

9-16-2016

# Supporting Candidates in High Needs Settings

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## Recommended Citation

Lorch, Janet, "Supporting Candidates in High Needs Settings" (2016). *Faculty Publications*. 79.  
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# Supporting Candidates in High Needs Settings

Presented at IL-TPAC State Conference

Janet Lorch

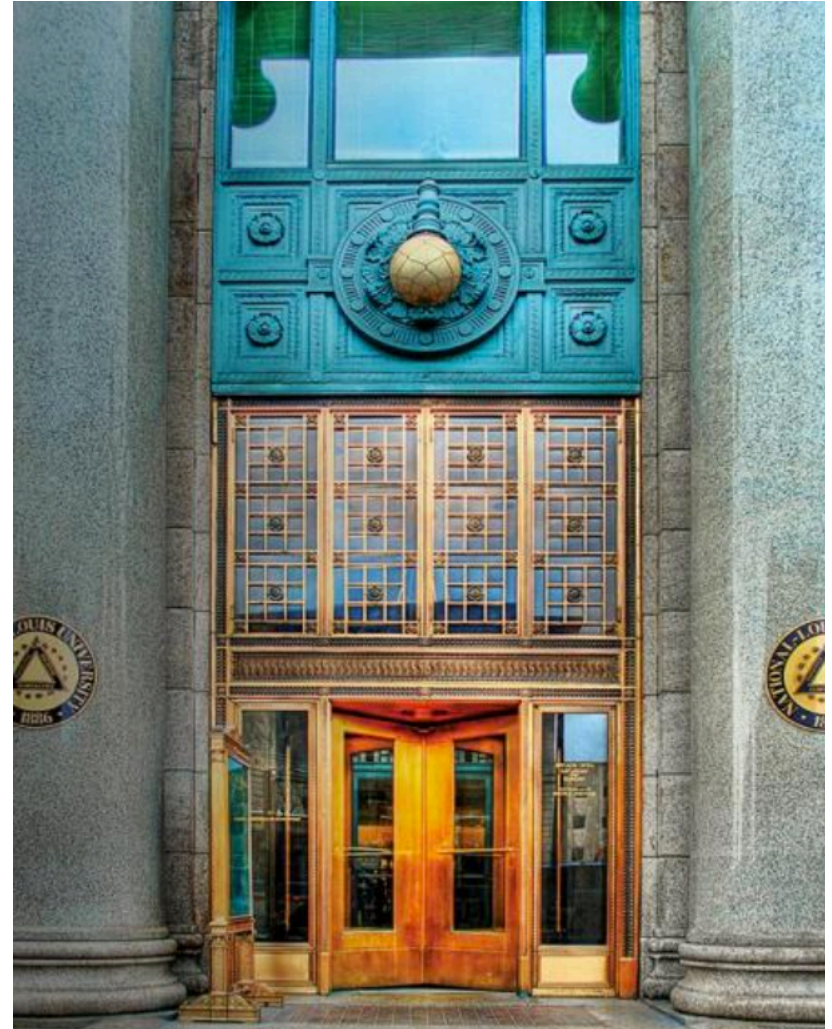
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*Bloomington, IL: September 16, 2016*

## CONTEXT: THE BACKGROUND

- This presentation is based on two years of data from an Urban Teacher Residency (UTR)
- Through TQP funding, NLU was able to track residents' performance on the edTPA



## CONTEXT: NLU

- In 2015 and 2016 Residents are in the MAT Program in Elementary Education, Grades K-8
  - They are now in ELE and MGE programs
- NLU coursework begins July 1 with an intensive summer session, Monday- Friday for six weeks with two additional weeks of online work
- Beginning fall, residents are at their training sites Monday – Thursday, then Fridays at NLU
- The NLU curriculum fall-spring includes a year-round practicum class and content specific methods courses

## CONTEXT: THE PLACEMENTS

- Residents are placed in low performing Chicago Public Schools
- Six training sites spread across Chicago
  - Most are south and west sides of Chicago, which typically have higher poverty rates
  - Training sites are typically 98% free/reduced lunch and 95% minority status
- Typically two residents per mentor teacher

## CONTEXT: CURRICULAR AND BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

- Performance expectations aligned with Danielson Framework
- In 2016, the network adopted the [CKLA](#) for K-2 and [Expeditionary Learning](#) for Grades 3-8
- Behavior expectations focus on Lemov's *book* [Teach Like a Champion](#), such as:
  - No Opt Out
  - Cold Call
  - Warm/Strict
  - 100%

