# EDUCATOR PREPARATION REFORM: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EDUCATIVE TEACHER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (EDTPA®) AS A MEASURE OF READINESS TO TEACH

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# ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether a relationship existed between early-career teachers' performance on the Educative Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA) as a measure for improving readiness to teach and their Level of Effectiveness (LOE) score once they begin teaching, and to investigate perceptions of early-career teachers regarding how well the edTPA prepared them to teach. The study addressed three Research Questions: Does a relationship exist between early-career teachers' performance on the edTPA assessment and their LOE score; Is there a difference in the performance on edTPA outcomes of early-career teachers based on education level, area of certification, or grade point average (GPA); and Is there a difference in the perception of the value of edTPA in early-career teachers since completing the edTPA during their preparation program and entering the teaching workforce.

This study employed a correlational non-experimental quantitative research design to explore the relationship between variables. A survey was conducted to gather the early-career teachers' perceptions of the value of the edTPA during preparation and beginning to teach. The participants in the study consisted of 134 early-career teachers who completed their educator preparation program from the same university and were employed in the same school district.

Data analysis indicated no significant association between first-year teachers' edTPA and LOE scores and no significant interaction between education level and grade level certification on edTPA performance, nor in the interaction between grade level certification and GPA. However,

GPA revealed a significant difference for 6-12 grade level certified candidates. The survey had a response rate of 52%. Survey results revealed that 94% of respondents perceived the edTPA as stressful and time consuming and not an accurate assessment of their teaching. However, 54% agreed their participation in the edTPA had better prepared them to be a more effective teacher.

Implications for practice and recommendations for future research were identified based on data results and survey responses. There are many factors to consider when determining the value of the edTPA as an assessment of teacher candidates' preparation and readiness to teach. Further investigation is warranted due to the limited scope of this study.

# DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my extremely supportive and understanding husband, Bruce Lussier, who has navigated this long journey with me every step of the way. I am truly grateful for his love, unwavering support, and encouragement.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AACTE, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

ACT, American College Test

AERE, American Educational Research Association

AFT, American Federation of Teachers

ARRA, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

AYP, Annual Yearly Progress

CAEP, Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation

CCSSO, Council of Chief State School Officers

ECS, Education Commission of the states

EPP, Educator Preparation Provider

edTPA, Educative Teacher Performance Assessment

ESL, English as a Second Language

ESEA, Elementary and Secondary Education Act

ETS, Educational Testing Services

GPA, Grade Point Average

GRE, Graduate Record Exam

IASA, Improving America's Schools Act

InTASC, Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium

K-12, Kindergarten through grade 12.

LOE, Level of Effectiveness

MAT, Millers Analogies Test

NAEP, National Assessment of Educational Progress

NASDTEC, National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification

NASBE, National Association of State Boards of Education

NBPTS, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

NCATE, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

NCLB, No Child Left Behind

NCTAF, National Commission on Teaching and America's Future

NCTQ, National Council on Teacher Quality

NEA, National Education Association

NES, National Evaluation Systems

NGA, National Governors Association

NRC, National Research Council

NSBA, National School Boards Association

NTC, New Techer Center

P-12, PreK through grade 12

PACT, Performance Assessment for California Teachers

PLT, Principles of Learning and Teaching

RTTT, Race to the Top

SAT, Scholastic Aptitude Test

SCALE, Stanford Center for Assessment, learning, and Equity

SACSOCOC, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

TBR, Tennessee Board of Regents

TEAC, Teacher Education Accreditation Council

TEAM, Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model

THEC, Tennessee Higher Education Commission

TSBE, Tennessee State Board of Education

TVAAS, Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System

U.S., United States

USDOE, United States Department of Education

# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

Teacher preparation programs have the responsibility to train teacher candidates to be ready to teach as they enter the classroom, to positively impact student learning, and to meet requirements for state licensure or certification (Darling-Hammond, 2006, 2010a). Certification requirements have historically included a series of standardized teacher certification exams such as the Praxis series by the Education Testing Services (ETS). These exams are typically paper and pencil or computer tests, which generally assess content knowledge, teaching theory, and pedagogy (Cochran-Smith, 2003). The standardized exams, Praxis and Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT), are used in approximately 40 states and territories as a requirement for certification of teachers (Educational Testing Service, 2014). However, certification exams are being highly criticized as an ineffective measure in determining the preparedness of preservice teachers (Crowe, 2010). These traditional certification exams have received criticism because of their format, high pass rates due to low minimum scores, and cost (Butrymowicz, 2012).

According to Goldhaber (2010), performance on licensure tests is not the only indicator of a teacher candidate's ability to teach. Goldhaber (2010) argues that there are two critically important components in teacher preparation: knowledge of the subject and the ability to teach the subject matter to diverse learners. An outcome of teacher preparation should include not only meeting certification requirements, but also verifying the knowledge and ability of the teacher to

impact student learning (Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation and Partnerships for Improved Student Learning, 2010).

Widespread education reforms focused on improving prekindergarten through twelfth grade (P-12) student achievement have resulted in an unprecedented emphasis on the accountability of teacher preparation programs to provide evidence that teacher candidates can demonstrate the knowledge and ability to teach (Coggshall, Bivona, & Reschly, 2012). A report from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) stated, "It is time to fundamentally redesign preparation programs to support the close coupling of practice, content, theory, and pedagogy" (Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation and Partnerships for Improved Student Learning, 2010, p. iii). The NCATE Blue Ribbon Panel report identified strategies or promising practices that improve the preparation of teachers (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2010)

One promising practice in the preparation of preservice teacher candidates is the use of a teacher performance assessment instrument designed to measure a set of core teaching skills. For example, one such performance assessment is the Educative Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA) instrument developed by the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE) in collaboration with the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) and modeled after the National Board Certification for Professional Teaching Standards (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2020a). The edTPA electronic portfolio is a multiple-measure performance assessment system, based on the Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT) and composed of three tasks: planning, instruction, and assessment of student learning. The tasks are designed to facilitate the analysis of lesson plans, video clips of instruction, teaching artifacts such as handouts and slides,

narrative explanations and rationales, student work samples, and teacher candidate reflections (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2020a).

The edTPA portfolio is also designed to provide authentic assessment of teacher candidates' performance and effectiveness during the clinical field experience (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2020b). The goal of the edTPA is to assess the readiness of the new teacher and provide evidence of the ability to teach all students in an authentic environment (Stanford Center for Assessment and Learning and Equity, 2015). The edTPA is currently implemented in over 790 educator preparation programs in 41 states and the District of Columbia to assess teacher candidates' readiness to teach (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2017). A growing number of states have implemented statewide policies or are considering such policies regarding the adoption of the edTPA to determine teacher certification and licensure. Currently16 states, including Tennessee, the site of this investigation, have initiated teacher certification requirements to include the edTPA portfolio for licensure (Stanford Center for Assessment and Learning and Equity, 2016).

Teacher certification in Tennessee previously required a passing score on the Praxis II and the PLT to meet licensing standards. However, changes to the Tennessee State Board of Education (TSBE) policy required all initial licensure candidates to pass the edTPA in lieu of the PLT pedagogical standardized exam effective January 1, 2019 (Tennessee Board of Education, 2018). TSBE set a series of incremental increases of qualifying scores required for licensure over a 3-year span. The required qualifying score in 2019 was 38, increased to 40 in 2020, and 42 in 2022 and thereafter (Tennessee Board of Education, 2018). The qualifying score of 42 by 2022 meets the suggested professional standard score set by the SCALE (Stanford Center for Assessment and Learning and Equity, 2013). The enactment of this new policy was a significant

change for the many teacher preparation programs in Tennessee. This reform effort established the edTPA as a high-stakes assessment for teacher candidates across Tennessee. In addition, it required teacher preparation programs to redesign curriculum and integrate the edTPA components in current teacher preparation coursework.

## Background to the Problem

A primary focus of education reform has centered on the preparation and education of the teaching workforce (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012). During the past 20 years, multiple state and national initiatives have sought to reform education by improving educational outcomes for P-12 public school children. In 1998, with the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act of 1965, the United States (U.S.) Congress determined the public should be able to know the effectiveness of teacher education programs and the qualifications of their graduates (AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education, 2005). The reauthorization also included the implementation of the Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants for states and partnerships. The purpose of the grants was to improve student achievement and the preparation of prospective teachers, enhance professional development, hold institutions of higher education accountable for preparing teachers in both content and pedagogy, and recruit highly qualified individuals into the teaching force (United States Department of Education, 1998). The focus on improving teacher preparation continued with the 2000 presidential election of George W. Bush. President Bush's administration passed the education reform initiative, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which intensified the focus on teacher preparation as a central issue of education reform (United States Department of Education, 2001).

NCLB was based on the premise that every student in K-12 public education should receive a high-quality education, resulting in greater academic achievement. The enactment of NCLB focused on the issue of identifying the elements of teaching and learning that are predictive of improving student achievement. A key element in this educational reform was the need to identify the criteria for producing qualified teachers. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) states that teacher qualifications are an important predictor of student achievement (Mayer, Mullens, & Moore, 2001). The National Research Council (NRC) agreed that teacher qualifications are important, arguing that students in every classroom must have an effective teacher in order to prepare them to live and work in the 21st century (National Research Council, 2010).

