The edTPA is coming! What is that, you ask? It’s the new performance assessment that will be required of all preservice teachers working towards Illinois licensure. No one at any University in Illinois will be recommended to the Illinois State Board of Education for a teaching license without passing scores on this assessment.

The edTPA is an outcome-based assessment that includes video of the teacher candidate and his or her students in action. In the past, student teachers at UIS have been required to complete a very similar project during student teaching called the Evidence of Student Learning. This self-study requires detailed lesson plans, videos, data collection, and a narrative analysis of and reflection on the student teacher’s teaching and their students’ learning. Beginning with the Spring 2015 semester, UIS teacher candidates will begin the process of changing this self-study into the edTPA, which is built around most of the same requirements, just in a different format. The TEP curriculum has been preparing candidates for this all along through methods course assignments that mirror the requirements of the edTPA. When candidates complete one of the ‘Justified Lesson Plans,’ the ‘Analysis of Student Work,’ the ‘Context of Student Learning,’ or the ‘Academic Language’ assignments, they are honing the analytic and reflective skills that will be required to complete the edTPA successfully. During student teaching, candidates will begin completing the self-study through observational assignments that will help them address the questions in the prompt templates of the edTPA.

Collaboration

So what should teacher candidates be doing right now? Teacher candidates at UIS already have access to the necessary edTPA materials on the TEP Students Blackboard. All candidates should locate the “General Information and Preparation” materials as well as the handbooks for their specific content areas and print out this material – yes, it will be long – and put it into a binder. Teacher candidates will find that they get a fundamental introduction to edTPA in TEP 318 Curriculum, Planning, and Assessment, and will expand upon that foundation in their methods courses. All teacher candidates should begin studying the available materials as soon as possible, no matter what their course schedule. During student teaching, seminar instructors will help guide teacher candidates through the edTPA process, but the onus of preparation is on the teacher candidate himself or herself.

The way we see it, the edTPA is just another opportunity for teacher candidates from UIS to show off how great they are in the classroom!
William Shalter, a secondary student teaching candidate during fall 2014 semester.

What have you most improved upon since beginning the Teachers Education Program?
Throughout my TEP experience, my professors pushed for a more student-centered classroom. At first, this was a struggle for me because most of my former professors and teachers relied heavily on lecture and note-taking. Furthermore, I was ignorant of what strategies to use in my lesson plans to foster such an environment. At UIS, my teachers gave me the tools to help me succeed in creating a student-centered classroom. I have changed my style of teaching entirely—for the better—because I see how students yearn to be at the center of their learning world. I am merely a guide and a help when they need it.

How did the TEP program help you become a better teacher?

What unique strengths do you use to relate to students?
I had a lot of public speaking experience before becoming a teacher, and I know how to read a crowd and present material in an engaging manner. I use this everyday to help motivate my students. In addition, I have had experience working in Customer Service, and I understand certain marketing and conflict resolution strategies are good to have to engage students and deal with stressful situations.

What advice would you give a student currently in the Teachers Education Program?
My advice would be to embrace the change that is taking place in education. What I have seen in the field is a combination of two different approaches: one is the teacher who is stuck in the old way teaching and is wondering why his students are not engaging with the material like students used to ten years ago and the second is the teacher who understands that students learn differently now and that the methods that were used in the past will not communicate well with them. Be the second teacher by grasping the concepts and strategies that the TEP department at UIS teaches you. And as always in college studies, know your program graduation requirements and stay well informed. Be actively involved in the coursework counseling process.

Student Highlight: Christina Foster

What was your motivation to become a TEP student?
As a teacher you are granted a special privilege to be able to touch the lives of the students you work with. My dream is to touch the lives of as many people as I can. So my dream motivated me to become a TEP student.

What subjects are you interested in?
Math, history, science, special education, technology and education.

What have you most improved upon since beginning the Teacher Education Program?
I have most improved on being more social after beginning the Teacher Education Program. I talk to more people and socialize with more people than I used to. I believe that an important part of becoming a successful teacher is to be able to socialize with your peers, students, parents and administrators of your school.