## TWO GROUPS

### 2015 PILOT (PRE CONSEQUENTIAL)

### 2016 CONSEQUENTIAL

- In 2015: 22 residents participated in an ELE pilot with official scoring from Pearson
  - MC ELA: 4, Math 2
  - ELE Lit: 9, Math 7
- In 2016, 37 residents completed the consequential edTPA
  - MC ELA: 2, Math 2, Science 2
  - ELE Lit: 18, Math 13

## SUPPORT DURING THE 2015 PILOT

During the pilot we had an opportunity to see how residents scored without significant support or program changes so we provided minimal formative support to candidates while they were preparing for edTPA . Therefore we did not:

- Teach to the edTPA
- Spend considerable seminar time on edTPA
- Add assignments that were not previously used in our program
- Change our lesson plan
- Use Writing Organizers or other supports
- Use Understanding Rubric Progressions
- Involve mentor teachers or supervisors
- Involve other NLU faculty teaching in the UTR



## WHAT WE DID TO SUPPORT CANDIDATES, 2015

- Added 20 minutes to our bimonthly year-round seminar course, to discuss edTPA and review handbooks and rubrics
- Practicum instructors read all commentaries and made general comments in seminar
- Revised the language to our Signature Assessments to match the language of the edTPA
- Review of exemplars in class

## PILOT SCORES: 2015

Rubric	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.0	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.3	3.4	2.7	2.6	3.3

### AVERAGES:

**Average Score: 44.5**

Task 1: 3.2

Task 2: 2.98

Task 3: 3.06

- **Given these scores, what would you say about the strengths and areas of concern? Are they consistent with a more traditional setting?**
- **What supports might you develop?**

## CHANGES BASED ON PILOT SCORES AND SURVEY DATA, 2016

- Minor revisions in our lesson plan template language on our Lesson Plan Template
  - Changed *Lesson Topic* to *Central Focus*
  - Changed *Vocabulary* to *Academic Language: Vocabulary and Function*
  - Changed *Differentiation* to *Planned Supports*
  - Added a section for *Checks for Understanding: Questions*
- More discussion about Academic Language in seminars and in all courses
- Supervisors used an observation form that focused on engaging instruction and connection to students' interest, lives, and community
- Simple Checklists to review content of commentaries
- Revision of the schedule to give time for the residents to write

## SUPERVISOR SUPPORT

Supervisor

Candidate

**Designed an observation form for supervisors aligned with the prompts of Task 2**

**Post observation conferences include these questions with an emphasis on high need settings**

### **Promoting a Positive Learning Environment**

How did you provide a positive learning environment by demonstrating mutual respect for, rapport with, and responsiveness to students with varied needs and backgrounds, and challenge students to engage in learning?

### **Engaging Students in Learning**

Explain how your instruction engaged students in developing an essential content specific skill, strategy or understanding.

Describe how your instruction linked students' prior academic learning and personal, cultural, and community assets with new learning.

### **Analyzing Teaching**

What changes would you make to your instruction—for the whole class and/or for students who need greater support or challenge—to better support student learning of the central focus (e.g., missed opportunities)? Why?

*Promoting a Positive Learning Environment: How did you provide a positive learning environment by demonstrating mutual respect for, rapport with, and responsiveness to students with varied needs and backgrounds, and challenge students to engage in learning?*

- ***No opt out, frequent choral responding, noting students' positive behavior, private corrections. Classroom jobs. Consider more peer to peer conversations. Get students to talk more to each other – let them make the discoveries instead of you telling them.***

*Engaging Students in Learning: Explain how your instruction engaged students in developing an essential literacy strategy and requisite skills.*

- ***Whole group instruction, individual student attempts. Consider how you connect content and objective to their lives. They were excited when you talked about your experiences – connect that back to them.***

## ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

- **Tied instruction in academic language to readings about language needs for students in high poverty schools**
- 5-10 minute “quick” language activity in each seminar ( from the AACTE edTPA site)
- Working with faculty and supervisors to understand **“Language Function”**
- Put Language Functions from the templates into one document for easy reference

### Language Task: Compare Example

Language Task	Words that We Use to Show This	Sentence Frame
<b>Compare</b>  When you compare, you are looking for the ways that something is like or similar to something else.	both same similar also like alike just as similarly as well as whereas	____ and ____ both have ____.  Both ____ and ____ are/have ____.  ____ is like ____ because ____.  Similarly, ____ is ____.  ____ is similar to ____ in multiple ways because ____, ____, and ____.  Whereas, ____ is ____, ____ is ____ and ____.  Because ____ is a ____, I can argue that ____ is like ____.  These two characters are alike because ____, ____, and ____.  Both ____ and ____ choose to ____ because _____.

