

# **Why states should require a teaching performance assessment and a subject matter assessment for a preliminary teaching credential**

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## **ABSTRACT**

During the past decade Federal and state public policy makers have considered mandating passing of a subject matter teacher licensure assessment and a teaching performance assessment as a pre-requisite for a teaching credential. Today, a subject matter teacher licensing assessment early in a teacher's career, is required in six states as a way to meet Federal mandates requiring states to train highly qualified teachers (HQT) under No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Teacher licensure assessment standards in the six states requiring a teacher licensure assessment will be compared with the standards of a teaching performance assessment to determine if a teaching performance assessment should be included in a teacher credentialing program purporting to train HQT beginning teachers. California requires both a subject matter teacher licensure assessment and a teaching performance assessment for a preliminary teaching credential.

Data from the first eighteen after implementing a teaching performance assessment into one of California's single largest teacher preparation programs will be analyzed to document the effects of implementing a teaching performance assessment into a teacher credentialing program. Candidate pass/failure rates will also be reported.. This paper discusses the question: Should states incorporate both a subject matter teacher licensure assessment and a teaching performance assessment to meet the requirements of NCLB and the training of highly qualified beginning teachers?

**Key words:** High Qualified Teachers, teacher licensure assessment, Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA), California Teaching Performance Assessment (CalTPA), California Teaching Performance Expectations (TPE), California Standards for the Teaching Profession, teacher licensure assessment, preliminary teaching credential.

## INTRODUCTION

For the past three decades urban school districts have faced continuing teacher shortages. State and national political rhetoric has shifted from general discussions of statements of what constitutes a highly qualified teacher to specific discussions of what newly credentialed teachers should know and be able to do. This discussion has intensified during the past eight years coupled with the most intensive development in American history of educational policy intended to address issues of teacher quality (White, M., Makkonen, R., and Stewart, K., 2009). Coupled with a national call to raise standards in teacher preparation and licensure programs, researchers began to discuss a link between the importance of teacher knowledge and student achievement. Several reports including, *The Nation at Risk*, the Holmes Group; John Goodland's National Network for Educational Renewal; the Renaissance Group; the Project 30 Alliance, The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, The National Board for Professional Teaching; and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education were critical of teacher education institutions and recommended more rigorous and measurable teacher credential candidate standards, higher teaching expectations including academic performance, and explicit calls for teacher preparation programs to be evaluated partially by how well their graduates meet performance standards (Hitz, 2008).

## TEACHER ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS

### **National Reports Allege Teacher Credential Programs Fail To Train Highly Qualified Beginning Teachers**

During the decade of the 1990's teacher credential programs have emphasized performance standards for teacher credential programs. Ferguson (1991) supplied data that supported the notion that teacher's experience—as measured by scores on a licensing examination, master's degrees, and experience—accounted for about 40% of the measured variance in student reading and mathematics in grades 1-11. Ferguson also asserted that after controlling for economic status, the large disparities in achievement between black and white students were almost entirely accounted for by differences in the qualifications of their teachers. The notion of raising teacher performance standards continued to be fueled by recommendations of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), and the performance-based standards of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (Hitz, 2008). In 1996 a report from the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future was published with the following challenge; “By the year 2006, America will provide every student with what should be his or her educational birthright: access to competent, caring and qualified teaching” (Darling-Hammond 1996, p. 1). The report further documented the relationship between student achievement and teacher skills by stressing what teachers know and can do is crucial to what students learn (National Committee on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). Similar findings were reported by Darling-Hammond & Bell (1995; 1997); Darling-Hammond (1995, 1997); and Honawar (2008). These and other results continued to support the contention that a highly qualified teacher possesses the ability to raise student achievement. Unfortunately for districts, few states achieved this standard.