In 2009, President Barack Obama and the United States Department of Education created a national education initiative called Race to the Top (RTTT). The RTTT initiative awarded millions in funding to states to improve educational outcomes and student achievement (United States Department of Education, 2009). The grants were funded through a $4.35 billion allocation from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Crowe, 2011). Once again, teacher quality was a focus of the educational reform initiative. The RTTT grants required states to "adopt more vigorous accountability mechanisms and to establish or expand preparation programs that are successful at producing effective teachers" (Crowe, 2011). The conditions within RTTT required state departments of education and higher education commissions to work collaboratively with institutions of higher education to improve teacher quality (United States Department of Education, 2009). The recruitment, preparation, and retention of effective teachers and school leaders were priorities of the RTTT competitive grant program.

It has been estimated that 90% of new teachers are prepared in institutions of higher education (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2011). In 2013, the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) reported that of the data from over 1,400 teacher preparation programs, only four programs were worthy of receiving their highest score of four stars (Greenberg, McKee, & Walsh, 2013). The report further stated the U.S. spends more than $7 billion a year on preparing classroom teachers, but these teachers are not necessarily classroom ready to impact student learning effectively (Greenberg et al., 2013). The outcome of the NCTQ report was an intensification of the need for teacher preparation programs to be held accountable for the training of future teachers.

More national efforts to improve teacher preparation were initiated by the U.S. President and the U.S. Department of Education. President Barack Obama and the U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, called for a revolutionary change in teacher training programs (United States Department of Education, 2013). In October 2016, the U.S. Department of Education released final regulations for evaluating all teacher-training programs. The regulations focused on outcomes, such as performance data, instead of the current reporting of inputs. Heretofore, teacher education programs were only required to report program and candidate demographic data such as enrollment number, gender, ethnicity, grade point average (GPA), program completers, and certification areas. To ensure teacher training programs are effectively preparing aspiring educators, the new proposed regulations would require states to annually report on the performance of teacher preparation programs including employment outcomes, survey feedback from new teachers and employers, P-12 learner outcomes, and specialized accreditation assurance that the program produces high-quality teacher candidates ready to teach in today's classrooms (United States Department of Education, 2014a).

In February 2017, with the election of President Donald Trump and a new Congress, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to overturn the recent federal accountability regulations for teacher preparation programs by a vote of 240-190 (Congress, 2017). This action occurred due to the belief by many congressional representatives that the regulations placed burdensome and costly data reporting requirements on states and institutions of higher education, as well as the potential for states to lose federal student-aid for low performing teacher preparation programs.

In addition, overturning the teacher preparation regulation would give states greater authority to make decisions regarding education (House, 2017). In March 2017, the U.S. Senate voted to rescind the U.S. Department of Education regulations for teacher preparation programs by a narrow margin of 50-49. The bill was signed by President Trump on March 27, 2017, officially rescinding the regulations that were enacted in October 2016 as part of the Higher Education Act (Brown, 2017). The rescinding of the federal education regulations gives states greater flexibility and control regarding the issue of accountability of teacher preparation programs (Brown, 2017). However, Tennessee remained among the states that chose to continue to annually report on the performance of teacher preparation programs.

In 2008, the Tennessee State Legislature passed a statute requiring an annual report card on the Effectiveness of Teacher Training Programs to address teacher preparation program quality (Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 2014). The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) published the report card, which included demographic data on the number, gender, ethnicity, and license type of each institution of higher education recent graduates (Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 2014). In addition, the report included performance data on the graduates' GPA, and test scores on the American College Test (ACT), Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), Graduate Record Exam (GRE), Miller Analogies Test (MAT),

and pass rates on Praxis content certification exams. Lastly, the report contained data on placement and retention as well as comparisons of recent graduates to veteran and beginning teachers by content area based on student achievement and growth (Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 2014).

In 2015, the Teacher Preparation Report Card moved under the control of the State Board of Education in partnership with the Tennessee Department of Education (Tennessee Board of Education, 2016b). The Report Card was redesigned to provide more useful information about Tennessee's education preparation providers and their graduates to a wide range of consumers and stakeholders (Tennessee Board of Education, 2016b). Each Tennessee educator preparation provider was scored in three major domains with multiple metrics: candidate profile, employment, and provider impact. A fourth domain on employer and candidate satisfaction will be required in future reports. An overall performance score ranging from the lowest score of one to the highest score of four was assigned to each Tennessee educator preparation provider (Tennessee Board of Education, 2016a).

In response to the issue of improving teacher quality, the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) redesigned teacher education programs at its six public universities. The mission of the redesigned TBR initiative, Ready2Teach, was to improve student learning through improved teacher quality (Scott & Teale, 2011). Full implementation of Ready2Teach was required by September 2013. To ensure teacher candidates are ready to teach, the initiative adopted a new way of assessing teacher candidates that requires candidates to demonstrate their ability to teach as well as their knowledge of content and pedagogy (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2014).

The new assessment implemented as part of the Ready2Teach program was the edTPA, a performance-based assessment used to measure teacher candidates' readiness to teach. The use

of performance-based assessments, such as the edTPA, was recommended by AACTE and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) as a means to strengthen accountability for teacher preparation programs and positively impact P-12 student educational outcomes (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2011; Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012). Additionally, Darling-Hammond (2010a) states that teacher performance assessments are better predictors of teacher candidates' ability to impact student learning than traditional standardized teacher exams.

The 2012 CCSSO report, *Our Responsibility, Our Promise: Transforming Educator Preparation and Entry into the Profession*, recommended the use of performance-based assessments to better determine candidates' readiness for licensure and teaching instead of relying on completion of a series of courses. The performance-based assessment requires candidates to apply the skills and knowledge they have acquired during the preparation program. CCSSO (2012) argued that high-quality educator preparation programs not only need "selective criteria for choosing candidates' entry into their preparation program but must also have rigorous criteria for program completion" (p. 10) such as performance-based assessments.

## Statement of the Problem

Preservice teacher candidates should be adequately prepared and ready to teach day one and supported in their early-career years in order to retain them in the classroom. According to a 2014 report by the Alliance for Excellent Education, approximately 13% of the 3.4 million American public school teachers either move or leave teaching each year (United States Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). This exodus of the teaching workforce was estimated to cost states between $1 billion and $2.2 billion per year

(Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014; Ingersoll, 2001). The New Teacher Center (NTC) reported that one in five U.S. teachers are in their first three years of teaching (New Teacher Center, 2016). Furthermore, research indicated that 40-50% of teachers leave the profession within the first five years (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004). Richard Ingersoll, an education professor at the University of Pennsylvania, stated the primary reason teachers leave the profession was due to their dissatisfaction with their preparation and support that was closely related with the quality of their first teaching experience (Ingersoll, 2001). Research by the Learning Policy Institute reported a 35% national decline in teacher preparation program enrollments from 2009 to 2014, and beginning teachers with inadequate preparation are two and one-half times more likely to leave the classroom after the first year as compared to their better prepared peers (Learning Policy Institute, 2016). This research report had major implications for teacher preparation programs. If the teaching workforce was to be retained, teacher candidates entering the classroom must be ready to teach and be well prepared for the rigors of teaching.

The growing debate on how to improve student achievement in P-12 schools has focused on teacher preparation programs in higher education, creating an unprecedented emphasis on the accountability of these programs. Specifically, the emphasis focuses on redesigning teacher preparation programs to better prepare beginning teachers to positively impact student learning as soon as they enter the classroom (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2014). Candidates' completion of a preparation program usually ends with a recommendation for licensure and endorsement in a specific discipline from their respective state (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012). While certification and licensure requirements vary from state to state, there are some common similarities such as a bachelor's degree, major or minor in education, completion of an accredited education program, and passing a certification exam (Roth & Swail, 2000).

According to the 2012 report by the CCSSO, all but two states used some type of standardized assessment as a requirement for licensure. These high-stakes summative assessments have historically tested content knowledge as well as pedagogical knowledge and skill (Butrymowicz, 2012). Pedagogical knowledge focuses on what teacher candidates know about teaching, while pedagogical skill demonstrates how candidates teach (Hollins, 2011). The variability in initial licensure requirements among states is noteworthy. One such disparity is in the passing score on licensure tests such as the Praxis II exams. In accordance with individual states determining licensing requirements, the state sets the passing score required on such exams. According to CCSSO (2012), states that require higher scores on the Praxis II exam typically "set a passing score 20-30 points greater than states with a less demanding score" (p. 7). As a result, less demanding states require teacher candidates to score better than one out of four candidates, while candidates from states with higher score requirements must score better than three out of four candidates (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012).

High-quality teacher preparation programs have more rigorous requirements for completion of their preparation program to ensure candidates' readiness to teach (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012). These requirements include the use of multiple measures to assess candidates' ability to teach, such as performance-based assessments (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2013). Furthermore, changes in national and state accreditation standards, such as the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) standards adopted by NCATE, necessitated the use of more authentic measurements like performance-based assessments to determine candidates' readiness to teach (National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2014).