# LANGUAGE FUNCTION SUPPORTING DOCUMENT

## Language Functions

(refer to edTPA Handbooks for full explanation)

### ELE Literacy (p. 46 ELE Literacy edTPA Handbook)

Analyze	Argue	Categorize	Compare/Contrast	Describe	Explain
Identify	Interpret (or Evaluate)	Predict	Question	Retell	Summarize

### ELE Math (p. 46 ELE edTPA Math Handbook)

Categorize	Classify	Compare/Contrast	Describe	Draw Conclusions
Explain	Interpret	Justify	Predict	Record
Represent	Summarize			

### MLE ELA (p. 47 MLE edTPA ELA Handbook)

Analyze	Argue	Compare Ideas	Describe
Evaluate	Explain	Interpret	Justify
Make Sense of Unfamiliar Vocabulary	Reading/Listening (for main idea)	Synthesize	Synthesize

### MLE Math (p. 47 MLE edTPA Math Handbook)

Classify	Compare/Contrast	Describe	Draw Conclusions	Evaluate
Explain	Justify	Predict	Prove	Represent
Summarize				



## Elementary Ed Literacy Planning Commentary: Task 1 Checklist

*Use this checklist as a guide to edTPA Task 1: Planning.*

### AUTOMATIC “ONES”:

- Significant content inaccuracies
- A pattern of misalignment between standards, objectives, learning tasks, and materials
- Support according to requirements in IEPs or 504 plans is completely missing
- Justification of learning tasks represents a deficit view of students and their backgrounds
- None of the assessment adaptations required by IEPs or 504 plans are made

### 1. Central Focus

- ☐ Describes the central focus
- ☐ Explains the purpose for the content to be taught
- ☐ Describes how the standards and learning objectives address an essential literacy strategy
- ☐ Describes how the standards and learning objectives address requisite skills that support the use of this strategy
- ☐ Describes how the standards and learning objectives address reading/writing connections
- ☐ Explains how plans build on each other to either help students make connections between skills and the essential strategy to comprehend or compose text in meaningful contexts.
- ☐ Aligns standards, objectives and assessments

### COMMENTS:

### 2. Knowledge of Students to Inform Teaching

*Consider the variety of learners in your class who may require different strategies/support (e.g., students with IEPs or 504 plans, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students).*

- ☐ Describes what students already know (prior academic learning) about the concepts addressed in this learning segment
- ☐ Cites evidence of what students what can do related to the central focus



## REVISED SCHEDULE: 3 RELEASE DAYS ADDED TO WRITE COMMENTARIES

- **2/16 Writing day Task 1**
- 2/19 Task 1 Planning Commentary due

### Feb 29- March 10: Teach edTPA Learning Segment

- **3/10 Writing day Task 2**
- 3/18 Task 2 Instruction Commentary due
- **4/1 Writing Day Task 3**
- 4/3 Task 3 Assessment Commentary due

**April 11: Submission**

## SCORE COMPARISON: 2015 & 2016

Rubric	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
2015	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.0	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.3	3.4	2.7	2.6	3.3
2016	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.0	3.1	3.3	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.6	3.2	2.9	3.4

Averages: 44.5/48.5

	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3
2015	3.2	2.98	3.06
2016	3.16	3.26	3.28

- What do you notice?
- What might have caused some of the scores to improve?
- What may have caused a drop in Planning?

## WHAT WE LEARNED (A SUMMARY)

- Residents did not need extensive support with the edTPA since the curriculum was already aligned
- Support was needed in the logistics and language of the edTPA
- Even with challenging placements, residents were able to successfully complete the edTPA **with appropriate supports in place**
- Purposeful, trained supervision was key

## KEY SUPPORTS FOR 2016: LOGISTICAL

- TIME TO WRITE – probably one of the biggest supports
- Simple supporting checklists and other materials, all in one place,
- Boot camp: intensive day, released from placement, to focus on all of the logistics of edTPA

## KEY SUPPORTS FOR 2016 WITH A FOCUS ON WORKING WITH HIGH NEED POPULATIONS

- Extensive feedback on assignments prior to edTPA
- Formative feedback on edTPA drafts
- Supervision prompts and post observation discussions aligned with Task 2 prompts
- Class readings related to culture and pedagogy
- Peer teaching and coaching opportunities
- Supervision

