As a follow-up to the webinar about appropriate candidate support, I had the following exchange with Daniel Lowe, Concordia University Chicago.

**DL:** Andrea pointed out that edTPA is a summative assessment. She also acknowledged candidates can get lost as they navigate the handbooks' immense amount of verbiage (50+ pages per handbook). She expressed concerns about peer-review via Understanding Rubric Level Progression (URLP) and responses by faculty/coordinators via probing questions may border (dependent on context of what candidate has written) on infringing SCALE's guidelines for appropriate support. Her suggestions include: i) candidates be exposed to and work through edTPA prompts and URLP throughout course work (integration and thus formative), ii) candidates use a checklist as part of the self-review process.

**Question 1. The Guidelines (within the AACTE website) document is specifically addressed to faculty, coordinators, supervisors, and cooperating teachers. Candidates are not subjected to the Guidelines. Thus, should peer-review continue as a support - given the fact that candidates will seek out each other’s help regardless in order to support each other? Personally, if SCALE avoids including candidates for the Guidelines, then is it not preferable to create a platform for peer-review with the appropriate SCALE-related tools (e.g. checklist and URLP clearly explained to the candidates)? Or is general feedback by faculty members (e.g. at NLU?) more preferable?**

**AA:** I agree. Andrea tends to key in on the point that people not ~misrepresent~ "scoring" versus "reviewing." I thoroughly agree with your perspective regarding peer review. I believe I've heard Ray say something to a similar point,that candidates will reach out to others. When it comes to peer-reviews, I've seen it be a very positive experience AND I remind them that their peers have not yet passed.

**DL:** I found peer-review to be a very powerful tool - particularly during the writing days when the candidates need an extra pair of eyes and another set of brains to clarify points and thoughts. Your reminder that they have not passed the edTPA is great!! With your permission, I will remind my candidates too - this absolves all candidates of any liability :)

**Question 2. The checklist that I created (and I believe similar to other institutions' checklist) always points the candidates back to the prompts/rubrics (e.g. Selection of Focus Students completed - YES/NO; Appropriate Support for ELL in Learning Segment - YES/NO). Does the checklist then highlight to the candidates what they have missed and need to address and thus can be seen as inappropriate support? Surely one or more of the items on the checklist will highlight to candidates what they missed as these are derived from the prompts? Should the checklist be general? How useful will a general checklist be?**

**AA:** I think we talked ourselves into a clarification that when your support directs them back to the prompts/rubrics, you are in safe territory, as opposed to reflecting on drafts they have submitted. Would you agree that we came to that? As soon as the webinar is archived, I'll try to review on that point.

**DL:** My question here arose because of Andrea's example on candidate missing addressing ELL in the prompt. All the points on my checklist are derived from the prompts and rubrics - and I do my best to breakdown the prompts into the various parts so that the list is user-friendly. Thus, I will continue to use the checklist that I have created and fine-tune it as we move ahead.

**Question 3: Andrea stated that verbal feedback via questions should not point out what candidates have missed in their responses to the prompts (example she gave "Did you address ELL in your segment?" is too telling if candidate did not address ELL or miss addressing an aspect of the prompt). In light of the immense verbiage in each of the handbook - shouldn't any checklist created help the candidates identify what they have missed when they do self or peer-review? Isn't edTPA's key purpose to assess candidates' capacities in planning, teaching, and assessing? Surely it is not designed to test candidates' capacity to wade through heavy language. A candidate may have addressed fully the ELL in his/her learning segment but miss addressing the ELL prompt. Should the support given - without direct instruction - highlight what the candidate missed?**

**AA:** I'm probably about to channel Andrea with part of my response. As a summative assessment, edTPA is not intended to prepare candidates, rather to assess their capacity as a result of preparation. Now back to being the me you're getting to know . . . As I think my way through the appropriateness of organizers and checklists, they are general, i.e., not formulated to any specific candidate response. They are comprehensive to the prompts/rubrics and we give them to all of our candidates so they can check their work. An isolated question, such as the one about support for ELL's is specific support based on review of what the candidate has already put together, strikes me as different. This is another great instance of where the line should be perfectly clear but as you get closer to it, it's blurred. Please respond on this point if you see it differently.