Performance-based assessments require teacher candidates to demonstrate their ability to apply knowledge to the practice of teaching. The heightened emphasis on teacher candidate skill performance, as well as content and pedagogical knowledge acquisition, illuminates the value of performance-based assessments to improve teacher preparation programs (Peck, Singer-Gabella, Sloan, & Lin, 2014). The edTPA was designed to provide a national standard framework by means of which to evaluate the preparation and readiness of beginning teachers seeking initial certification (Stanford Center for Assessment and Learning and Equity, 2013). Therefore, as previously stated, 41 states have adopted performance assessments in an attempt to improve teacher quality (Stanford Center for Assessment and Learning and Equity, 2016). Tennessee adopted the edTPA as a licensure and certification requirement for all initial licensure candidates effective January 1, 2019 (Tennessee Board of Education, 2018). This significant change in licensure requirements for Tennessee teachers required teacher preparation programs to align curriculum, coursework, and clinical experiences with the edTPA components.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether a relationship existed between the early-career teachers' performance on the edTPA as a measure for improving readiness to teach and their level of effectiveness (LOE) evaluation score once they begin teaching. Tennessee teachers receive an annual evaluation LOE score on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest rating. The LOE scale score includes qualitative data, student growth data, and student achievement data (Tennessee Department of Education, 2017).

This study also investigated whether teacher candidates' performance on the edTPA differed when education level, certification area, and GPA were considered. In this study, student

level was defined as undergraduate and post-baccalaureate student status. The certification area was identified as early childhood, elementary, middle grades, and secondary education certification (Middle Tennessee State University College of Education, 2014). Furthermore, the study examined the perceptions of early-career teachers, with one to three years teaching experience, who completed the edTPA as a requirement of their preparation program. Specifically, the study investigated perceptions of early-career teachers regarding how well the edTPA prepared them to be ready to teach.

The information gained from this study is needed to make informed programmatic decisions, elevate teacher candidates' effectiveness and readiness to teach, align teacher preparation programs with state licensure requirements, and advise policy. Education preparation programs, state department of educations, state board of educations, policy makers, and all other education stakeholders need information regarding the role of edTPA in preparing teacher candidates to teach that positively affect student learning. This study added to the body of research on how to improve and enhance teacher education programs to better prepare the next generation of teachers.

## Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

### Research Question One

Does a relationship exist between early-career teachers' performance on the edTPA assessment and their LOE score?

Research Question Two

Is there a difference in the performance on the edTPA outcomes of early-career teachers based on education level, area of certification, or GPA?

Research Question Three

Is there a difference in the perception of the value of edTPA in early-career teachers since completing the edTPA during their preparation program and entering the teaching workforce?

## Rationale for the Study

The primary basis of teacher education is to develop the knowledge and skills of teacher candidates so they can become highly effective in helping students learn (Darling-Hammond, 2010a). Current education reforms are keenly focused on the preparation of teacher candidates at the state and national levels as a way to increase P-12 student achievement (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2013). Education reforms are often adopted without the input from the people directly responsible for implementing the reforms such as inservice teachers, preservice teachers, and the education preparation programs (Paine, Beal-Alvarez, & Scheetz, 2016). One such reform is the increasing use of a performance assessment to evaluate the readiness of teacher candidates and to measure their effectiveness upon entering the classroom. Multiple research studies indicate that teachers who participate in performance assessments are more effective teachers with regard to their impact on student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2012).

The need to improve and strengthen teacher preparation programs is critical to improving P-12 student achievement (National Research Council, 2010). New methods of linking theory to

practice are vital in the preparation of new teachers, as these "graduates are faced with educating an increasingly diverse student population that is being held to increasingly complex standards" (Ginsberg & Levine, 2013, p. 1). In a survey conducted by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), 84% of new teachers stated they were completely or mostly prepared on content, while only 70% felt completely or mostly prepared on pedagogy (Teacher Preparation Task Force, 2012). Based on these research findings, the survey affirms the need for better preparation and assessment of teacher candidates in the area of pedagogy, which is the actual performance of teaching, not just the knowledge of teaching (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2013).

Teacher preparation programs are challenged to effectively measure their teacher candidates' readiness to teach. In response to the need to improve teacher preparation and effectiveness in order to increase P-12 student achievement, the use of teacher performance assessments has become widely accepted and implemented by universities across the nation (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2013). One such assessment, the edTPA, developed by the SCALE, is the most widely used performance assessment instrument to date (Stanford Center for Assessment and Learning and Equity, 2013). The edTPA is designed to help teacher preparation programs increase their focus on practice by providing a common standard of teaching quality that supports student learning (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2013, 2020b).

Many states are not only using the edTPA for assessing and evaluating their teacher candidates, but also for employing this assessment as a state licensing requirement and a measure of accountability for accreditation of teacher preparation programs (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2020a). This change significantly elevates the importance of

performance assessments for teacher candidates and teacher preparation programs when used for certification, licensure, and accreditation (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2013). As states transition to adopting the use of performance assessments for high-stake purposes, such as licensure and program accreditation, it is important for teacher preparation programs to understand the perceptions of teacher candidates in relation to the efficacy of the edTPA (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2013). By understanding the experiences of preservice teachers completing the edTPA, educator preparation programs can better meet the needs of preservice teachers and provide needed supports.

The data that universities receive from their candidates' edTPA performance assessment may also be used to inform and initiate teacher education curriculum changes and state licensure policies. While performance data are typically readily available to educator preparation programs, student perceptions or student voice is often absent when making programmatic decisions (Paine et al., 2016). Understanding early-career teachers perspectives is critical in the retention of the workforce (Zhang, Nam, & Pelttari, 2016). Furthermore, early-career teachers' performances relating to the edTPA are important to educator preparation programs in identifying areas of program strength and need. This information is essential in order to make programmatic changes regarding the integration of edTPA components in coursework and clinical experiences to ensure the readiness of teacher candidates (Paine et al., 2016).

## Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

According to Zeichner and Wray (2001), "teaching portfolios have become a staple in U.S. teacher education programs for the purpose of granting initial certification, recertification,

and National Board certification" (p. 613). However, teacher education programs vary in the conceptualization and implementation of teaching portfolios depending on the intent and purpose for which they are utilized. The edTPA portfolio is used to collect multiple sources of evidence, such as artifacts, video clips, and commentaries, to assess the teacher candidates' readiness and proficiency to teach (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2020b). This process requires the teacher candidate to demonstrate content and pedagogy knowledge as well as skills in the practice or performance of teaching. The teacher must then reflect on the lesson taught and synthesize the needed changes to improve the effectiveness of the lesson to ensure student learning and achievement.

The performance and proficiency of the teacher candidate ultimately impacts the achievement of the students s/he is teaching. The teacher candidate must demonstrate a certain level of proficiency in the planning, instruction, and assessment of teaching standards while creating a learner-centered classroom environment that promotes learning for all students. In the learner-centered classroom, the teacher focuses on each individual student's unique learning needs in order to engage and motivate the student to take ownership and actively participate in the learning process (McCombs, 2001). Figure 1.1 depicts the conceptual framework for the performance-based portfolio assessment. The figure illustrates the relationship of the multiple sources of collected evidence to the elements of effective teaching as well as the knowledge and performance of the teacher candidate. Collectively, these elements influence the achievement and growth of the learner.


Figure 1.1 Framework for Performance-Based Portfolio Assessment

## Significance of the Study

This study examined the perceptions and performance of early-career teachers who engaged in the edTPA as a requirement of their preparation program. The findings of this study are useful in informing the university teacher preparation program faculty, P-12 schools, State Department of Education, State Board of Education, and other stakeholders concerning the use of the edTPA performance assessment in preparing teacher candidates to be ready to teach. In addition, this study provided much needed information to stakeholders on the usefulness of the edTPA performance assessment as a requirement for licensure. The results also added to the body of available research on education reform efforts regarding the use of the edTPA as a measurement of teacher candidates' readiness to teach.

## Definition of Terms

The following terms and definitions apply to this study:

- Accreditation: An evaluation process that determines the quality of an institutional program based upon predetermined standards (National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2014).
- American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE): A nonprofit national alliance of educator preparation programs with over 800 member institutions representing public and private colleges and universities in every state, the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Guam (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2014).
- American College Testing Program (ACT): A curriculum-based test used to assess an individual's readiness for college (American College Testing Program, 2014).
- Certification: The process by which the state evaluates the credentials of prospective teachers to ensure that they meet the professional standards set by the state education agency (Goldhaber, 2010). Certification is often referred to as licensure and may be used interchangeably throughout this study.
- Clinical Experience: The part of a teacher preparation program in which teacher candidates practice teaching in an authentic school environment, also referred to as field experience (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2011).
- Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP): The new unified teacher preparation program accreditation system, which serves all providers previously accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

(NCATE) and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) prior to July 2013 (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, 2013).

- Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO): A nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five US extra-state jurisdictions (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2014).
- Completer: Students who complete professional education programs in an institution of higher education, which prepares students for a degree, licensure, and endorsement credentials (Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 2015).
- Early-Career Teacher: A teacher with one to three years teaching experience (Davis, 2016).
- Educative Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA): An electronic portfolio teacher performance assessment designed by the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE) to assess teacher candidates' readiness to teach (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2020b).
- Education Commission of the States (ECS): A bipartisan organization designed to help state officials study educational policy issues (Education Commission of the States, 2014).
- E-portfolio: A learning and assessment tool which includes a digitized collection of artifacts including demonstrations, resources, and accomplishments that represent an individual, group, or institution (Darling-Hammond, 2010a).
- Inservice Teacher: A degreed, licensed practicing teacher (Darling-Hammond, 2012).

- Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC): A consortium of state education agencies and national educational organizations dedicated to the reform of the preparation, licensing, and on-going professional development of teachers (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011).
- Level of Effectiveness (LOE) Scale: The level of effectiveness scale score 1-5 includes qualitative data, student growth data, and student achievement data (Tennessee Department of Education, 2017).
- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): A group that conducts assessments of randomly chosen fourth and eighth-grade students across the United States for the purpose of reporting and comparing reading, math, science, and writing scores (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2014).
- National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE): The professional accrediting organization of colleges and universities that prepares teachers and other school personnel (National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2014).
- National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ): A nonprofit organization that focuses on education reform policies and publishes an annual evaluation and ranking of teacher preparation programs in the United States (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2014).
- National Research Council (NRC): A group organized by the National Academy of Sciences in 1916 to associate the broad community of science and technology with the purpose of furthering knowledge and advising the federal government (National Research Council, 2010).

- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB): Federal education legislation that revised the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that called for reform in K-12 public education and sets rigorous accountability standards for schools (United States Department of Education, 2001).
- P-12: Refers to the grade span of prekindergarten to twelfth grade (Tennessee Department of Education, 2012)
- Pedagogy: The function or work of a teacher including instructional methods, principles, practices, and profession of teaching (Hollins, 2011).
- Performance-Based Assessment: An assessment in which the teacher candidate demonstrates and applies what they have learned to their teaching practices (Lane, 2010).
- Praxis II: A standardized national subject-area content examination administered by the (AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education, 2005) Educational Testing Service (ETS) and required by many states for initial licensure of teacher candidates (Educational Testing Service, 2010).
- Praxis Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT): A standardized national exam designed to assess a beginning teacher's knowledge of a variety of job-related criteria that is pedagogical knowledge and required by many states for initial licensure of teacher candidates (Educational Testing Service, 2010).
- Preservice Teacher: An individual admitted to or enrolled in a program for the initial or advanced preparation of teachers, a teacher continuing their professional development, formerly referred to as teacher candidate or student teacher (AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education, 2005).

- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC): The regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the southern states (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 2014).
- Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT): A test implemented to assess an individual's readiness for college (College Board, 2014).
- Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR): A system of public higher education institutions in Tennessee consisting of six state universities, 13 community colleges, and 27 colleges of applied technology (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2015).
- Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS): An assessment system that measures the impact schools and teachers have on their students' academic progress. TVAAS measures student growth, not proficiency, on state assessments (Tennessee Department of Education, 2013).
- Teacher Candidate: An individual admitted to or enrolled in a program for the initial or advanced preparation of teachers, a teacher continuing their professional development, formerly referred to as student teacher or preservice teacher (AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education, 2005).
- Teacher Preparation Program: A state-approved course of study that when completed signifies an enrollee has met all the state's educational requirements for initial licensure to teach (AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education, 2005).

## Methodological Assumptions

The following assumptions were made in regard to this study:

- All participants will be independent of each other.
- All participants will be represented only once.
- All participants will answer survey questions truthfully and honestly.
- All participants will have attended the same teacher preparation program.
- All participants will have completed the edTPA as a requirement for licensure.
- All survey participants will have scores on the edTPA.
- All survey participants will have a Level of Effectiveness (LOE) score.
- The data collected from the edTPA assessment will be valid and reliable.

## Delimitations of the Study

This study is delimited by the following:

- The study focused only on early-career teachers who completed the edTPA during the Residency II clinical field experience (i.e., student teaching) semester at the same university.
- All survey participants had scores on the edTPA.
- All survey participants had LOE scores.
- Early-career teachers participating in the survey were employed at the same local public school system.

## Limitations of the Study

The study is limited by the following:

- The external scoring of the edTPA was completed by subject-area and grade-level teachers as well as teacher educators with experience mentoring or supervising teacher candidates (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2020b). The degree of inter-rater reliability has been affected due to the large number of assessments submitted for scoring from the 700 institutes of higher education.
- The survey responses by early-career teachers were self-reported.
- The sample of early-career teachers was from one educator preparation institution, which limited generalization beyond that school.
- The scoring of the LOE scale may be subjective since teacher evaluations are a component of the LOE. Teacher evaluations were conducted by building level principals and/or supervisors. While all administrators had received the same training on the state adopted evaluation model, the degree of interrater reliability may have been affected due to the number of administrators conducting the teacher evaluations in different schools.

# CHAPTER II

# LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the literature germane to this study includes a number of significant areas that together form the conceptual framework for reform of the preparation, assessment, and certification of teacher candidates in higher education teacher preparation programs. The following review of literature was conducted in researching the political climate for education reform, teacher preparation programs, teacher quality, the use of performance-based assessments, teacher certification, and emerging trends and recommendations in teacher education. The review also includes the expanding use of the edTPA to improve candidates' readiness to teach.

## Political Climate

The last three decades have included unprecedented education reforms beginning with the release of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform* in April 1983 (United States Department of Education, 1983). This report created serious concern throughout the U.S. regarding the educational system. The weakened U.S. economy in the 1980s coupled with the rising economy in the east, such as Japan's, caused heightened alarm throughout government entities (AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education, 2005). President Ronald Reagan attributed the weakened U.S. economy to its education system (Edwards, Gilroy, & Hartley, 2005). The *Nation at Risk* report presented a very dismal picture of American education but argued that, even though it would be difficult, the decline in education could be reversed over

time (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The recommendations from *A Nation at Risk* addressed establishing higher academic standards, strengthening state and local high school graduation course requirements, spending more time in school, improving teacher preparation, and holding elected officials accountable for ensuring implementation of improvements (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). While the report was alarming to most American citizens and politicians, it did very little to raise student achievement. However, it was very effective in creating public awareness of educational issues (Vinovskis, 2009).

By the mid to late 1980s, more reform was underway, with a focus on creating standards for teachers as well as students. During this time two major reports were released, both calling for specific reforms in teacher education. In 1986, the report from the Task Force on Teaching as a Profession of the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, *A Nation Prepared*, addressed the need for well-educated teachers equipped to redesign schools for the future. The task force recommended a medical model which requires a residency clinical experience for teacher education at the master's level (AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education, 2005; Edwards et al., 2005). The report also called for cultural diversity training for teachers due to the increasing diversity of the student population as a result of school desegregation from the civil rights reform of the 1960s and the 1954 Brown Supreme Court decision (Cornbleth, 2013). Also in 1986, the Holmes Group, an alliance of over 100 research universities, released the report, *Tomorrow's Teachers*, promoting improvements in teacher preparation to become more rigorous and intellectual. The report recommended higher entry standards, career ladders for teachers, and the creation of professional development schools to train teachers (AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education, 2005).

In 1987, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) was founded to "establish high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do, and to develop and operate a national, voluntary system to access and certify teachers who meet these standards" (AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education, 2005, p. 1). This marked the beginning of the standards-based era of education for both students and teachers. In 1988, a strong emphasis on the need for more state-level student assessment data resulted in the National Assessment of Education Progress to be written in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Vinovskis, 2009).

The 1990s brought forth a national education strategy to further the focus on teacher quality and standards-based education reform. The first ever national education goals were created at the 1989 National Education Summit with the adoption of the Goals 2000 Educate America Act (United States Department of Education, 1998). These goals were created at the impetus of the National Governor's Association (NGA) during the Bush administration, 1989-1993, but became the centerpiece of education reform during the Clinton administration, 1993-2001. Goals 2000 was comprised of six very ambitious, but mostly unachievable goals (Vinovskis, 2009). The specific objectives of Goals 2000 were (a) by the year 2000, every child would start school ready to learn; (b) a national graduation rate of 90%; (c) student mastery of five core subjects by Grades 4, 8, and 12; (d) American students to lead the world in math and science; (e) all American adults to be literate; and (f) every school to be safe and drug free (Vinovskis, 2009). Since the Goals 2000 initiative was led by state governors, states began developing more challenging academic standards, assessments, curriculum frameworks, graduation requirements, and accountability systems to report student, school, and district progress (Schwartz & Robinson, 2000).

In 1994, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) under the Clinton administration was passed as the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA). The reauthorization once again required states to establish challenging content and performance standards, implement assessments that measured students' performance against these standards, create performance-based accountability systems for the achievement of all students, promote programmatic flexibility, and foster instructional and curricular reform(Vinovskis, 2009). During the mid-and late- 1990s, states and school districts began to move in the direction of standards-based reform, consistent with the intent of IASA (Vinovskis, 2009). However, neither the Goals 2000 initiative nor the IASA were fully implemented in many states due to the lack of federal provisions and funding to enforce these acts (Goertz, 2005).