Elmore (2002) suggests that the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for what a teacher should know and do reside in three domains: (1) deep knowledge of the subject matter (e.g., math, science, history-social science) and skills (e.g., reading and writing) that are to be taught; (2) expertise in instructional practices that cut across specific subject area, or general pedagogical knowledge; and (3) expertise in instructional practices that address the problems of teaching and learning associated with specific studies and bodies of knowledge, referred to as pedagogical content knowledge (p.17). According to the California Commission on Teacher on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), the California Standards for the Teaching Profession and the Teaching Performance Expectations denote what a successful beginning teacher should know and be able to do (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2008). Reports at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century examined the effect of licensure testing on the demographic and academic characteristic of prospective teachers. It has long been held that state licensure assessments restrict the overall pool of candidates as teacher licensure assessment attempt to ensure uniform expectations of beginning teacher quality (ETS, 2007)

### **No Child Left Behind**

Through authorization of the Higher Education Act, Congress imposed reporting regulations on all schools and colleges of education through Title II as an attempt to ensure the quality of teacher education programs. Using data from the Title II requirements, the U.S. Department of Education issued a report titled, Meeting the Highly Qualified Teachers Challenge: The Secretary's Annual Report on Teacher Quality. The data collected for this report suggested that schools of education and formal teacher training programs were failing to produce the types of highly qualified teachers that the NCLB Act, demands. The report continued to question the value students receive from attending schools of education and recommended the implementation of alternative teacher education programs and streamlining teacher certification through alternative routes (Hitz, 2008). The NCLB provisions included the HQT provision mandating that all students were to be taught by teachers who not only were licensed by whom and demonstrated competencies in subject matter that they taught. Hence, every teacher education program required multiple and single subject competency testing. Since only those who pass subject matter tests are eligible to teach in public schools. Annually, one hundred percent of credential candidates have successfully passed subject matter competency tests (ETS, 2007).

### **State Credentialing, No Child Left Behind, and Teacher Licensure Assessment**

Under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, states have gained greater flexibility in how they use federal education funds, how teachers are credentialed, and the reduction or revision of licensure requirements (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Responding to NCLB's call for developing alternative certification and the reduction, revision, or elimination of licensure requirements, several alternative teacher preparation programs have been developed and implemented. Notable alternative teacher credentialing programs include; Teach for America and the teaching residencies of Chicago's Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL), the Boston Teacher Residency Program, and the Boettcher Teachers Program in Denver (Darling-Hammond, 2008).

Federal policies have mandated reporting of state and institutional data on teacher candidates and that all teachers meet state requirements for being highly qualified in the subjects that they teach (ETS, 2007). The Council of State School Office (CSSO) recommends beginning teacher performance testing in the areas of content knowledge, teaching knowledge, and an assessment of actual teaching (CCSS, 2009).

These reports confirm that Federal and state public policy makers continue to consider mandate the successful passing of a teacher licensing assessment, in addition to content knowledge, as a pre-requisite for a preliminary teaching credential. Today, a teaching performance assessment is required in six states to comply with Federal mandates requiring teacher preparation institutions to train high quality beginning teachers under NCLB.

### **Teacher Licensure Assessments Recommended By National Reports**

A shift in policy toward teacher licensure assessment was supported by a report released by the Council of Chief State School Office (CCSSO), recommending a supports for what state officials need and want in new assessments for the licensing of teachers. The report supports efforts to bring together the resources of business and education to help build a complete new system of teacher licensure. “The new imperative is that students need 21<sup>st</sup> century skills because the world has changed” (p. 4.) To accomplish this change, the report recommends building of a new system of teacher licensure. The report recommends four areas of reform of teacher licensure. Initially, states need identify a common core of student standards to support the development of a framework of skills and competencies needed for 21<sup>st</sup> century student success. Second, states need to refine and expand data reporting systems between Federal and state agencies. Third, states need to continue to explore and rethink about what supports students will need for student learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century particularly online and virtual models. Finally, the report recommends the development of an educator support system that begins from when candidates first consider becoming teachers through retirement. Implementation of CCSSO recommendations forms the framework for building a new system of teacher licensure for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (CCSSO, 2008).

In support of teacher licensure reform, CCSSO outlines key areas of knowledge and skills teachers need for the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment. They include moving from lecture to engagement, scaffolding cognitive learning, building meta-cognitive skills including a focus on high quality intellectual skills, using effective formative assessment and nurturing reflective practice (CCSSO, 2008). In addition CCSSO recommended several other areas of preparation including technology literacy, helping students to appreciate different perspectives across different cultures, and situations including strategies for teaching English Language Learners, students with disabilities and students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Collaboration skills and global awareness are the final two knowledge and skills teachers need for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (CCSSO, 2008).

