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NAME Position Statement on the edTPA

The National Association for Multicultural Education is committed to respecting and appreciating cultural diversity, ending racism and discrimination, promoting economic justice, and developing curricula that are culturally responsible and responsive. These are manifested in teacher education programs through course syllabi, teaching practices, in the diversity of faculty and candidates, and in the assessment process of pre-service teachers. The practice of critical multicultural education cannot, by its nature, be standardized, nor can the development of teachers who will engage critical multi-cultural education in their classrooms. Therefore, NAME supports the principle that authentic assessment of pre-service teachers should be conducted by those who know teacher candidates and their work in the classroom, including cooperating teachers, supervisors and faculty, who are best able to both support and assess the developmental work of becoming a teacher. While not all of these educators will be versed in critical multiculturalism, their commitment to their students and their students' students make it more likely that they will pursue equitable, multicultural practice in evaluating their students than outside scorers for whom candidates are merely numbers. Indeed, NAME encourages schools of education to pursue initiatives that will incorporate multiculturalism throughout their programs. Further, NAME rejects any incursion of outsourced, private, corporate interests into this sensitive and critical human work, deeming it contradictory to our commitment to critical multicultural public schools that are responsive to the voices of the communities they serve, and seek to develop a socially and economically just world.

It is in this context that NAME supports the concerns of teacher educators and students with respect to the spread of high stakes teacher performance assessments that standardize and outsource teacher performance assessment. Further, NAME calls on educators and community members to investigate how the edTPA undermines critical multicultural education, and demands an end to the standardization and outsourcing of teacher candidate assessment required by this test. In taking this stance, NAME takes its lead from student teachers and faculty at the University of Massachusetts Amherst who have spoken out against the standardization and corporatization of teacher education occurring through the marketing and imposition of the Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA) under the auspices of Pearson, Inc.

Pearson, Inc. is a corporation that claims on its website to be the world's leading education company and a member of the Financial Times Groups that "provides business and financial news data, comment and analysis in print and online to the international business community." The Teacher Performance Assessment was constructed and devised by a national consortium of educators, under the leadership of faculty at Stanford University. The prototype was the Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT), which has been used in California since 2006. The TPA just completed field testing by Stanford and Pearson in 25 states, 6 of which are accelerating the adoption of the TPA for licensure endorsement.

In the summer of 2011, Stanford entered into a contract with Pearson for the distribution and scoring of the TPA. Pearson hired individuals on a contract basis to score these TPAs, offering \$75 per reviewed TPA, each of which is estimated to take 2 hours to score. The assessment includes four tasks, each with a

number of questions, including one task that requires submission of video clips of teaching lessons. These tasks are scored on a set of rubrics, leading to a numerical score. Pearson's website indicates that, while there was no charge to the students for the field test scoring, students would be charged up to \$300 dollars once the TPA is part of the student teaching assessment. The test is now being called edTPA and being promoted by Stanford Center for Assessment Learning and Equity, the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, and Pearson, Inc. through available 'usage plans.'

The test is currently being used in different states to evaluate student teacher preparedness for licensure, and/or program effectiveness. As a high stakes (gate keeping) instrument for teacher credentialing, the edTPA presents the same problems as high stakes standardized tests do for K-12 students, including the fact that standardized assessment rubrics tend to be reductive, leaving out much of the complexity necessary to evaluate teacher performance on a multicultural scale, and privileging dominant cultural norms that reproduce inequities. As an instrument scored by 'calibrated' scorers hired on a piece-work basis, the edTPA limits teaching readiness to what can (ostensibly) be assessed on these rubrics through what is essentially a writing test and brief video clips. Further, there is not compelling evidence that the edTPA is either reliable or valid. As a high stakes measure, it narrows the curriculum to what the authors consider to be the essence of good teaching. Unless future rubrics allow for alternative, multicultural, and student-teacher involvement in their development, a diversity of perspectives on teaching and learning is likely to be marginalized. While it is true that not all teacher educators preparing students for licensure are versed in the complexity of critical multicultural education practices, most have deep knowledge of their candidates and encourage candidate self-knowledge. The nuanced practices necessary for working with culturally and linguistically diverse students cannot be fully assessed by distant observers using a standard rubric. Nor are credential candidates' attributes such as kindness, promotion of social justice, the ability to think on one's feet, or to adjust teaching to the exigencies of the moment assessed or assessable by the edTPA.