## **SUPERVISION AS SUPPORT: 2016**

- Monthly Supervisor PD meetings to discuss how to support residents in high need settings
- Supervisor focused feedback on attention to engagement and connection to students' lives and community
- Supervisor helped with troubleshooting issues in the placement
  - Conversations with mentor teachers, only when necessary, to explain the need for the residents to plan and teach the edTPA lessons they created

## **OTHER THINGS WE LEARNED: HOW TO SUPPORT CANDIDATES IN CHALLENGING SETTINGS**

- Make sure to review Context for Learning to ensure the environment is thoroughly described
- Give the option to work with mentor teacher to plan small groups if possible
- Train the university supervisor to be the “liaison” with the site and NLU to be able to step in and help when needed
- Have former students come talk

## OTHER FACTORS THAT MAY HAVE INFLUENCED OUR SCORES

1. We avoided talking about “doing this for edTPA” or any negative talk about the edTPA
  - Instead, we talked about best practice for teachers, and would then refer to the edTPA as a way to demonstrate these practices
2. The extended year-round placement and practicum
  - The same practicum instructor was the contact person for edTPA throughout the year
3. We “challenged” our candidates to beat the NLU average score
  - They did by 7 points!



## DISCUSS: HOW CAN WE APPROACH CHALLENGING SETTINGS?

- Consider special conditions in challenging placements
  - Urban teaching environment with large classes and a fairly significant number of students with behavior issues
  - Emphasis on compliant behavior management
  - “Scripted” curriculum

### Small Group Discussion

- What challenges or advantages are you seeing for candidates who are in high need and/or urban settings with the edTPA?
- What resources do you utilize to best support your candidates?

## NEXT STEPS

- Survey data showed that while the edTPA was certainly “tough”, they did learn a lot about how to plan for individual students and whole class assessment
- Many made comments that the edTPA filled in areas they may have missed as part of a structured program

## RESIDENT FEEDBACK: SOME OF THE “HIGH POINTS” OF THE YEAR

- In reflecting on my successful writing, submission, and receipt of the edTPA, I am happy to say I can look back on the past two months or so with positivity and pride. This is a lot coming from one of the most stressed-out residents in my cohort in regards to the exam, but I am happy to report that the experience of writing my edTPA, while daunting and seemingly hopeless at times, also contained some of the high points of my residency year. **Truly, the construction of my plans and the three tasks within my edTPA gave me a renewed sense of control, autonomy, self-esteem, and pride in my work,** all things I had been slightly lacking before. I was so grateful for the experience of designing my lessons, planning rigorous instruction that pertained to the state standards, and being in total control of analyzing my students' learning through assessments I created.

## RESIDENT FEEDBACK: UNDERSTANDING TRENDS IN STUDENT LEARNING

Completing the formal analysis of student learning was also a valuable experience as a beginning teacher, because it allowed me to quantify student understanding in several different ways across 3 related lessons. Prior to the edTPA, I had used formative assessment data only as a means of addressing individual student needs, allowing me to identify students who needed to be pulled into a small group for additional support, and tracked individual student progress on exit tickets across a unit. **Working on the edTPA pushed me a step further in that it allowed me to analyze overall student learning in my class to notice trends in understanding.** This is useful information to continue collecting to analyze the effectiveness of my teaching and determine if I should change certain strategies to improve effectiveness.

## RESIDENT FEEDBACK: AN INSIGHT INTO THE FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING

**Working with the edTPA helped me to experience teaching as it will be next year in my own classroom.**

I will always need to keep in mind the necessity of creating measurable objectives, guiding students towards meeting those objectives, and then administering appropriate assessments that show whether or not I was successful in my endeavor. Though all lessons will not be as painstakingly planned as those I prepared for the edTPA, the overall planning experience will remain the same throughout my teaching career.

## NEXT STEPS

- Recent research with the 2016 residents indicated that while they are comfortable entering their first year with content and management, their biggest struggle is with *connecting linking students' prior academic learning and personal, cultural, and community assets* with their planning and instruction.
- This was surprising since we had a fairly complex assignment related to cultural and community assets
- Our next research question: **How can we help our candidates make these important connections?**

## CLOSURE: BUILDING COMMUNITY AND SUPPORT

Consider how we can support each other in working with students in high need and challenging settings...

If you're interested in forming a discussion group, or meeting in Chicago, please email me at

[Janet.lorch@nl.edu](mailto:Janet.lorch@nl.edu)