The CCSSO supports the inclusion of a teacher licensure assessment as a continuing assessment for beginning and experienced teachers. The focus of this paper is the licensure of beginning teacher credential candidates. The teacher licensure recommendations of CCSSO form+ key design principles of a new system of beginning teacher licensure assessment. The Council of Chief State Officers recommendation that beginning teacher assessment include, measures of literacy/numeracy, content, pedagogy, actual classroom performance, teacher dispositions including flexibility, cross cultural skills, leadership and collaboration (CCSSO,

2008). The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium Test of Teaching Knowledge (TTK) was developed to test a beginning teacher's ability to meet the INTASC model core standards, considered essential for competent teaching access a beginning teacher's professional knowledge in areas including theories of teaching and learning, cognitive, social and physical development, diagnostic, and evaluative assessments, language acquisition, the role of student background in the learning process and other foundational knowledge and skills essential to the profession of teaching. The INTASC recommendations for beginning teachers recommends that a candidate pass at least three licensing tests before they are issued a permanent license, instead of a requirement for an initial or provisional license. These three tests include: (1) a test of content knowledge (math, science, etc), (b) a test of teaching knowledge (pedagogy, etc), and (3) an assessment of actual teaching. The first two tests on content and teaching knowledge are recommended by the state at the end of formal preparation prior to receiving a provisional license covering the first few years of teaching, The third test, is to be used at the end of the first of second year of teaching and will be the final evidence to issue an ongoing or permanent license CCSSO, 2009). An important component of teacher licensure according to CCSSO is providing feedback to candidates who do not pass the licensing assessment so that they know where to focus their remedial efforts (CCSSO, 2008, p. 5).

### **Status of Teacher Licensure Assessment**

In response to NCLB, in 1998, six states, California, Florida, Illinois, North Carolina, Ohio, and Texas have passed legislation requiring all teachers demonstrate a knowledge of state teaching standards (White, Makkonen, & Stewart, 2008). In addition to a subject matter test, the California legislature mandated an additional teaching performance assessment that was approved by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC). Implementation of a teaching performance assessment was delayed by the Commission in 2003 in response to requests received from the Legislature and others during the state's financial crisis at that time. Senate Bill 1209 (Chapter 517, Statutes of 2006), however, mandated the implementation of a TPA requirement for all multiple and single subject professional teacher preparation programs beginning July 1, 2008. The Commission took action in December 2006 to require that any candidate who began a teacher preparation program on or after July 1, 2008 must pass a TPA prior to recommendation for a credential (White, Makkonen, & Stewart, 2009; CTC, 2008).

Today, California universities offering a teacher credential programs are mandated by the State Legislature to implement a TPA. Three Commission approved TPAs include the California Teaching Performance Assessment (CalTPA), the Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT), and the Fresno Assessment of Student Teachers (FAST). Assessments of teaching performance are designed to measure a candidate's knowledge, skills and ability with relation to California's Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs), including demonstrating their ability to appropriately instruct all K-12 students in the Student Academic Content Standards. Each of the three approved teaching performance assessment models requires a candidate to complete defined tasks relating to subject-specific pedagogy, designing and implementing instruction and student assessment, and a culminating teaching experience or event. When taken as a whole, teaching performance assessment tasks/activities measure knowledge the TPEs. Candidate performances are scored by trained assessors against one or more rubrics that describe levels of performance relative to each task/activity. The CalTPA is the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing model and consists of performance tasks and

the Culminating Teaching Experience. The PACT was developed by Stanford University and a consortium of public and private institutions of higher education. It consists of Embedded Signature Assignments (ESA's) and the Teaching Event. The Fresno Assessment of Student Teachers (FAST) is a state-approved TPA system designed for use at California State University, Fresno. FAST assesses the pedagogical competence of teacher candidates, including interns, with respect to the 13 TPEs and the Teaching Sample Project. The three approved CTC assessments measure a candidate's knowledge, skills and understanding of California's TPE's except for TPA 12 (Professional, Legal, and Ethical Obligations) in the CALTPA, which is measured within the teacher preparation program. In sum teaching performance assessments provide candidates with a series of performance tasks, each of which increase in complexity. The tasks are embedded within the teacher preparation program sequence and are both administered and scored by program sponsors. (CTC, 2009).

