

5 edTPA tips for cooperating teachers

The [edTPA](#) is a three-part portfolio assessment that teacher candidates in 31 states and the District of Columbia will complete. Candidates submit 3-5 days of lesson plans, video clips of themselves teaching in the classroom, and samples of feedback they have given to students on assessments.

In each part of the assessment, teacher candidates are expected to reflect on their teaching practices and explain their work.

We have been involved with the edTPA for several years both as scorers and scoring supervisors. In addition, we host multiple clinical students in our classrooms each year, many of whom are working on their edTPA portfolios.

Here are five tips for [cooperating teachers](#) working with teacher candidates who are completing edTPA portfolios:

Tip #1: Learn the basics of edTPA

edTPA is most likely a different type of assessment than what you were exposed to while earning your teaching credentials.

Before you start working with teacher candidates, it's important to learn some specifics about the assessment.

Take some time to read the rubrics for your content/specialization area. There are several foci areas for teacher candidates that have not always been emphasized in education programs. For example, academic language has become a huge focus for teacher candidates.

One of the great advantages of working with a teacher candidate is learning what's current in the field of education. Take this as an opportunity to educate yourself on what student teachers are learning.

Tip #2: Explain your reasoning to teacher candidates when you teach. As an experienced teacher, you likely make several decisions every class period without even thinking about them. However, edTPA requires candidates to explain the reasoning behind their decisions. The more candidates hear you justify the choices you make in your teaching, the better idea they will have about what good reflection looks like when they themselves are teaching.

When the teacher candidate begins taking over the classroom, make sure to ask them questions during your conference time that push them to explain their reasoning. This reasoning can include analyzing things that went well, but candidates should also brainstorm what changes they could make to improve the lesson and why. Making your thinking explicit might be the best thing you can do to help your student teachers understand effective decision making.

Tip #3: Consider when teacher candidates will give lessons. When teacher candidates choose lessons for the assessment, make sure they consider the timing in the semester when they will be presenting them to the class. The student teacher needs enough time before their lesson to get comfortable in front of the room and to get to know the students in order to accurately respond to prompts provided by edTPA. They also need enough time when they are done teaching to reflect on their video and assessments given to students.

Tip #4: Help student teachers manage their time effectively

In several states, teacher candidates are required to pass edTPA in order to receive their teaching credentials. Your student teacher will need help managing their time in your classroom. In addition to creating the lesson plans, recording video, and assessing, the candidate will be writing extensive commentary responses explaining their teaching. While we want to help our teacher candidates be prepared for teaching and all the responsibilities that go along with it, you may want to consider this written assessment in your overall plans for student teachers.

Tip #5: Help teacher candidates with the technicalities of edTPA. In addition to the basic requirements of what candidates have to accomplish for edTPA, there are many additional details to consider. For example, your student teacher will need signed permission forms from parents in order to video record students for edTPA. It's also important to find a good place in the classroom to record so that you can see what students are doing and hear conversations. We recommend having a trial run in which you help teacher candidates record a lesson before the real one. This way you can help teaching candidates reflect on their teaching and make sure that there will be no technical issues on the actual day. Working with teacher candidates is both challenging and rewarding. edTPA can seem like an intimidating process to all stakeholders, but it is a great opportunity for both teacher candidates and coordinating teachers to learn and grow as educators. We hope our tips are helpful as you encourage your teacher candidates to do their best on edTPA. Enjoy the time you have working together!

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