Following the Goals 2000 initiative and IASA, a 1996 report from the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF), *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*, made very specific recommendations for improving education. The commission was formed in 1994 for the purpose of evaluating what education changes needed to occur to ensure that every child had access to the kind of teaching needed to help him/her meet the new, high standards. While the Goals 2000 initiative and IASA focused primarily on improving education for students, the NCTAF focused on teacher quality (Darling-Hammond, 1997). The recommendations offered a blueprint for transforming teacher preparation, recruitment, licensure, certification, induction, professional development, and rewards.

A network of 12 states worked with the commission, their governors, state departments of education, legislators, and business and education leaders to develop strategies for improving the quality of teaching. The 12 states involved in the initial work included Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Missouri, Montana, North Carolina, Ohio, and

Oklahoma (Darling-Hammond, 1997). In 1996, a follow-up research study was conducted to measure the progress of all states on the implementation of the commission's recommendations. The follow-up report, *What Matters Most: Investing in Quality Teaching,* highlights progress on state and local initiatives to improve the quality of teaching. The report concluded that while progress had been made, there was much work to be done (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

As these education reforms were taking place, a shift in student demographics across the U.S. was also occurring. During the 1990s, the number of Mexican immigrants living in the United States grew by nearly 5 million people (Card & Lewis, 2007). These students and their families were no longer settling in states close to the borders, such as California and Texas, but in large metropolitan areas such as Atlanta, Raleigh-Durham, Portland, and Seattle. People from Mexico were the largest single group of U.S. immigrants, representing about one-third of all immigrants and 4% of the country's working age population (Card & Lewis, 2007). Most Mexican immigrants were non-English speaking and had relatively low levels of education. This influx of mostly non-English speaking students created new challenges for teachers and schools in the midst of widespread education reform. As the influx of Mexican immigrants increased, so did the need for additional school services such as English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers. By 2013, there were over 11.6 million Mexican immigrants in the United States accounting for 28% of all U.S. immigrants (Zong & Batalova, 2014).

The 21st century ushered in a new administration in 2001 with even more stringent ideas for education reform. Both presidential candidates, George W. Bush and Al Gore, proposed education as a priority with aggressive education policies to improve American education. Federal policy had supported standards-based reform since the passage of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994; hence, the rhetoric of both candidates was centered on creating a

national education agenda to improve education (Vinovskis, 2009). Within days of taking office, President George W. Bush sent a legislative draft titled No Child Left Behind to Capitol Hill. The NCLB legislation was modeled after the Texas standards-based accountability program, where President Bush had served as governor (Vinovskis, 2009). The NCLB Act of 2001 was signed into law on January 8, 2002.

The new NCLB law required all government-run schools receiving federal funding to determine students' annual yearly progress (AYP) by administering annual state-wide standardized tests for students in Grades 3-12 (United States Department of Education, 2001). Test results were publicly reported by subgroups of race, socioeconomic status, special education, and English language learners in each school and district. AYP proficiency rates increased every few years with an end goal of 100% student proficiency in math, reading, and science by 2014. NCLB provided consequences for schools that failed AYP for two consecutive years and allowed students to attend a school of their choice if their zoned school persistently failed AYP for three consecutive years (United States Department of Education, 2002). One of the most profound and lasting effects of NCLB was the employment of data-driven decision making to improve schools (Goertz, 2005). Data-driven accountability was a paradigm shift for most schools and educators as it had not previously been a central focus of determining school effectiveness. The focus on the achievement of subgroups of students was also a new concept in the use of data for schools (Hess & Petrilli, 2006).

One of the NCLB elements that caused schools great angst was the testing of English language learners (EL). The NCLB law introduced dramatic policy changes at a time of rapid immigration growth in the US. By 2002, one in five children in K-12 was an immigrant, and one in four of these children came from low-income families. Of the 10.5 million students

nationwide, who were children of immigrants, one-quarter were foreign-born, and three-quarters were born in the United States. This created major implications for schools to provide needed services for these children and ensure they met AYP (Fix & Passel, 2003).

Initially, the acceptance of NCLB was with renewed hope of improving American schools. However, it did not take long for educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders to become disenfranchised due to the significant emphasis on high stakes testing with an outcome goal of 100% proficiency for all students (Goertz, 2005; Hess & Petrilli, 2006).

> With the enactment of this law, the federal government expanded its role significantly, requiring states to test more and set more ambitious and uniform improvement goals for their schools, and prescribing sanctions for schools that failed to meet these goals. (Goertz, 2005, p. 74)

By the 2008 presidential election, NCLB was a highly contested and debated issue for both federal and state politicians seeking election or reelection. There was widespread discourse with the federal NCLB law, and calls for revision or repeal of the law were heard across the nation.

As history has proven, with each new administration, new legislation is enacted based on the political agenda of the new president (McGuinn, 2011). American schools and educators faced one more major education reform effort early in the 21st century. The 2008 election of Barack Obama as president during the recession brought the enactment of ARRA to stimulate the economy, support job creation, and invest in critical sectors such as education (United States Department of Education, 2009). The president's education initiative was a competitive grant program, *Race to the Top*, which provided $4.35 billion in grants to states. The RTTT grant was designed to reward states that were initiating education reform for the purpose of achieving improvement in student outcomes, student achievement, closing achievement gaps, increasing

high school graduation rates, and preparing students for success in college and careers (United States Department of Education, 2009).

The four core areas of education reform include:

- Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy;
- Building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction;
- Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals especially where they are needed most;
- Turning around the lowest-achieving schools. (United States Department of Education, 2009, p. 2)

The approach to the RTTT grant program differed from earlier federal education reform initiatives in that these grants were competitive, voluntary, customized to state needs, and initiated by states. Therefore, while the grants were based on four major principles, each was operationally different in the various states. However, the greatest difference was that RTTT supported those states that had demonstrated the willingness, ability, and commitment for innovation and reform. This requirement created substantial recommendations for changes to state policy in order for states to meet eligibility requirements of the grant (McGuinn, 2011).

The RTTT grant applications were scheduled to be submitted in two phases: January 2010 and September 2010. States that applied in phase one but were not awarded could apply again in phase two. Forty states and the District of Columbia applied for the RTTT grant during phase one, but only two states were awarded grants, Delaware and Tennessee. On March 10, 2010, Delaware was awarded approximately $119 million and Tennessee was awarded $501 million. In the second phase, nine states and the District of Columbia were awarded RTTT grants

in February 2011. Based upon the results of the education reforms within states, the RTTT competitive grant program expanded to include a third phase in 2011, in which seven more states received funding. In all, 19 states have received RTTT funding to further education reforms in their states (United States Department of Education, 2011). The RTTT grant for the awardees in phase one ended in 2014 raising concerns about the states' ability to sustain the reforms once the funding ended. Many of the states that received RTTT funding were faced with the dilemma of how to continue the programmatic changes without additional federal or state funding.

Additional RTTT competitive grant programs were established to expand early learning programs and opportunities in the states. There were four specific criteria that grantees had to meet:

> (1) adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy; (2) building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction; (3) recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and (4) turning around our lowest-achieving schools. (United States Department of Education, 2014b, para. 2)

There have been three phases of competition for RTTT Early Learning grants, and 20 states have received funding. The United States Department of Education (USDOE) also held three rounds of competition for District RTTT grants. In 2011, nine states were awarded RTTT funding, an additional five districts received RTTT grants in 2012, and RTTT grants were awarded to 16 districts in 2013 (United States Department of Education, 2011). The overall purpose of these grants was to establish or expand early learning opportunities in the states.

The RTTT competitive grant program has generated more state-level reform efforts than any other initiative since the release of a *Nation at Risk* in 1983 (Crowe, 2011). However, this has not been without controversy and angst among state educators who are directly affected by

these reforms. McGuinn (2011) argues that while the program's approach may be different from that of earlier federal education programs, many of the political and institutional obstacles to sustaining these reforms at the federal and state levels have stayed the same, such as the political discourse around education reform.

In October 2016, at the end of the Obama administration, the USDOE released new accountability regulations for all teacher preparation programs (United States Department of Education, 2016). The new regulations required states to report annually on multiple outcome measures such as graduate placement and retention rates, stakeholder satisfaction, and student learning (United States Department of Education, 2016). There were several key controversial issues of the new accountability regulations. The issues centered on requiring states to evaluate teacher preparation programs based on standardized scores of the students taught by graduates of the program and requiring annual ratings of each teacher preparation program (American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, 2015). The passing of the new accountability regulations for teacher preparation programs was short lived as in March 2017, the accountability regulations were officially rescinded by U.S. Congress and signed into law by newly elected President Trump (Brown, 2017).

## Improving Teacher Quality

It is critical that every student in every classroom have an effective teacher in order to meet the demands of living and working in the 21st century (National Research Council, 2010). While there is an overwhelming acceptance of the belief that the effectiveness of the teacher is critical to the success of the student, the discourse is in the lack of agreement in defining effective and how to adequately measure teacher effectiveness (Cornbleth, 2013). The use of

teacher evaluation data alone has been questioned as a poor measure for improving teacher effectiveness due to the variance of evaluation instruments and the skill of the evaluators using them (Crowe, 2010). The use of student performance data is increasingly becoming a factor in determining the effectiveness of the teacher (National Association of State Boards of Education, 2011).