### **Rationale for Including A Teaching Performance Assessment As a Requirement For A Preliminary Teaching Credential**

In California The CalTPA, the PACT, and the FAST were developed as an outcome of. Senate Bill 1209 (Chap. 517, Statutes of 2006) that mandates the statewide implementation of a TPA (CTC 2008). The purpose of a TPA is to sustain high quality standards for the preparation and teaching performance of credential candidates by: (1) assuring that all students recommended for a preliminary multiple or single subject teaching credential demonstrate a satisfactory level of mastery of the California TPE's, (2) using TPA results as an indication of program effectiveness; (3) providing candidates a way to judge their progress and needs with their teacher preparation program; (4) providing evidence of a candidate's development for use in an induction program and (5) meeting the requirements specified in Senate Bill (SB) 1209 (chapter 517, Statutes of 2006) concerning the state wide implementation of a TPA (CTC, 2006, CTC 2008). The California TPE's incorporated are described below.

<p>California Teaching Performance Expectations (TPE)</p> <p>A. Making subject matter comprehensive to students</p> <p>TPE 1: Specific Pedagogical Skills for Subject Matter Instruction</p> <p>    a. Subject-specific Pedagogical Skills for Multiple Subject Teaching Assignments</p> <p>    b. Subject-Specific Pedagogical Skills for Single Subject Teaching</p> <p>B. Assessing Student Learning</p> <p>TPE 2: Monitoring Student Learning During Instruction</p> <p>TPE 3: Interpretation and Use of Assessments</p> <p>C. Engaging and Supporting Students in Learning</p> <p>TPE 4: Making Content Accessible</p> <p>TPE 5: Student Engagement</p>
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TPE 6: Developing Appropriate Teaching Practices

- a. Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Grades K-3
- b. Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Grades 4-8
- c. Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Grades 9-12

TPE 7: Teaching English Learners

D. Planning Instruction and Designing Learning Experiences for Students

TPE 8: Learning about Students

TPE 9: Instructional Planning

E. Creating and Maintaining Effective Environments For Student learning

TPE 10: Instructional Time

TPE 11: Social Environment

F. Developing as a Professional Educator

TPE 12: Professional, Legal and Ethical Obligations

TPE 13: Professional Growth (CTC, 2006)

For California teacher credential candidates to successfully meet the requirements of a TPA, teacher credentialing programs will need to continue to tailor credential programs focusing on a candidate's ability to make teaching decisions based on intentional cognitive decisions supported by research-based rationale. Intentional cognitive decisions include a number of teaching decisions teachers use to match learning of subject matter to preferred student learning patterns. Students enrolled in teacher credentialing programs should receive practice in teaching for student success by designing, teaching, and assessing multiple ways to present lessons (Sternberg, Torff & Grigorenko, 1998; Sternberg, 2002). Examples of intentional cognitive reflections include reflection on decisions about: (1) instructional design; (2) subject matter pedagogy; (3) designing assessment, and (4) developing comprehensive teacher competencies (Elmore, 2002).

### **Incorporating a Teaching Performance Assessment Into a Teacher Credential Program**

The effect of a TPA requirement for credential candidates enrolling in a teaching credential program, in California, after July 1, 2008 affects students who: (1) enroll in a Multiple and Single Subject credential program on or after July 1, 2008; (2) are currently enrolled in a Multiple or Single Subject credential program that have not completed a course towards this program before July 1, 2008; and (3) have discontinued their multiple or single subject credential program for 12 months or more and have not successfully completed an academic course, if re-enrolled into their program on or after July 1, 2008 (National University, 2008). Major concerns a university teacher credentialing program will have to consider when implementing a TPA

include: (1) organizing faculty review of foundations, methodological, and clinical teacher program syllabi for embedded TPEs; (2) TPA training for faculty-student advising; (3) the cost of offering and scoring a TPA; (4) developing an introductory course to acquaint students in how to negotiate a TPA; and (5) providing for TPA data collection and storage of formative and summative TPA information to be used by the Commission and university for teacher credential program improvement.

