

# Up-cycling Teacher Performance Assessments:

## Preparing Candidates to Advocate for Their Practice through Rhetorical Argumentation



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# Advocacy as Professional Practice

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# edTPA Overview

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Professional portfolio – specific to certification area

Task 1: Planning (artifacts: plans for instruction & materials)

Task 2: Instruction (artifacts: videoclips of instruction)

Task 3: Assessment (artifacts: student work samples)

Requires extensive writing (up to 33 pages commentary)

Evaluated by outside scorer - program completion/certification contingent upon meeting cut score

## Our Response: Reframing edTPA as Written Argument for Competency (rather than *assessment of competency*)

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- ❖ How might this framing shape the ways teacher candidates interpret edTPA tasks and **use elements of rhetorical argumentation to develop written arguments** about their knowledge and practices as beginning teachers?
- ❖ How might this framing **enable teacher candidates to better understand and use rhetorical argumentation** across contexts?

# Toulmin Model of Argumentation (1958/2008)

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Primary elements of argument

- **Claim:** the position being argued for
- **Grounds:** reasons or supporting evidence
- **Warrant:** chain of reasoning that connects the grounds to the claim (represents “common ground” between author and audience)
- **Backing:** support for the reliability/relevance of warrant in current context

## For example...

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- **Claim:** Ann's bedroom is on fire.
- **Grounds:** Smoke is pouring from Ann's bedroom.
- **Warrant:** Smoke is a primary sign of fire.
- **Backing:** Because fires generally produce smoke.

(Karbach, 1987)

# What Is My Argument? Interpreting the edTPA as an Argument for Competency

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*I am an effective novice teacher because my planning, instruction, and assessments demonstrate that students are engaged and learning (and when they are not or they do not, I have reasonable, evidence-based ideas for what to do next).*

# Coordinating subclaims across the full edTPA portfolio

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For each task, candidate **makes specific claims and establish grounds** (mobilizing specific evidence)

- Task 1: Planning (evidence: lesson plans, materials, assessment tools)
- Task 2: Instruction (evidence: videoclips of instruction)
- Task 3: Assessment (evidence: student work samples)

Candidate analyzes commentary prompts and evaluation rubrics to infer audience priorities/values (useful for crafting **warrants** and **backing**)

## Example: Instruction Prompt

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*Refer to scenes in the video clip(s) in your response. Describe how your instruction linked students' prior academic learning and personal, cultural, and community assets with new learning.*

## Example: Instruction Prompt

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### **Claim** and **Evidence**

*Refer to **scenes in the video clip(s)** in your response. Describe how **your instruction linked students' prior academic learning and personal, cultural, and community assets with new learning.***

# Aligning Argument with Audience: Using the Rubrics to Infer Audience Values

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Target Rubric: Engaging Students in Learning

*How does the candidate actively engage students in integrating strategies and skills to comprehend or compose text?*

**Level 3:** Candidate links prior academic learning to new literacy learning.

**Level 4:** Candidate links prior academic learning AND personal, cultural, or community assets to new literacy learning.

# Aligning Argument with Audience: Using the Rubrics to Interpret Audience Values

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## **Audience priorities/beliefs** (for use with warrants)

To effectively engage students in new learning:

- a teacher must at least link that new learning with prior academic learning
- and also should make links with students' personal, cultural, or community assets.

# Entering a Broader Conversation: Drawing Support from Research/Theory

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Claim, Evidence, Backing

**Assessment prompt:** *Based on your analysis of student learning...describe next steps for the whole class and 3 focus students. Explain how these next steps follow from your analysis of student learning. Support your explanation with principles from research and/or theory.*

# Drawing Support from : Entering a Broader Conversation (Backing)

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- Frame discussions of research and theory as **participation in broader conversations**
- Engage as *professional* teachers and participate with authority (rather as students - to simply justify responses with citation)

