focus students in Tasks 2-4). Starting with my chosen 3rd-grade music classroom, this provided me with an opportunity to really know the intricacies of teaching and beginning to understand your students. So in a general sense, PPAT helped give me a basic starting point in that fundamental.

There was a deliberate focus on helping candidates connect the relevance of the performance assessment with their graduate school work as well as their practical teaching experience. Integration and scaffolding were key to candidate buy-in and their successful completion of the earlier tasks set up confidence and proficiency for the last, more heavily weighted task. Recognizing that the PPAT work was a formative assessment of their individual learning helped build their commitment for a thorough summative assessment representing their readiness for teaching. As the feedback indicates, once they trusted there would be support for the nuts and bolts (i.e., technology troubleshooting, response structures, time management) candidates were receptive to accepting that this process would be beneficial to developing aspects of their teaching practice.

## Lessons Learned

As our integration of PPAT strengthened with practice, and we sought feedback from stakeholders, we learned several threads of successful implementation which pulled through the stakeholder groups and needs:

1. *Time management topped the list* - This factor impacts every stakeholder and their role in the assessment process. It was necessary to scaffold tasks, tease apart all requirements, and set deadlines early enough to allow for unforeseen circumstances. Creating checklists for each task, while creating writing time was key.
2. *Knowledge of the performance assessment, specifically the scoring rubrics, is critical*. All stakeholders need to know the process of the assessment (videos are made, permission forms are completed, etc.). Many stakeholders need to share a clear understanding of specific terms and academic language. Candidates needed to respond to all parts of a prompt and writing responses for the correct audience. Those working with candidates needed to know these instrument specifics to support candidate success.
3. *Back-up plans are a must*. Life happens, and there must always be a Plan B (e.g., record more video than necessary).
4. *The devil is in the details*. Unexpectedly, different writing platforms provided different character counts causing frustration (Google Drive vs PPAT online system). Being able to note the differences upfront saved frustration later. Providing recording devices across PDS campuses that were available, charged, had room for storage, and were working properly required thought and troubleshooting, but ultimately allowed for ease of access and use. Adequate digital storage space became complicated at times. Little details like having candidates create a seating chart with codes for students without video permission worked wonders. Identifying these small details and creating realistic and concrete processes relieved stress related to the process.
5. *Identifying and teaching acceptable faculty and field supervisor feedback was an area that required discussion and consistency across programs*. All stakeholders needed to be on the same page regarding the differences between scaffolding and support versus editing and specific feedback.

## Conclusion

Implementing a standardized performance assessment provided opportunities for learning within and across programs and organizations (Peck, Singer-Gabella, Sloan, & Lin, 2014). To be sure, the initial year of change is challenging, as adjustments to process, timelines, and curriculum encroach on an already full schedule. There was the need for flexibility and collaboration as stakeholders evaluated how the new assessment would fit into the program meaningfully. We took on the challenge to carefully integrate the necessary tasks into the practical experience in a way that would still create formative learning opportunities for candidates. The shift to the performance assessment needed to be a value add, not simply additional work. Statements from teachers, faculty,

and candidates indicate the work on the PPAT was, indeed, a formative learning tool that allowed candidates to evaluate their practice and make improvements. The process required to complete the assessment was beneficial beyond achieving a rubric score to complete the program, but added reflective and intellectual work as candidates evaluated and took steps to increase the effectiveness of their teaching.

At Trinity, we realize that our context is unique and our insights will not transfer to every teacher preparation program; however, we see value in the prospect of defining better measures for predicting teacher effectiveness and improving the quality of teachers for all of our children. As we move from implementing the PPAT in our Teacher Education Program, we will pay close attention to the lessons learned and the resulting processes as we begin to pilot the edTPA with our next cohort.