### **Basic Requirements for a Preliminary California Multiple or Single Subject teaching credential**

To receive a five-year California preliminary multiple or single subject teaching credential, candidates must complete the following requirements:

1. University admission requirements
2. Undergraduate: blended bachelor's degree, Graduate: bachelor's degree
3. Program coursework within seven years.
4. U.S. Constitution requirement
5. Basic skills requirement
6. Subject matter competency requirements for multiple or single subject candidates
7. Undergraduate and graduate residency requirements
8. Coursework completed within seven years
9. Undergraduate cumulative grade point of 2.5. Graduate cumulative grade point of 3.0.
10. Pass the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA).
11. Written evaluations of performance in field experiences, internships, educational projects, students teaching and other practicum
13. Pass all four tasks of the CALTPA
14. CPR certification
15. BCLAD only-verification of passing scores on oral and written language proficiency examinations
16. Valid certificate of clearance or similar document
17. Fulfillment of all financial obligations to the university
18. A CTC credential application
19. Successful passing of the exit process (NU Catalog, 2010)

### **Implementing a California Teaching Performance Assessment**

Prior to implementation of the CalTPA, California Institution of Higher Education discussed their proposed implementation and addressed issues and concerns raised by students and faculty. Questions included: Prior to and during implementation, does the Institution of Higher Education (IHE) welcome discussions to clarify and discuss the effect of implementation of a TPA? Has the IHE provided a convenient way for student access to a TPA as well as their assessment results? Does the IHE systematically recruit and train certified TPA assessors? Is a procedure in place for yearly calibration and re-calibration of TPA assessors? What procedures are in place for addressing assessor inter-rater reliability? Do opportunities exist for student-



faculty clarification of ethical and logistical considerations of incorporating a TPA into a teacher credential program? Does the IHE have procedures in place to assist student remediation of TPA tasks? What are the student test and re-test pass rates? Finally, does the IHE have a process in place for monitoring and adjusting to new information from the Commission to meet the needs of the IHE and their students?

The California Commission for Teacher Credentialing offers assessor training in the Northern and Southern parts of California. Educators who wish to participate as an assessor can complete training for IHE assessors and become certified to assess the CalTPA. Universities need to institute procedures for yearly calibration and re-calibration of its TPA assessors. The CTC requires yearly re-calibration of assessors. National University requires this training for all university TPA assessors. In addition, National University offers additional opportunities for coached re-calibration online for assessors who fail to recalibrate annually. The California Teacher Commission requires that each university offering a teacher credential program randomly select fifteen percent of their TPA assessments to a second assessor for assessment. Critical for university TPA assessment results are the procedures in place for addressing assessor inter-rater reliability through reassessment of fifteen percent of candidate submissions. To comply with CTC requirements, National university assesses fifteen percent of candidate submissions twice. Should two assessors not agree the lead assessor reviews candidate work, each assessor's record of evidence, and assigns a true score. National University has a procedure in place for students to take a TPA task up to three times. When a student fails to pass a task, the university lead TPA faculty receives notification from the university center for assessment to contact the student who has failed the task. Upon notification of a student failure on any of the four TPA tasks, the lead assessor contacts each candidate by telephone or email to discuss the task with the student. The lead assessor is bound by the University honor code as is the candidate to not discuss responses specific questions, but to discuss the task with the candidate in general terms. After the lead TPA faculty provides student assistance, the candidate is cleared to retake the task. A persistent question requires a university response. Are student performance and subject matter tests results a true indication of the effectiveness of a teacher credential program?

During 2010 the Commission is scheduled to post individual university pass/fail TPA score scores. To provide a mechanism for monitoring and adjusting to new information, each university will provide online services for students and faculty to monitor TPA tasks submissions and scoring, retesting of students, and calibration and recalibration of university assessors. Each California IHE offering teacher credential programs provides a TPA web site accessible for teacher candidates, lead faculty, an institutional TPA administrator, plus a lead assessor who reconciles any student or faculty submission scores.