Ques#	language from prompt	language from rubric	audience interest/value	claim needing to be made	evidence type
1.a	Describe the central focus and purpose for the content you will teach in the learning segment.		You have a central focus for your learning segment.	I have a central focus for the content I will teach in my learning segment.	
1.b	Given the central focus, describe how the standards and learning objectives within your learning segment address an essential literacy strategy, requisite skills that support use of the strategy, reading/writing connections.		Your standards and objectives address an essential literacy strategy and requisite skills.	My standards and objectives in my plans address an essential literacy strategy and requisite skills.	
1.c	Explain how your plans build on each other to help students <b>make connections</b> between skills and the essential strategy to comprehend <b>OR</b> compose text in meaningful contexts.	<u>Rubric 1</u> Level 2: Candidate's plans for instruction <b>support student learning of skills with vague connections to strategies for comprehending OR composing text.</b> Level 3: Candidate's plans for instruction <b>build on each other to support learning of the essential literacy strategy for comprehending OR composing text with clear connections to skills.</b> Level 4: <b>Candidate's plans for instruction build on each other to create a meaningful context that supports learning of the essential literacy strategy for comprehending OR composing text with clear AND consistent connections to skills.</b>	Plans for instructions build on each other.  Plans create a meaningful context for learning essential literacy strategy.  Clear and consistent connections to skills.	My plans for instruction build on each other and create a meaningful context for learning the essential literacy strategy for these reasons.  My plans help students to make clear and consistent connections between skills and the essential literacy strategy for these reasons.	lesson plans for literacy sequence

# “Author-izing” Teacher Candidates

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Rhetorical argumentation as a **strategy** and a **stance** – to engage in advocacy and to prepare for performance evaluations

# Strategy: Emphasis on edTPA as Written Argument

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Highlighting *writing moves* candidates can make in composing edTPA materials (and other rhetorical argumentation):

e.g., Teach 3 INs strategy (Lawrence, 2014): practice these moves as writers, recognize these moves in other texts

- INtroduce **claim** and supporting evidence
- INsert **evidence**
- INterpret evidence in terms of claim (**warrant**)

## Candidate Commentary Response (Task 2)

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**I show responsiveness to students with various needs** in the video (**Clip 2, 3:38**) because **I called a specific boy up to the board to practice fixing a quotation** *because I had noticed that he was struggling with doing it correctly, and I wanted to be able to give him the opportunity to fix one at the board with me. This also shows that* **I am providing a challenging but safe learning environment for students where they can feel comfortable with practicing and unafraid to make mistakes.**

## Candidate Commentary Response (Task 2)

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The phone rings (Clip 2, 4:20) and when I go over to answer it, while I speak to the person on the line, the students are quiet and watching their classmate work up at the board. This shows that **the students and I have mutual respect for each other** because they do not take advantage of me going to answer the phone as a time to begin to chat with neighbors. **They also show that they have respect for their peers** because they are paying attention to the student at the board while I answer the phone.

# Stance: Helping candidates craft arguments for their professional decisions

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- Rejects the premise that teachers are suspicious characters who need to defend what they do
- Aligns with premise that professional teachers make informed, intellectual decisions, and they can articulate these to a variety of audiences
- Candidates position themselves as *authors* of their professional identities – vs. giving this authority to the test/scorer
- Crafting an argument is the role of an author – can promote teacher agency (as opposed to “test prep”)

# Candidate Reflection

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*Thinking about my teaching and writing the edTPA in terms of claims and evidence **helped me to reflect on what worked and what didn't work more accurately**, and thus gave me a lot of specific things to write about in my edTPA. For example, in task 4, a focus student got a particular math problem on rewriting math sentences wrong. Why did he get it wrong? What did he do? So my claim is that he doesn't understand this certain concept, and my evidence is the mistake he made. **Then, I can get deeper into thinking about what he did wrong and how to fix it.** So now my claim is that I will teach him a certain method and the details of his specific mistake is the evidence that my new method might be helpful for him.*

## Candidate Reflection, cont'd

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*Then comes the reengagement lesson, and I now have his work. So, if he now understands the concept, my claim is that my strategy was effective in teaching him this new concept, and my evidence is that he is not making the same mistake anymore and got it right. If he still doesn't get it, that's okay too. This just means that my claim is that he is still misunderstanding something and the evidence is the mistake he made (it may be the same mistake or a different one now). And then the process would repeat itself. **So, thinking about claims and evidence gives me a structure of how to think about analyzing a student's work and deciding what they need from me.** And then that translates beautifully into a narrative for the edTPA questions because they don't just want to know what you think!*

# Upcycling... to Promote Deeper Understanding of Rhetorical Argumentation

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- “Reading” texts and contexts through the lens of argumentation (“everything is an argument” – links to advocacy)
  - Support ability to enter professional conversations (articulate clear claims, identify audience values and relevant evidence, connect to other professional knowledge and ongoing conversations)
  - Support complex understandings to inform instruction of argumentative writing (Common Core Standards)
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