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Appendix A

PPAT Overview for Cooperating/Mentor Teachers

Task	Description	Candidate Turns In	Mentor Support	Due Date
<b>TASK 1: KNOWLEDGE OF STUDENTS AND THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</b>	Interns identify contextual information about the school community, district, campus, classroom & specific students. They then use that information to identify possible instructional strategies and learning activities that will support students' learning.	A written commentary (approx. 7 pages), the Instructional and Support Resources Chart, one completed student interest inventory, and a document that demonstrates a method of communication with students and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- help secure permission forms -</li> <li>- help interns access &amp; review student data, including mainframe, Compass, Gradespeed, special education, ELL, &amp; cumulative folders</li> <li>- help interns identify one specific class to focus on for the PPAT</li> </ul>	September 21
<b>TASK 2: ASSESSMENT &amp; DATA COLLECTION TO MEASURE &amp; INFORM STUDENT LEARNING</b>	<p>1. Interns select or design an assessment from a lesson they plan and teach.</p> <p>2. Interns must identify data used to establish a baseline for student growth related to the lesson's learning goals. After administering the assessment, interns must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- create a graphic representation of the results for the class</li> <li>- analyze the results to determine students' progress toward the learning goals</li> <li>- evaluate the effectiveness of the data-collection process</li> <li>- describe how students were involved in analyzing their own assessment results OR helped to understand their progress toward the learning goals</li> <li>- determine the effectiveness of the modifications that they made to the assessments for their two focus students</li> <li>- explain how their data analysis will inform their future instruction</li> <li>- explain how they would modify the assessment and/or data-collection process for the future</li> </ul>	A written commentary (approx. 7 pages) and 8 artifacts (2 representative pages of the assessment (max), 2 pages of the whole class baseline data (max), 1 page of the rubric/scoring guide, 1 page of the baseline data for Student 1, 1 page of the baseline data for Student 2, 2 pages of a graphic representation of the collected data (max), 1 page of a completed assessment for Student 1, 1 page of a completed assessment for Student 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-discuss and mutually agree on the two focus students (ensuring parent consent and students' attendance)</li> <li>- help your intern identify lesson content within your scope and sequence that s/he can utilize for the task.</li> <li>- discuss the types of assessments that are appropriate for the content that can be quantitatively scored but allow the intern to create the assessment (e.g., 10-item multiple choice)</li> <li>- review and approve the assessment for use with your students</li> <li>- review and approve a pre-assessment created by your intern</li> <li>- support intern in a think-aloud discussion about how to analyze the assessment results after teaching the lesson (intern should do the talking with mentor asking only facilitating questions)</li> </ul>	November 2
<b>TASK 3: DESIGN INSTRUCTION FOR STUDENT LEARNING</b>	Interns design a lesson that addresses the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the learning theory/method used to guide their planning</li> <li>- learning goals (and explanation of how they build on content students have previously learned)</li> <li>- potential difficulties students might encounter and how to address them</li> </ul>	A written commentary (approx. 8 pages), 2 representative pages of a lesson plan that includes the use of technology (max), 1 representative page of a differentiated lesson plan for Student 1, 1 representative page of a differentiated lesson plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- practice using the video technology selected on a different class to make sure everything is working correctly</li> <li>- help your intern identify lesson content within your scope and sequence that s/he can utilize for the task.</li> </ul>	January 30

