

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Nicola Long. I received my teaching credential from UC Davis in 2018 and currently teach in Monterey Peninsula Unified School District. I love to teach and I loved my UCD program. I was lucky to have an instructor who had graded EdTPAs before, so I felt well prepared to take my test. That said, I believe that without the EdTPA, my program would have been able to focus further on the skillsets I truly needed in order to feel prepared to enter the classroom.

My student teaching experience and the consistent feedback I received were far more valuable than the many hours I spent on the EdTPA. The lessons in my credential area (Single Subject Social Studies) that took a deep-dive into teaching historical perspective, chronological awareness and source analysis were crucial to my development as a new educator. The full lessons we had to take on the exact vocabulary to use in an EdTPA, the multiple-hour sessions we spent writing this slightly awkward language, the stress over a recording that didn't work, or a lesson that didn't work on the day that you had all the permission slips signed by students in order to get the footage... these were not useful additions to my work. Yet, if memory serves me well, I spent *far* more time working on the EdTPA in my credential program than we spent on those Social Studies lessons. As a graduate student, paying thousands of dollars for these courses, I found it an especially hard pill to swallow that this was something we had to spend so much time on when I did not feel it served my practice.

A good teacher is not defined as the person with the most detailed plans for their class. A good teacher has incredible skills of planning well and pivoting well. They know how to teach a lesson, while watching for behaviors, while pivoting if a point is not landing and they do this with fast, real-time reflection on their teaching. They then work with their colleagues to look at test answers, calibrate successes and struggles, and try to adjust their teaching in minor and major ways the next day to address any misunderstandings. They do not have the luxury of spending the kind of time the EdTPA takes on any one part of this. As such, it was the time with my instructor offering me feedback, especially when I was pivoting for the following day and receiving additional feedback before my next assessment that guided my practice. My Masters work too, which had me assess and reassess and skillset over a few months to see what growth I could generate was also really useful. Spending months deeply analyzing one lesson is not a realistic model of the classroom.

In addition, spending hours over many weeks writing my EdTPA only to receive a *barely* passing grade, with minimal feedback did very little to help me grow. I was told that my low score may be a result of some of the graders who stop looking for additional points to give you once you have passed so that they can move onto the next one. Perhaps this is untrue, but either way, the feedback offered to me was the least productive part of my teacher preparation program. We are not practicing what we preach in terms of meaningful feedback, or meaningful assessment and indeed, some of my colleagues had worse experiences.

Just last year I had two colleagues, both well-respected educators and well-liked by their students, who did not pass the EdTPA and thus had to be put into a substitute teaching position for this school year. The colleague I know best is single mother who had her child when she was a teenager in one of our schools. She has worked incredibly hard to get to where she is. She connects with our students, knows her subject area and is an asset to the profession. Watching her now having to accept lower pay because of a test she did not take, largely because she did not have the privilege I had of entering a most costly teacher preparation program like UC Davis, was heartbreaking.

To be clear, I do not believe that the goal of the Commission should be solely to make it easier to be a teacher. This is a challenging job and preparation in content, pedagogy and numerous other skill sets are vital. I do not believe you fix a job shortage by allowing under qualified people into the classroom. *However*, hoops to jump through are also not the answer, and the EdTPA in its current format felt more like a hoop that took up hours of expensive time in my program, than a useful addition to my teacher preparation program.

Thank you sincerely for your time and attention to this matter,