Preparing teacher credential candidates to successfully pass a TPA will require both short and long-term program commitments by credential program providers. California institutions of higher education offering a Commission approved teacher preparation program are required to offer a TPA embedded within the course work of all credential candidates beginning July 1, 2008 (CTC 2008). The TPA measures the TPE's in multiple ways which requires universities to review of all course syllabi to ensure that the TPE's are thoroughly embedded within each course. The Commission offers assessor training to not only university faculty but to field supervisors, retired teachers and administrators, and other education professionals to certify as assessors in TPA. Every IHE must have a procedure in place for an electronic TPA student honor statement defining acceptable and unacceptable student behaviors. Each honor statement requires a student electronic signature.

## **Training Highly Qualified Beginning Teachers By Incorporating A Teaching Performance Assessment**

A continuing goal of teacher credential programs is the training beginning teachers to raise achievement of all students. The problem remains-how can teachers possible raise the achievement of all students? Some students benefit by instruction they receive and other do not. Reasons some students may be hard to teach include disabilities, disorders, motivational problems, and health problems to name a few. Another reason for student failure is that some students may not benefit from instruction if there exists a mismatch between the learning patterns of some students and the particular range of methods that a teacher is using (Sternberg, 2002). Sternberg's theory of successful intelligence supports the premise that many students who might like to study a given conventional subject area may stop because they believe that they can not succeed in studying it. They may give up or stop taking courses in particular subject areas. Sternberg (2002) defines teaching for successful intelligence as teaching a student to succeed in life, given one's own goals and environmental contexts.

Teaching for successful intelligence therefore forms not only a basis for school achievement but also achievement in life. A person is successfully intelligent to the extent that one effectively adapts to, shapes, and selects environments, as appropriate to their individual circumstances. To achieve success, students have three choices. They can adapt to fit the environment, they can modify the environment to fit their goals and needs, or they can select another environment that better fits their goals and needs (Sternberg, & Grigorenko, 2007). People adapt to their environment by capitalizing on individual strengths and begin to recognize and correct their own weakness. Each person has to find and refine their own particular pathway to success. One of the most useful strategies a teacher can teach a student is to help each student figure out how to use what they do well and find ways around things they do not do as well. Students need to learn to capitalize and compensate by balancing their analytical, creative, and practical abilities to reach success. Teaching for successful intelligence can guide teachers in training to teach using a series of teaching techniques that reach as many students as possible (Sternberg, 2002; Sternberg, & Grigorenko, 2007).

Sternberg et al, (2007) continues by describing teaching for successful intelligence as a way of looking at the teaching-learning process that broadens the kinds of activities and assessment teachers traditionally do. Good teachers "teach for successful intelligence" spontaneously. But for what ever the reason, most do not. Teaching for successful intelligence involves at a minimum, using a set of tasks that encourage students to engage in memory, analytical, creative and practical learning (Sternberg, 2004)

Teaching for memory learning is the most conventional way to teach. Teaching for successful intelligence is not about asking teachers to stop the way they are teaching. The theory of successful intelligence recommends that teachers build on memory learning. Teaching for

memory becomes the foundation of all other teaching because students can not think critically about what they know if they do not know anything. Teaching for memory includes assisting or assessing students memory of who, what, where, when, why and how. Teaching and assessing for memory includes recall and recognition of facts, matching one set of items with another, verifying statements and repeating what has been learned (Sternberg, 2002; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2007)).

Teaching for analytical learning recognizes that some students are not particularly adept as memory learners. Many students have the ability to learn but cannot memorize or recall a set of isolated facts. Teaching and assessing for analytical learning and thinking include: analyzing and evaluating an issue; explaining how something works; comparing and contrasting two or more items; and judging the value of the characteristics of something (Sternberg, 2002; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2007).

Teaching for creative learning acknowledges that teaching should include encouraging students to use and develop their creative abilities. Some students learn best when they are allowed to find their own individual ways to learn material and then are left to explore ideas that go beyond those likely to be in books or in lectures. Examples for teaching and assessing for creative learning and thinking include: creating a game; inventing a toy; exploring new ways of solving problems; imagining what would happen if scenarios; synthesizing knowledge of a major event such as the Vietnam War or current conflicts (Sternberg, 2002). Sternberg (2002) argues, that to a large extent creative thinking represents a decision by teachers to think and do things in a certain way by redefining responses, taking intellectual risks; surmounting obstacles when people criticize one's attempts at being creative; and working to persuade people of the value of creative ideas.