NAME shares the concerns of many that public education, K-12 and teacher education, like other aspects of the public sector, are under assault by privatizing forces that commodify teachers, students, and the knowledge we build together. These attacks entail high levels of surveillance, devalue teachers, teacher educators and children, and distort the process of teaching by reducing it, ultimately, to quantitative data points. Whatever the intent of those who developed the edTPA, the outcomes of this test do just this. In fact, those who are disseminating the test across the nation quite clearly explain that a quantitative outcome is required as part of the current, hyper-accountability, national agenda.

Standardizing teacher education, and the outsourcing of teacher education assessment to Pearson, a publically traded company, are not only contrary to the values we hold most dear, but are destructive of those values. Attacks on any aspect of education, pre-K through teacher education, have rippling effects throughout the system as they contribute to a shift in the underlying purposes and possibilities of public education. In terms of the edTPA, given the likelihood that Pearson-delegated scorers will embody the norms and values of the dominant culture, and given existing evidence from schools that have adopted the edTPA that the high-stakes test takes over their programs resulting in candidates and professors "teaching to the test," these assaults are likely to include:

- Imposing a common and pre-determined curriculum on teacher education that severely limits faculty ability to enact their commitment to preparing teachers to promote critical multicultural education, social justice, and democratic citizenship.
- Privileging the teaching practices of the dominant culture by distance scorers who are asked to use reductive, standardized assessment rubrics to evaluate student writing and brief video clips.



- Reinforcement of institutional racism, classism, and white supremacy through standardization and the centralization of authority that accompanies it.
- Marginalizing the contributions of teachers, supervisors, and school administrators that are generally central to teacher development.
- Marginalizing opportunities to learn to teach through critical dialogues and feedback from others.
- Furthering the problematic “hidden curriculum” that proscribes teaching as a process of obedience to prescribed mandates rather than critical thinking and empowerment.
- Invasion of privacy of classroom students and student teachers in the sharing of video and, for student teachers, intellectual property with a private company.
- Encouragement of high-surveillance mechanisms and dehumanizing high-stakes measures as instruments of control in teaching and learning to teach.
- Further encroachment of corporate control into the intensely personal, human, humane, and democratic endeavor that is public education.
- Introducing, through the additional fee of \$300 suggested by Pearson, Inc. of another barrier to diversifying the teaching force.

While NAME respects that people of good will have been a part of the edTPA initiative, we see the efforts to create a standardized assessment and scale it up through outsourcing to a private corporation as, at best, naïve and, at worst, very dangerous. It is critical that educators at every level be aware of the dangers of standardization and of ongoing privatizing efforts and the insidious manner in which corporate profiteers enter the public commons and eventually overtake it. We cannot fool ourselves. We know that corporate interests are ultimately reducible to profit, and that education for democracy and for profit are incompatible. Further, as educators who understand that classroom teachers must be knowledgeable about and attentive to the culture, context, and lived experiences of their students, so too teacher educators must be knowledgeable about and attentive to the local, contextual, lived reality of the student teachers with whom they are working. Indeed, our commitment to the knowledge created within these culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and then shared across communities, is core to our understanding of multicultural, social justice education.

Therefore, we call on all teacher educators, pre-service teachers, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members to join with the student teachers and faculty of UMass Amherst in questioning and resisting this imposition of standardization and privatization into the work of preparing teachers. We can take specific actions to join this resistance:

Teacher educators: Claim your professional knowledge about the education of teachers, including your commitment to have critical multicultural education as the core of teacher education. Demand that student-teaching assessment reflect a critical multicultural framework, and happen within the relationships of supervision, mentoring, and coursework. Organize locally and regionally to demand the removal of corporate interests from teacher assessment.



Teachers and school administrators: Engage parents, students, and community members in conversation about the purpose of education and the complex work of teaching. Identify and reject the standardization and corporatization of teaching and learning wherever it occurs. Refuse to allow any video recording in your classrooms except for local use.

Student teachers: Demand critical multicultural, social justice education as the core of your teacher education programs and assert your right to developmental work within the context of relationships with teachers, students, faculty, and parents. Communicate with cooperating teachers, parents, and school administrators to engage their support in questioning and resisting the edTPA and Pearson.

Parents: Engage teachers, administrators, community members, and your children in conversations about the purpose and possibilities of education, of what teaching and learning can and should look like. Identify and name any corporate incursions into public education. Refuse to allow your child to be in any video recording not for local use.

Community members: Demand that children and teachers be protected from their commodification by corporate interests, and the tools of surveillance and standardization.