What is a particular characteristic of yours that will help you become a successful teacher in the classroom?
I believe one characteristic that makes a teacher successful is genuinely caring for his or her students. I believe when a teacher shows that he or she is caring, then students feel more comfortable in the classroom which helps them do better academically.

What do you think society needs to do in order to help teachers be more today?
I believe that a student’s learning, education needs to be extended past school hours. A student’s learning needs to continue at home and out in the world. Society needs to help teachers become effective by reinforcing lessons or concepts taught in class.

What advice would you give a student that wished to enroll in the Teachers Education Program?
What are you waiting for? If you wish to become a teacher and change the lives of a vast array of students, enroll now. If you are unsure if becoming a teacher is right for you to take an introduction education class or volunteer at a local school.
TEP Administrator Spotlight
A Conversation with Mr. Dustin Day

Dustin Day is the Principal at Tri–City High School, Buffalo, Illinois. He is always supportive of the Teacher Education program.

Tell us about your educational background.
I graduated with an Associate of Science degree from Carl Sandberg Community College in 1993 and with a Bachelor’s of Arts degree in History from Western Illinois University in 1996. I received my Master’s degree in Educational Leadership (Masters in Teaching and Learning program) from the University of Illinois Springfield in 2006 and received a certificate in Administration (Principal endorsement) from the University of Illinois Springfield in 2008. In 2014, I received my Educational Specialist Degree (Superintendent endorsement) from the University of Illinois Springfield.

As an administrator, what unique strengths do you use to relate with students, teachers and other stakeholders in your school?
You have to be honest, forthright, and caring. Have empathy for students and what some are going through at the time. Be honest and upfront with your answers. Do not make promises you can’t keep. Don’t ask someone to do something you wouldn’t do yourself. Good communication skills and positive relationships are the key to the success of the school.

What particular characteristic do you think helps a teacher to be effective in the classroom?
Support – As an administrator, your goal is not only making students successful, but making teachers successful and grow as well. Teachers need support, professional development, and proper feedback to assist their development as a professional. What do you think society needs to do in order to help teachers to be effective today?

What do you think about the UIS-Teachers Education Program? If you had any advice for a student currently in TEP, what would you tell him or her?
I sit on the Council of Professional Education (COPE) at UIS. I believe the TEP program is doing an excellent job preparing students for the workforce. In fact, we have hosted multiple student-teachers and even hired one that is working for us currently. UIS-TEP is one that cares about their students and is willing to assist students when needed. The caring part is something that can’t be taught. TEP is one of the most thorough programs providing up-to-date knowledge on pedagogy, instructional strategies, proper assessment, and good classroom management techniques.

Currently, I have spoken to the outgoing student teachers twice. It is one of the most rewarding moments I have each year. Why? It’s great to see that enthusiasm and excitement from teachers ready to enter the profession. I’ve always told myself that if I ever lose that enthusiasm, it’s time for me to choose a different career.

*Editor’s note: Congratulations to Mr. Day are in order: he will be entering a new phase of the profession in Fall 2015 when he assumes the position of Superintendent for the Waverly School District!

Welcoming New TEP Graduate Assistant

Ansumana Darboe is a 2nd year student in the Masters of Public–Admin program at UIS. He earned a Bachelor Degree in Management from his home country, the Gambia, West Africa. Previously, Ansumana was the Head of International Relations at the University of the Gambia. In his capacity, he managed collaboration and partnerships with other universities and coordinated visiting scholar programs. The Department of Teacher Education was pleased to have had Mr. Darboe as a graduate student during the Fall 2014 semester.
From the Desk of the Director,

Dr. Ronda Mitchell

The 2014-2015 school year has been busy, but great! We have two new students, Kailee Harris and Samantha Missey. Both are graduates of Eisenhower High School in Decatur. Kailee is majoring in psychology and minoring in elementary education. Samantha is majoring in history and minoring in secondary education.

Project MSS welcomes back Valerie Farmer as the Graduate Assistant. Valerie is a graduate of Trinity International University in Deerfield, Illinois. She has a bachelor’s degree in Counseling/Psychology and is currently working on her master’s degree in Human Development Counseling with a concentration in Marriage, Couple and Family Counseling.