Since the release of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, education in the United States has experienced waves of reforms aimed at improving student achievement and graduation rates (Vinovskis, 2009). Inevitably, the focus turns to the preparation of teachers as the most important factor for improving outcomes for P-12 students. The past two decades have witnessed a remarkable amount of policy directed at teacher education, intensifying the debate about which approaches best prepare teachers to make a difference in student outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2010b). Reports from the mid-1980s, such as the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, the Holmes Group, and the NBPTS, promoted the argument for a more knowledgeable and skilled professional teaching workforce (AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education, 2005; Edwards et al., 2005). The 1989 Goals 2000 national strategy for improving education and the Improving American Schools Act (IASA) of 1996 initiated the concept of standards-based education (Vinovskis, 2009). However, it was the report from the NCTAF, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*, that specifically addressed the need for professional teaching standards as well as strengthening teacher education and certification requirements (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

The focus on improving teacher quality continued with the introduction of highly-qualified teacher status as part of the NCLB Act of 2001. Highly-qualified was defined as those who have obtained full state certification or have passed a state teacher licensing exam. This

included those teachers who were certified through an alternate licensure program (United States Department of Education, 2001). An alternate licensure pathway into teaching allowed individuals with degrees to enter the teaching profession without first completing an accredited teacher education program (Roth & Swail, 2000).

The tenets of the new law centered on content knowledge, requiring all teachers in core academic subjects to be highly qualified by the 2005-2006 school year preferably through an assessment of content knowledge. However, the law also allowed states to determine other routes for granting teachers highly qualified status, such as a matrix of multiple criteria like professional development activities and additional coursework (United States Department of Education, 2002). Many school districts in Tennessee relied on the Praxis content exam as evidence of a teacher being highly qualified in a specific area.

The NCLB law also required the use of standards-based curriculum and high-stakes testing as evidence of student achievement and teacher effectiveness. For the first time, test results were publicly reported by subgroups of students, instead of aggregated class level or school level test scores. This created the need for teachers to understand assessment data and to make data-driven decisions in regard to differentiated instruction to meet the individual learning needs of their students (Levine, 2006). The focus on every child achieving proficiency and interpreting assessment data created a new challenge for most classroom teachers. According to Levine (2006), today's teachers need to know and be able to do things their predecessors did not. "Most of the current teachers were unprepared for these changes, as they were educated for classrooms that existed when they earned their teaching credentials" (Levine, 2006, p. 12). Teachers must be prepared to educate all students to achieve learning outcomes (Levine, 2006).

The federal education reform initiative of 2010, the RTTT competitive grant, challenged most teachers in navigating the myriad of changes to the teaching profession. The demands and expectations of teachers have never been greater than they are today due to the implementation of national common core standards, an intensive evaluation process, and the use of student assessment data to determine teacher effectiveness (Darling-Hammond, 2012). Teacher evaluation data and student growth value-added data are being used to not only determine teacher effectiveness, but also to evaluate teachers for the purpose of tenure and continued employment (United States Department of Education, 2014a). For example, the Tennessee Board of Education passed a policy in regard to teacher and principal evaluation that has implications for continued employment. The policy states that teacher and principal evaluations will be used to determine hiring, promotion, dismissal, and compensation (Tennessee Board of Education, 2015).

The RTTT education reform initiative has great significance for higher education teacher preparation programs, as well as classroom teachers, schools, and school districts. A report from the Center for American Progress, *Race to the Top and Teacher Preparation: Analyzing State Strategies for Ensuring Real Accountability and Fostering Program Innovation* (Crowe, 2011), states that one major tenet of the RTTT education reform is improving teacher quality and effectiveness. States awarded the RTTT grant must meet certain requirements, such as using student achievement and growth data to determine teacher effectiveness. Teacher data are then linked back to the higher education institution that prepared the teacher to determine the effectiveness of that program. The effectiveness of each teacher preparation program in the state is to be publicly reported, and states are encouraged to expand the programs that produce the most effective teachers (Crowe, 2011; United States Department of Education, 2011).

The RTTT initiative shifted the focus from highly-qualified teachers to highly-effective teachers, placing greater emphasis on a teacher's ability to impact student achievement, which requires much more of the teacher than just content knowledge (Crowe, 2011). According to the tenets of RTTT, a highly effective teacher is one whose students achieve high rates of student academic growth, such as one and one-half grade levels in a school year (United States Department of Education, 2011). Tyler (2010) argues that there is a significant need to identify valid indicators of excellent teaching and that the instruments used to measure teacher effectiveness must meet high technical standards when used for high-stakes purposes.

## Teacher Preparation Programs

The past two decades have brought increased attention and accountability on higher education schools of teacher preparation for the education and training they provided their candidates. Teacher education programs struggle to determine the best way to prepare teachers amidst the plethora of conflicting recommendations from a myriad of government entities, researchers, accrediting agencies, and education commissions. According to Levine (2006), teacher education must be redesigned to produce high-quality teachers that can effectively raise student achievement.

Cochran-Smith and Zeichner (as cited in AERA Panel on Research and TeacherEducation, 2005) added that research on teacher education only emerged in the last half century. The NRC (2010) asserts there is a lack of sufficient evidence about what contributes to the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs. The efforts to reform teacher preparation programs have come from within the ranks of teacher education as well. NCATE stated in the

report *Transforming Teacher Education through Clinical Practice: A National Strategy to Prepare Effective Teachers*:

> To prepare effective teachers for the 21st century classrooms, teacher education must shift away from a norm, which emphasizes academic preparation and course work loosely linked to school-based experiences. Rather, it must move to programs that are fully grounded in clinical practice and interwoven with academic content and professional courses. (Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation and Partnerships for Improved Student Learning, 2010, p. ii)

Traditional teacher preparation programs (TPPs) generally assess teacher candidates' content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical skills, technological pedagogical knowledge, and work samples, such as portfolios. Many TPPs also conduct ratings of dispositions, which are collections of personal and professional attitudes and behaviors. Finally, the clinical experience, formerly referred to as student teaching, is typically the capstone event of the teacher candidates' preparation program. The extent and quality of the clinical experience have proven to correlate with value-added estimates of teacher effectiveness (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2009). For certification, or a teaching license, candidates must pass coursework, some type of summative evaluation, and standardized tests, such as the Praxis II and PLT (AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education, 2005).

During the past 15 years, there have been several key studies that attempted to add to the body of research on teacher education. In 2001, with the enactment of NCLB, the U.S. Department of Education commissioned a review of high-quality research on teacher preparation. The resulting report, *Teacher Preparation Research: Current Knowledge, Gaps and Recommendations*, (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001), was organized around five key questions to guide the analysis. The questions centered on the types of subject matter, pedagogical preparation, and clinical training needed to effectively train preservice teachers to

impact student learning. Other questions examined policies that were successful in improving the quality of teacher preparation programs and components of high-quality alternative certification programs (Wilson et al., 2001). The studies selected for review were required to be rigorous and empirical. Only 57 studies were eligible for review. Therefore, the researchers were unable to fully address the questions presented by the Department of Education due to the lack of available research. The researchers were able to note that the few studies available presented a basis for future research in determining the contributing elements to the preparation of effective teachers. The recommendations centered on improvements of research design, data collection, and analysis for future studies (Wilson et al., 2001).

Building on the work of *Teacher Preparation Research: Current Knowledge, Gaps and Recommendations* (Wilson et al., 2001), the ECS selected two of the original researchers to expand their previous work. Wilson and Floden (2003) investigated 11 questions for this study, five of which were in the first study. In 2003, *Creating Effective Teachers: Concise Answers for Hard Questions* was released (Suzanne Wilson & Robert Floden, 2003). Once again, the researchers were unable to answer the questions presented by the ECS due to a limited number of studies that varied greatly in quality. Only 64 studies were included in the review, and many were not peer-reviewed. While the study centered on effective teachers, the report did not explicitly address effectiveness other than to state the goal of teacher education should be to train teachers to assist students in reaching academic standards (Suzanne Wilson & Robert Floden, 2003).

The first major meta-analysis study was commissioned by the American Educational Research Association AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education (2005). AERA convened a panel of teacher educators in November 2000 to "provide a critical and evenhanded analysis of

the empirical evidence relevant to practices and policies in preservice teacher education in the United States" (AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education, 2005, p. 1). The panel was also charged with recommending a new research agenda based on their review of existing research. The published report was released in 2005 as *Studying Teacher Education: The Report of the AERA Panel on Teacher Education* edited by Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Kenneth Zeichner (AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education, 2005). The report was organized around nine key topics including teacher characteristics, indicators of quality, pedagogical approaches, methods courses, and field experiences. Each topic posed guiding questions to synthesize the research relative to that topic. However, due to the lack of longitudinal studies, the report contained hundreds of individual studies. The last chapter of the book argues for a new research agenda such as connecting teacher characteristics, teacher education, teacher learning, teacher practice, and connecting preparation programs to the performance of their graduates (AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education, 2005).