Some students are practical learners meaning that they do not catch on unless they see some kind of practical use for what they are learning. Examples of teaching and assessing for practical learning include: putting into practice what you have learned, using knowledge learned in every day life, forecasting an event, or changing your own behavior. Examples of applying practical knowledge include applying knowledge of history in running for an elected office, using knowledge of paints to achieve a certain color, or using an understanding of good speaking to give a persuasive talk (Sternberg, 2002). Teaching for practical thinking is about teaching students to adopt certain attitudes when approaching intellectual work. These attitudes include combating the tendency to procrastinate, getting organized to get work done, figuring out how one learns best, avoiding using self-pity as an excuse for not working hard, and avoiding blaming others for one's own failings (Sternberg, 2002).

In two separate studies (Sternberg et al., 1999) found that high school students who were taught in a way that, (at least some of the time), enabled them to use their preferred learning skill strengths, outperformed students who were not taught to use their strengths. A second study found that third grade students who were taught for successful intelligence outperformed students who were taught either for either memory or critical thinking. These results were duplicated across grade level, subject matter, and type of assessment (Sternberg, 1998 a, b).

Subsequently, Sternberg et al., (2002) relates that students who were taught for memory, analytical, creative and practical learning outperformed the students taught in the more conventional way on all assignments, whether for vocabulary, or reading comprehension, and whether teachers emphasized memory-based, analytical creative, or practical thinking.

### **Teacher Licensure Assessment Standards Required in Six States**

The Council of Chief State School Officers recommends several issues to consider in implementing a career-long teacher assessment program. The first step in developing a career-long teacher assessment program is a beginning teacher licensure assessment. Several issues emerge in a discussion of implementing a beginning teacher licensure assessment. They include (1) cost of the assessment to students and the university, (2) defining what beginning candidate performance looks like, (3) evaluation and scoring of the assessment and ensuring validity and reliability especially with performance, (4) developing and storing performance items, (5) test security, (6) the role of university and the teacher education department cultural support for a TPA assessment and (7) providing appropriate technology for taking, scoring, reporting, and storing results of the assessment. Future performance based assessment for teachers will be based on teacher assessment in California and Connecticut. Both states provide a cost effective model that demonstrates effective beginning teacher performance (CCSSO, 2008).

A study of a cross state analysis of the standards in the six states requiring teacher licensure assessment by White, Makkonen and Stewart (2008) found: (1) California (TPA), Texas, Florida, Illinois, North Carolina and Ohio have developed their teaching standards to cover all teachers from beginning to experienced. Texas has developed its teaching standards expressly for beginning teachers, (2) the number of teaching standards in each state varies from 4 (Texas) to 12 (Florida), (3) the states' teaching standards address instruction of English language learners student through recognition or support of diversity, differentiation of instruction, knowledge of related theory or strategies, communication with students and families, assessment of students' language status and development, and selection of related materials or curricula, (4) Instruction of students with disabilities is address through differentiated instruction, inclusion, collaboration with Individualized Education Programs, student rights, styles of learning, identification of students with disabilities, and use of technology for collaboration or communication, and (5) the teaching standards considered accountability and student learning standards through teachers' knowledge and understanding of state learning standards, use of learning standards to plan instruction, delivery of standards-based instruction, and assessment of students' progress toward meeting state learning standards (White, Makkonen, & Stewart, 2008).

An analysis of CCSSO and INTASC teacher credential recommendations and the California TPE reveals that the thirteen standards of the TPE parallels the recommendations of CCSSO and INTASC regarding teaching performance assessment.

### **Training High Quality Beginning Teachers and Raising Student Achievement**

California has taken the recommendations of INTACS and CCSO a step further by requiring a TPA prior to an institution of higher learning recommending a candidate for a preliminary teaching credential instead at the end of the first few years of teaching. As a lead TPA assessor for the university recommending the largest number of credential candidates of

any other single university for preliminary teaching credentials, my analysis of TPA prompts reveals that successful negotiation of a TPA requires candidates to respond to prompts demonstrating their knowledge of the TPE's using intentional cognitive rationale. A review of the prompts also reveal that the principles of teaching for memory, analytical, creative and practical learning should assist candidates taking the TPA to organize their responses in an intentional way using for rationale from current research. Organizing student knowledge should be a precursor for successfully negotiating a TPA.