**DL:** I agree that edTPA is an assessment and not preparation and with your observations concerning the checklists.? The line does get blurred, especially when I see that the lesson plans and videos have ELL-support in place yet the responses to the prompt (amidst the verbiage) miss this point. To me, this is a genuine oversight and thus a question (e.g. What about your ELL-support?) is surely justified? If a candidate ignores the question, then he or she does so at his or her peril! Should genuine oversight not be given a second-chance?

**AA:** In our approach with candidates we try to head this off in advance. We point out that the handbook is a dense and complex technical manual. They are cautioned not to try to start at page one and just read through like a magazine. Instead, we break it down with them and define the function of each aspect (task overview, rubrics, commentary prompts—with support for marking them up to avoid oversight, evidence chart with logistical info, and the rest is step-by-step what you need to think about and do).



**Question 4. The URLP was released by SCALE on Sep 5 2015 to further assist faculty/coordinators/supervisors to understand how rubrics are scored. Andrea noted that it should not be used by candidates or faculty to assess the level of the responses as only scorers are trained to do so. She also discourage the use of URLP by candidates to revise their responses in order to score at higher levels. Then why release the URLPs along with the rubrics if these will mis-lead the candidates and faculty who are not scorers? Furthermore, how do candidates improve on their responses if the URLPs do not serve as clear guidelines? If SCALE wants to release these documents, why not make them user-friendly? Otherwise, should SCALE refrain from releasing these documents, since edTPA is summative?**

**AA:** I would start with see #1. And the next to last sentence in #3. If I get really particular in my thinking, I would explain it like this: they released the URLP document to assist with the interpretation of official scores, on the assumption that the scorers are performing with the acceptable levels of calibration and therefore reliably. With a reliable score profile on the table, and preferably the candidate's portfolio, we can sit down to the educative promise, look at the sample, look at the score, look at the URLP to see what's missing or what carried it over the line. In practice however, now we have access to it on the formative end of candidate preparation and we want to use it to its fullest extent. I know our coordinator, Elisa Palmer, much prefers the URLP document to orient new faculty to edTPA, and we drew upon it heavily in our edTPA prep course. I think this is one where we are thinking on our feet and should be a continued point of discussion as our supports evolve.

**DL:** Your example of how URLP is used for new faculty at ISU is very helpful. I will explore and see if it can be integrated into our current Methods and Assessment courses and also to help faculty further understand the edTPA rubrics.

If you can share how Elisa uses it with new faculty, it will be very helpful for me.

**Question 5. Finally, wouldn't Andrea's encouragement to provide for formative experiences with edTPA prompts and rubrics/URLPs via course work (i.e. integration) result in devoting a large portion of time (especially in methods and assessment classes) to work through edTPA requirements and thus "teaching to the test"? If the purpose of edTPA is summative (also consequential) and SCALE is overly concerned about "appropriate feedback" - then wouldn't colleges want to prepare their candidates sufficiently prior to edTPA and thus re-design curriculum with edTPA as the central focus?**

**AA:** Andrea is consistent with her message that edTPA should not colonize the curriculum and I take her at her word on that. I think she would say our role is "to provide formative experiences with planning, instruction, and assessment focused on student learning, strengths, needs, and assets, and give candidates feedback on that performance." At ISU our School of Teaching and Learning holds its nose when they hear me say "edTPA," but they have used its status as the rallying point to make sure their program will prepare candidates to be successful. They have turned to using Danielson's Framework for Teaching, which complements edTPA very well and keeps them from uttering those syllables. So they use performance rubrics, work with candidates to identify pertinent evidence, engage students in learning worthwhile content, etc. without referring to edTPA rubrics or prompts. They have explicitly added considerations of academic language demands as that's not part of FfT.

**DL:** While my current colleagues are not adverse to edTPA, I cannot say the same for future faculty members! Thus, using Danielson or other framework that points candidates to the same direction and prepare them for edTPA will continue to be a practice here at CUC. In fact, even as I revise the MAT Elementary Program, I am having the principles of edTPA crafted into the various objectives for different courses.

**AA:** I think we're all learning to live in a reality that no one "out there" has the set way of doing things. It's just been a looooonnng time since we've faced a major adaptation in the way we do business.

**DL:** Yes, edTPA has changed the ways things are being done in Il. My take on edTPA - having worked for Singapore's Education Ministry in reviewing/designing curriculum and standards and training teachers - is that it is a useful assessment tool that will verify if indeed the colleges or schools of education have lived up to their mission or vision to produce excellent teachers for the classrooms of tomorrow. I look forward to continue collaborating with you as edTPA unfolds here.