*The Predictive Validity of Measures of Teacher Candidate Programs and Performance: Toward an Evidenced-Based Approach to Teacher Preparation* (Henry et al., 2013), was conducted in response to the multitude of criticism aimed at educator preparation programs (EPP) for the poor quality of teachers they produce. The study was conducted to determine if the current indicators of progress and performance used by EPPs predict the effectiveness of their graduates when they become teachers. According to Henry et al. (2013), teacher preparation programs must routinely analyze the indicators of performance and progress demonstrated by teacher candidates as they matriculate through the program. This is necessary in order to identify those indicators that have the greatest impact on the candidates' effectiveness later on in the classroom, as measured by student achievement and growth. Common progress and performance

indicators among EPPs include data on course taking and grades, professional behavior and dispositions, performance assessments during student teaching, Praxis exams, and comprehensive portfolios. Henry et al. (2013) argues that new and better indicators need to be implemented to ensure continuous improvement and to guide reform.

This study was conducted at one large NCATE accredited state university that graduates on average 753 teachers per year and routinely collects data on the five identified progress and performance indicators. The sample in this study consisted of 279 elementary teachers from the same university, who were teaching the tested subjects of math and reading in Grades 3-5. All the teachers in the study had one to five years teaching experience. For the purpose of the study, predictive validity was defined as "the extent to which the data gathered on teacher candidates in the course of their preparation are correlated with their effectiveness after they graduate and begin teaching" (Henry et al., 2013, p. 439). The study found that neither the data on the indicators of progress and performance nor the teacher candidates' scores on standardized exams predict their later effectiveness in the classroom.

The results of the study indicated a low correlation of the five indicators of progress and performance used by the EPP and the teachers' effectiveness as determined by their students' test scores in reading and math. The data on the indicators were also examined for their ability to predict value-added scores of program graduates. The teachers' grades in their last two years of coursework were positively associated with the students' value-added scores in math achievement but not reading achievement. The teacher candidates' SAT scores, high school rank, and Praxis I scores, which were used to determine admission into the teacher education program, were not related to their students' value added measures of achievement. However, a positive relationship of 4% in reading achievement was shown if the teacher was teaching in the same

grade where s/he had student taught (Henry et al., 2013). While the disposition surveys, student teaching ratings, and the summative portfolio were not significantly correlated to the teacher effectiveness, they could be considered a global rating of the teacher candidate.

The recommendations from the (Henry et al., 2013) study suggest that more valid and reliable assessment instruments need to be used to measure the performance progress of teacher candidates. The study cites multiple reasons for the recommendations such as providing more meaningful feedback to the teacher candidates, identifying those candidates that need additional support, redirecting low-performing teachers to other programs of study, and tracking the progress and development of teacher candidates (Henry et al., 2013). Finally, the researchers stress that in this era of accountability, EPPs should consider following their graduates into their classrooms and using their students' achievement data to determine and monitor the EPP's quality and effectiveness (Henry et al., 2013).

The researchers did acknowledge one assessment instrument that shows promise as a summative instrument, the edTPA, a performance-based assessment originally developed as the PACT by SCALE at Stanford University. More recently SCALE, in partnership with the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), revised the PACT to become the Teacher Performance Assessment, and now the edTPA (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2020a). The results of an extensive field test of the edTPA were released in November 2013. The content validity ratings reported a strong relationship between the edTPA three key tasks of planning, instruction, and assessment to an entry-level teacher's job (Stanford Center for Assessment and Learning and Equity, 2013). The edTPA is a subject-area specific, performance-based assessment designed to measure teacher candidates' readiness to teach. The edTPA portfolio requires teacher candidates to submit artifacts, commentaries, and

video clips of teaching for assessment by trained scorers (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2020a). The portfolio is scored using a set of 15 rubrics (Stanford Center for Assessment and Learning and Equity, 2013).

## Accreditation of Teacher Preparation Programs

EPP accreditation ensures accountability that the program meets a rigorous set of performance standards. NCATE and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) were the two major accrediting agencies in the United States (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2013). NCATE was the oldest and largest of the teacher preparation accrediting agencies. NCATE was founded in 1954 as an independent nongovernmental accrediting body, replacing AACTE. Five major organizations were instrumental in the founding of NCATE:

- AACTE,
- National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC),
- NEA,
- CCSSO, and
- the National School Boards Association (NSBA).

NCATE accredits schools, colleges, and departments of education in U.S. colleges and universities, as well as non-university entities that prepare educators for P-12 schools. NCATE accredited 670 teacher education programs with 70 more on the list for initial accreditation (National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2014).

TEAC was founded in 1997 and accredited 213 programs in 164 institutions of higher education or alternate educator preparation programs. Its membership varied greatly from small liberal arts colleges to large research universities. The mission of TEAC was to help educator preparation programs improve and be accountable for the quality of their programs and graduates (Teacher Education Accreditation Coucil, 2014).

However, in 2013, the accrediting functions of NCATE and TEAC began to merge and form a new organization, CAEP. CAEP was established as the single specialized accrediting agency for more than 900 educator preparation providers currently accredited by the NCATE and the TEAC. EPPs included traditional institutions of higher education, as well as alternative pathways such as residency programs. With the implementation of CAEP standards, teacher preparation programs were required to dramatically demonstrate the quality of prospective candidates in response to critics and the many calls for educator preparation reform to teacher candidate recruitment, preparation, and effectiveness. CAEP standards will restrict admission to only those students who score in the top third of the ACT, SAT, or GRE by 2020 and will require evidence of student achievement growth in the classrooms in which their graduates teach (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, 2013).

On August 29, 2013, the CAEP Board of Directors adopted new standards for accrediting educator preparation programs. The new CAEP accreditation standards for teacher preparation uses multiple measures on outcome data and key program characteristics in order to make more informed judgments about program quality. The new standards are based on five criteria: (a) content and pedagogical knowledge; (b) clinical partnerships and practice; (c) candidate quality, recruitment, and selectivity; (d) program impact; and (e) provider quality assurance and continuous improvement (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, 2013).

According to the NRC report *Preparing Teachers: Building Evidence for Sound Policy* (2010), accountability has become the cornerstone for K-12 education reform in the United States. The report specifically notes two types of accountability related to teacher education. The first is the direct monitoring of teacher preparation programs through program approval and accreditation. The second type of accreditation is the monitoring of individual teacher candidates through certification and licensure (National Research Council, 2010). The report recommends a research agenda by examining the relationship between teacher preparation and student achievement outcomes.

## State Approval of Teacher Preparation Programs

All states require EPPs to receive state approval, but not all states require these programs to be nationally accredited by an accrediting agency such as NCATE, TEAC, or CAEP. State approval of EPPs is typically based on a set of standards such as state-developed, NCATE, InTASC, or TEAC (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011). Each individual state is responsible for the evaluation and approval process of teacher preparation programs within the state. A teacher preparation program may include preparation in one or more teacher licensure areas. While variation for program approval differs from state to state, there are basic similarities among programs. Typically, approval for both initial programs and reauthorization of programs is a collaborative effort of the state education agency, partner licensing board, and the agency that oversees higher education (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012; Wilson & Youngs, 2005). In Tennessee, these agencies would be the THEC, TN Department of Education, and the State Board of Education (Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 2017).

InTASC was created in 1987 by CCSSO as a consortium of state education agencies and national educational organizations responsible for the preparation, licensing, and professional development of teachers. The purpose of InTASC was to develop standards to address the knowledge, dispositions, and performances that all beginning teachers should possess to be effective teachers. Many teacher preparation programs are aligned to the InTASC standards in order to meet accreditation and program approval requirements (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011).

In 2012, CCSSO, in collaboration with the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) and NGA, convened the Task Force on Transforming Educator Preparation and Entry into the Education Profession to address needed reforms in the preparation of teachers (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012). The task force released the report *Our Responsibility, Our Promise: Transforming Educator Preparation and Entry into the Education Profession* (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012) as a guide for improving teacher education programs.

The report outlined 10 recommendations for states that addressed teacher licensure and preparation program approval, including data collection and reporting. Concerning program approval, the specific recommendations to improve accountability of preparation programs were:

(a) hold preparation programs accountable by exercising the state's authority to determine which programs should operate, and which programs should be closed, based on a clear and fair performance rating system
(b) adopt and implement rigorous program approval standards
(c) require alignment of preparation content standards to P-12 college and career ready standards for all licensure areas, and
(d) provide feedback, data, support, and resources to preparation programs to assist them with continuous improvement and to act on any program approval or national accreditation recommendations. (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012, p. v)

While certification and licensure policies affect teachers directly, they also affect preparation programs, which have the goal of certifying their graduates. According to the National Research Council (2010), the performance of teachers on high-quality state certification and licensure exams is an indicator of what the graduates of teacher preparation programs have learned and could be used as a measure of the effectiveness of the program.

## Certification and Licensure

Certification, or licensing, is the process by which states assess the qualifications of individuals to teach. The United States began licensing teachers in the late 1600s to ensure that all teachers met a minimal level of knowledge and skill (AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education, 2005). While all states require that the graduates of teacher preparation programs meet minimum standards for licensure, these standards vary from state to state (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012). Certification decisions in part are determined by standardized licensure exams that measure basic knowledge and skills, general academic ability, content knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge, as well as performance-based assessments of teachers' instructional practices.

