This case study examines perspectives on re-evaluating standardized testing for Texas teachers. Testimonies by former students show how issues of high-stakes testing hinders bilingual teacher candidates, who are numbered in the field. For those who pass, it is a harsh reminder that failing to overcome testing barriers could have impacted their teaching profession. As the main focus of the study, Texas currently mandates changes to teacher certification programs, revamps and aligns teacher standards, and designs new teacher exit exams. Exit exams or standardized tests are considered by Texas to be the determining factor of success.

The literature reveals these reforms are contributing to a shortage of 600,000 teachers for the state. Minority students make up a large majority of this gap and more specifically, a low enrollment among Latinas/os. For many Latina/o bilingual teacher candidates, high rates of failure can be traced back to student enrollment into college in which ACT or SAT scores determine entrance. Standardized testing is a continuum throughout their collegiate career and in some cases impacts their future occupational goals, such as in the case of teacher candidates.

New Texas guidelines require teachers to become certificated in EC-4 grad or 4-8th certificates. In addition, content courses in Math and Science are required but do not reflect the limited number of minority students who did not have access to high schools with certified math and science courses. This impacts the number of teacher candidates who are forced to choose a certification in EC-4th lessoning the number of bilingual teachers in Grades 5-8. In the authors’ case studies of two teacher candidates, Carmelo and Natalia, their stories demonstrate the need for standardized tests to eliminate testing bias, incorporate involvement from teacher candidates in test development, and consideration of teacher’s classroom-based teaching performance or portfolio based assessments for certification. At the conclusion, the authors note there is no corroboration between competency testing and actual performance in the classroom. There results point to a need for reform of high-stakes testing to ensure minority students do not continue the pipeline.

Overall, this article is valuable in understanding how high stakes testing has hindered teacher candidates not only as they completed their program, but throughout their educational journey in K-12 grades. Carmelo and Natalia, once teacher candidates themselves, shared their continuous difficulty with testing that eventually impacted their efforts to become certified bilingual teachers. Although they eventually became certified, they are only two of the ever growing number of individuals who struggle to pass certification tests. In the future, testing reform is necessary to accommodate not only students, but also teacher candidates, particularly as there is an ever growing need for bilingual educators.