Department of Teacher Education librarian, Sarah Sagmoen, visited our classroom this semester to provide instruction on how to use library resources when conducting research. The students commented on how much they learned from having her go through this information.

I would like to thank all of our scholarship donors who have contributed to our success throughout the years. Special thanks to Michah and Peggy Barlett, Betty and Ralph Hurwitz, and Melinda and Alfred LaBarre. We had a wonderful annual scholarship luncheon in October, and the students who received the scholarships were very appreciative.

The students observed in many of the local schools this fall. A special thank you to Ball Charter Elementary, South East High School, Ridgely Elementary, and Sacred Heart Griffin High School for welcoming us.

Students attended the Broadway musical “Sister Act” in late December at the Sangamon Auditorium. Featuring original music, it tells the story of a wannabe diva whose life takes a turn when she witnesses a crime and hides in a convent. The show received five 2011 Tony Award nominations. What a fun production!

Sincerely, Dr. Ronda Mitchell

The Library Comes to the Classroom

Sarah Sagmoen, librarian for the Department of Teacher Education, came to TEP 202 and 203 to give instruction on how to use library resources when conducting research. Specifically, Sarah talked about the Research Guide for Education, how to search within ERIC (the database from The Department of Education), and Google Scholar. She also talked about how the ERIC database and basic search skills can go beyond the students’ time in college and are needed as they progress through their careers in the field of education.
Samantha Missey, a freshman with a History major and a minor in Secondary Education, has always been able to see herself as a teacher. She believes that education is the single most important thing in a person’s life, and that it can get you anywhere you need to go. Project MSS was recommended to her in high school, and she knew that it was the path she wanted to pursue. With clear passion and the desire to be a successful teacher, Samantha is looking forward to her courses this semester and growing educationally. When she’s not pouring into her studies, she enjoys reading, being outside, and bowling competitively. She has been on a team since high school and absolutely loves it. Samantha also enjoys hanging out with her friends and having a good time. While at UIS, she looks forward to getting more involved on campus.

MSS students observed many teachers and different age groups this fall at Ball Charter Elementary, South East High School, Ridgely Elementary, and Sacred Heart Griffin High School. Some of the objectives were to observe school activities, examine materials, gain insight into methods of classroom management, and learn about the organization of the schools. This was an opportunity for candidates to experience best practices. Thank you to our local school for partnering with us!

Students Pictured from left to right: Denzel Brewer, Kailee Harris, Tarika Mootrey and Sydney Smith.

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In order for a student to qualify for the Dean’s List, he/she must maintain at least a 3.75 grade point average for the semester as a full-time student, which entails taking at least 12 credit hours. That averages out as an “A” in overall academic achievement for their course load. Studies are rigorous, the commitment is hefty, but the payoff is worth it—especially for Project MSS student, Tarika Mootrey, a senior with a Psychology major and Elementary Education minor. She has been on the distinguished Dean’s List for three semester’s running! Her continued academic achievement is a reflection of her hard work that takes place in and outside of the classroom. Tarika’s level of academic achievement is not only recognized by UIS, but also by Project MSS. She has received several academic scholarships and continues to be an inspiration to her peers. Good work, Tarika!
Newsletter Editors
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Lauren Getzelman
TEP & MSS Graduate Assistants

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Important Dates:
April 17th and 18h
On Campus Conference for
Online Courses

May 8
Last Day of Student
Teaching

May 16
Commencement

CONGRATULATIONS
FALL 2014
STUDENT TEACHER
CANDIDATES!

Elementary Fall 2014:
*Stephanie Baile *Allison Duncan* Kaitlyn
Fulkerson* Beverly Jackson* Timothy Keysear*
Ashley McCallister* Kara Provines* Tiffany
Rang* Kristin Schattschneider* Scott Summers*
Wendy Turner *

Secondary Fall 2014:
*Chase Brinkley* Brian Heidtke* Victoria
Helliwell* Nathan Kuehnel* Robert Laird* Kayla
Matheny* Zack Morrissey *Brian Shafer* Will
Shalter*