If teacher credential candidates become familiar with and practice the strategies of teaching for memory, analytical, creative and practical learning throughout their credential program, then they should be able to recognize students' strongest learning skills, and how to successfully teach to those skills. Additionally beginning teachers will be able to teach students how to compensate for their weaker skills. The result will be that newly credentialed teachers would not be as likely to be teaching with a mismatch between the learning patterns of some students and the particular range of methods they are using to try to teach all students. The outcome of teaching for memory, analytical, creative and practical learning is that beginning teachers learn to teach with a balance of teaching strategies, concentrating not only in memory learning but in analytical, creative, and practical learning. By teaching for analytical, creative and practical learning success, a beginning teacher is addressing some students' strengths, at least some of the time and, at the same time, is allowing students to recognize work on and correcting their learning style weakness (Sternberg, 2002; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2007).

As teacher credential candidate's progress through their university credential program with TPE's embedded in the curriculum, they will practice making intentional cognitive teaching decisions based on research rationale. By making intentional cognitive teaching decisions teacher credential candidates will identify and encourage students to use preferred learning skills instead of letting those skills go to waste. As teachers in training become more adept at learning and encouraging students to use their learning strengths while correcting learning weakness, student achievement will naturally increase (Sternberg, & Grigorenko, 2007). Teaching for memory, analytical, creative and practical learning, incorporating California's TPE's into a teacher credentialing program and successfully negotiating a TPA are three important steps towards defining what a beginning teacher should know and be able to do. The California TPE's are an agreed upon standard for teacher preparation that moves teaching one step closer to professional status. Other states may want to review the results of first year data from the California TPA to determine if incorporation of TPEs and a TPA into their teacher credential program will support the training of highly qualified beginning teachers.

### **Analyzing TPA Pass/Fail Results**

California requires a credential candidate to pass all four tasks of a TPA for a preliminary teaching credential. This requirement applies to all candidates beginning their teaching credential

on or after July 1, 2008. As of February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010, National University (Torrey Pines, CA), reported the following pass rates per TPA task:

- a. 469 students successfully completed Task 1 on their initial submission
- b. 125 students successfully completed Task 2 on their initial submission
- c. 60 students successfully completed Task 3 on their initial submission
- d. 60 students successfully completed Task 4 on their initial submission
- e. 13 students who did not pass Task 1-4 on their first try, participated in coached remediation and passed .
- f. The University pass rate is 97 percent initial pass rate

## CONCLUSION

This paper discusses some of the advantages and disadvantages of requiring a Teaching Performance Assessment for a preliminary teaching credential. Since July 2008, California has required the passing of a subject matter teacher licensure assessment and a teaching performance assessment as a requirement for a preliminary five-year credential.

There are several disadvantages to requiring a teaching performance assessment and a subject matter teacher licensure assessment. First, there is added expense to the university teacher credential program in providing web-based technological support for assessment submission, scoring, reporting results, test security, and task resubmission if candidates fail to pass their initial task submission. Second, there will be an expense to the university to train, and recalibrate university assessors. Third, there are added responsibilities and expenses for full time and adjunct faculty for compensation, providing administrative and clerical support, a lead assessor to oversee university procedures for candidate submission, scoring, results reporting and rescoring fifteen percent of the submissions as required by CTC. In addition, the lead assessor determines the real score when two assessor scores do not match. Ultimately, added expenses will be passed on to teacher credential candidates as additional assessment and task reporting fees.

The advantages of implementing a TPA outweigh the disadvantages by adding a perceived validity to California teacher credentialing programs by providing a standardized assessment that can be used measure the progress of teacher credentialing institutions toward training highly qualified beginning teachers for diverse California classrooms. Teaching performance assessment results can also be used by State Departments of Education, politicians, parents, faculty, and local communities to discuss reforming a state's teacher credentialing program to meet NCLB requirements.

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