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- instructional strategies to be used to engage students (that connect to the learning goals)</li> <li>- how to group students (e.g. individual, small group, whole group) to facilitate learning</li> <li>- learning activities to implement and 1) how they address students strengths/needs; and 2) how class demographics informed design of learning activities</li> <li>- how to foster both teacher-to-student <i>and</i> student-to-student interactions</li> <li>- materials/resources used</li> <li>- technology used</li> </ul> <p>In addition to designing the whole class lesson, interns must select 2 focus students with <i>different</i> learning needs. For each student, the intern must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- describe the child’s learning strengths and challenges related to the lesson’s learning goals</li> <li>- describe how they will differentiate specific parts of the lesson to help the child meet the goals</li> <li>- determine what evidence to collect to show progress the student makes toward the goals</li> </ul> <p>After teaching the lesson, interns must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- determine to what extent the lesson facilitated student learning (citing specific evidence collected)</li> <li>- analyze how students demonstrated meaningful learning of the content</li> <li>- describe adjustments made during the lesson to better support student engagement/learning</li> <li>- analyze steps taken while teaching to foster teacher-to-student <i>and</i> student-to-student interactions</li> <li>- describe the feedback provided during the lesson to facilitate student learning and determine its impact on student learning</li> <li>- determine whether/how the two focus students achieved the learning goals</li> <li>- evaluate whether/how differentiation of the lesson helped the focus students meet the lesson goals</li> <li>- describe a detailed plan to work with the students who did not</li> </ul>	<p>for Student 2, work sample for any class member other than St. 1 or 2 (1 page), work sample from Student 1 (1 page), work sample for student 2 (1 page)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- support the intern in lesson plan development and differentiation but allow the intern to create the plan</li> <li>- review and approve the lesson plan</li> </ul>	
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	<p>meet the learning goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- describe how the analysis of the lesson will guide future planning (both for the whole class and the two focus students)</li> </ul>			
<p><b>TASK 4: IMPLEMENT &amp; ANALYZE INSTRUCTION TO PROMOTE STUDENT LEARNING</b></p>	<p>Interns design a standards-based, whole class lesson that addresses learning needs, includes instructional strategies to engage students, and incorporates assessment techniques to gauge student learning.</p> <p>While planning the lesson, interns must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- identify learning goal(s) and standards (both state <b>and</b> national) and explain how the goals are appropriate for the lesson and students' learning needs.</li> <li>- identify whole-class data used to establish a baseline to measure student growth</li> <li>- describe how students' prior knowledge <b>and</b> background information influence their planning process</li> <li>- determine how to use academic content language to advance the understanding of the concept being taught</li> <li>- determine how to engage students in critical thinking to promote student learning</li> <li>- determine how to use questioning skills to promote student learning</li> <li>- integrate reading into the content they will teach</li> <li>- describe the activity or activities that is(are) the main focus of the lesson plan (including how they anticipate <b>and</b> address student learning needs)</li> <li>- describe how to monitor student learning during the lesson</li> <li>- determine the work samples students will submit as part of your assessment of their learning (work can be created either during or after the lesson). Determine how these responses will be integrated into the lesson plan</li> </ul> <p>When designing the lesson, interns select two focus students who reflect different learning needs. They must address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- what are his/her learning strengths/challenges?</li> <li>- what data will you use to</li> </ul>	<p>A written commentary (approx. 8 pages), 2 representative pages of a lesson plan, 1 representative page of a differentiated lesson plan for Student 1, 1 representative page of a differentiated lesson plan for Student 2, work sample for any class member other than St. 1 or 2 (1 page), work sample from Student 1 (1 page), work sample for student 2 (1 page)</p> <p>Interns can either upload one 15-minute unedited video segment or three 5-minute segments (each unedited).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- videotape the lesson</li> <li>- observe the lesson and provide feedback</li> <li>- ask probing questions to help interns think about academic language, questioning, critical thinking, and reading skills (but do not identify for them)</li> </ul>	<p>March 10</p>

	<p>establish a baseline to measure the student's growth?                  - what evidence will you collect to show his/her progress toward the learning goals? [interns must collect this data and reference it in later analysis]</p> <p>The lesson must then be <b>videotaped</b>. Afterwards, interns use the video to reflect on the lesson:                  - how did the academic language you used advance students' understanding of the concept being taught?                  - how did you engage students in critical thinking to promote student learning?                  - how did you use questioning skills to promote student learning?                  - how did you integrate reading into the content you taught?                  - how did you monitor student learning while teaching the lesson?                  - how did you provide feedback to individual <b>and</b> the whole class to advance student learning?                  - how did you use verbal and nonverbal communication techniques to foster student learning?                  - what classroom management strategies did you use during the lesson?                  - in what ways did the strategies engage students and promote a positive learning environment?                  - in terms of instructional strategies, interactions with students, and classroom management strategies, what went well and what areas would you revise in the future?                  - what revisions would you make if you were to teach this lesson again?</p> <p>Then interns assess student learning:                  - to what extent did students reach the learning goals?                  - based on the baseline data and student work samples, to what extent did each of the two focus students achieve the learning goals?                  - how will your analysis of the baseline data and student work samples guide planning for future lessons?</p>			
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**Appendix B****Teaching Resources**

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