Currently, the majority of states use some type of standardized assessment as a licensure requirement. Some states have as many as 85 different licensure exams, with a test for each grade level and content area (Coggshall et al., 2012; Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012; Goldhaber, 2010; Wilson & Youngs, 2005). Teacher licensure exams have often been criticized for the high pass rates due to low cut scores. For example, in 2008-2009, the pass rates on teacher exams were 95% for traditional program completers and 97% for alternative program completers (Goldhaber, 2010). Cut scores on licensure exams are set by individual states, which

creates a wide range of variability. One criticism of the practice of states setting the cut scores is that they tend to set the score at or below the national median score established for the licensure exam. Another criticism of licensure tests is determining if they are worth the cost as an indicator of the candidates' preparation and readiness to teach. In review of the literature and research, Wilson and Youngs (2005) found that two vendors currently dominate the market for licensure tests: Educational Testing Service (ETS) and National Evaluation Systems (Tennessee Board of Education, 2015). While NES has developed over 400 different teacher exams for states, approximately 80% of states requiring licensure exams use one form of the Praxis Series by ETS. According to ETS, "approximately 400,000 teacher candidates take some portion of the Praxis II exams each year" (Wilson & Youngs, 2005, p. 600).

It is generally accepted that the purpose of licensure exams is to meet a minimum standard, not predict teaching success. However, CCSSO noted that, because of the widespread use of licensure exams, they have the potential to serve as an effective means of driving change in educator preparation programs (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012). CCSSO makes four recommendations to states in regard to educator licensing:

- Revise and enforce licensure standards for teachers and principals to support the teaching of more demanding content aligned to college and career readiness and critical thinking skills to a diverse range of students;
- States should work together to influence the development of innovative licensure performance assessments that are aligned to the revised licensure standards and include multiple measures of educator's ability to perform, including the potential to impact student achievement and growth;
- Create multi-tiered licensure systems aligned to coherent development continuum that reflects new performance expectations for educators and their implementation in the learning environment and to assessments that are linked to evidence of student growth;

- Reform current licensure systems which are more efficient, have true reciprocity across states, and so that their credentialing structures support effective teaching and leading toward student college and career readiness. (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2012, pp. 14-16)

## Performance-Based Assessments

Various researchers cite performance-based assessments as having the potential to more authentically assess teacher candidates' knowledge in practice. These assessments may be defined as assessments that can measure students' cognitive thinking and reasoning skills as well as their ability to apply knowledge to solve realistic, meaningful problems. They are designed to more closely reflect the performance of interest, allow students to construct or perform an original response, and use predetermined criteria to evaluate student work (Lane, 2010). Furthermore, the purpose of performance assessment is twofold: the first is to provide a comprehensive picture of student learning across their respective programs of study, and the second is to evaluate a program's effectiveness (Cummings, Maddux, & Richmond, 2008).

Changes in state and national accreditation processes demand that teacher preparation programs provide evidence that their graduates know how to teach. Unlike written tests, performance-based assessments, such as portfolios, artifacts, and teaching exhibitions, capture how teacher candidates apply what they have learned to their teaching practices (Coggshall et al., 2012, p. 19). In multiple studies, teacher candidates reported that they believed the process of completing performance-based assessments improved their teaching practices (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000).

The use of teaching performance assessments over the last 20 years has experienced wide acceptance in teacher education programs as a means of assessing teacher candidates' knowledge and instructional practices for the purpose of licensure. According to AACTE, teacher

candidates' readiness cannot be measured by multiple choice or selected response tests alone; they must demonstrate readiness to teach. Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000) argue that TPAs are, by design, aimed at producing rich and concrete descriptions of teacher performance in contexts of practical activity. They identify four characteristics of authentic assessments of teaching:

- The assessments sample the actual knowledge, skills, and dispositions desired of a teacher in real teaching and learning contexts;
- The assessments integrate multiple facets of knowledge and skill used in teaching practice;
- Multiple sources of evidence are collected over time and in diverse contexts;
- Assessment evidence is evaluated by individuals with relevant expertise against an agreed upon set of standards that matter for teaching performance. (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000, pp. 523-545)

## Educative Teacher Performance Assessment

The edTPA is a performance-based assessment modeled after the NBPTS and the PACT. The edTPA originally began as the PACT in 2002 to measure beginning teachers' abilities to plan, implement, and assess instruction in actual classrooms while candidates were completing student teaching. The PACT was developed by 12 public and private universities in response to California legislation that required all teacher candidates be licensed through a performance assessment (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2020a).

Researchers and faculty at the SCALE in partnership with the AACTE developed the edTPA with substantial advice and feedback from teachers and teacher educators. The development of the edTPA was based on 25 years of experience working with performance-based assessments of teaching, including the NBPTS, the InTASC Standards portfolio, and the

PACT. Goals of the edTPA are to provide a valid and reliable assessment of teacher candidates' readiness to teach and to support the connection between teacher performance and student outcomes with necessary data to guide preservice and inservice teachers (Stanford Center for Assessment and Learning and Equity, 2013).

The edTPA became fully operational in 2013 after two years of field testing with 12,000 teacher candidates (Stanford Center for Assessment and Learning and Equity, 2013). The results of the field test were released in November 2013. Validation studies were also conducted to confirm the content validity, job relevance, and construct validity of the assessments. The studies documented that the assessment is well aligned to professional standards, reflects the actual work of teaching, and measures a primary characteristic of effective teaching. The field test indicated a significant degree of consistency among raters of the edTPA (Lane, 2010).

The edTPA electronic portfolio assesses teacher candidate performance in 27 different initial licensure subject areas using a rubric comprised of three domains: planning, assessment, and instruction. For 25 of the subject areas, each domain has five indicators and is scored on a scale of 1-5, for a total possible score of 75. However, World Languages employs a rubric of 13 indicators and Elementary Education Literacy and Mathematics employs a rubric of 18 indicators. Through a standard-setting process, a score of 37-42 is considered to be a minimum professional standard score. The edTPA is the first standards-based, subject-specific assessment to become nationally available in the United States (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2020a). It is currently being used in 41 different states and the District of Columbia. The edTPA is used for a variety of purposes such as a requirement for teaching certification in some states (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2020b).

The TBR Universities, Vanderbilt University, and the University of Tennessee Knoxville were involved in the piloting of the edTPA in Tennessee from 2009-2013. In determining that performance assessment is another method of verifying a preservice teacher's readiness to enter the classroom and is aligned to the Tennessee Professional Education Standards, the State Board of Education approved the option of using the teacher candidates' edTPA scores in lieu of the Praxis PLT exam (Tennessee Board of Education, 2014, p. 5).

In October 2016, the State Board of Education revised the policy to require the edTPA for licensure beginning January 2019 instead of the PLT. The State Board of Education policy reads:

> Pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge assessments are required for all licensure candidates. Beginning January 1, 2019, initial license applicants are required to submit qualifying scores on the appropriate edTPA performance-based, subject-specific assessment. Prior to January 1, 2019, licensure candidates may submit a qualifying score on either the relevant Principles of Learning and Teaching Assessment or the edTPA. Candidates completing job-embedded clinical practice must submit the qualifying score before renewing or advancing the teaching license. (Tennessee Board of Education, 2016a, para. 4)

The premise behind this change in policy was based on the need for a more authentic, competency-based assessment that focused on practical experiences. The previous pedagogical assessment, Praxis PLT, only assessed the candidates' knowledge about pedagogy via a computer-generated exam. The edTPA portfolio assesses candidates' performance of teaching in their subject-specific endorsement in the areas of planning, instruction, and assessment.

The portfolio design requires candidates to provide evidence of their teaching through submission of lesson plans and video clips, development of assessment instruments, written commentaries analyzing student learning, and examples of student work, teacher feedback, and students' use of feedback (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2020b).

The portfolio requires candidates to demonstrate the link between the teacher's content knowledge and their choice of instructional strategies based on knowledge of the learners. In addition, the edTPA also requires candidates to reflect on the lessons taught, to link teaching strategies to research, and to use assessment data to inform instruction (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2020b).

The Tennessee Department of Education and the State Board of Education considered both the benefits and challenges of adopting the edTPA as a requirement for licensure. The benefits identified were alignment with the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM), submissions were externally scored, edTPA assesses both pedagogy and pedagogical content knowledge, and employs common performance-based criteria for all teacher candidates (Tennessee Board of Education, 2018). The challenges identified were the significant increase in cost, training of faculty, longer time to implement, and more time required for teacher candidates to complete the portfolio (Tennessee Board of Education, 2018). The State Board of Education voted to accept the edTPA as a licensure requirement in October 2016.

## Summation of Literature Review

In summary, a review of the literature provides strong evidence of multiple education reforms over three decades aimed at improving the preparation and quality of teachers. The 1983 report, A Nation at Risk (Carnegie Task Force, 1986), illuminated the need to improve the U.S. education system. One recommendation in the report highlighted the need to improve teacher preparation. The report served as a catalyst for the creation and implementation of numerous initiatives such as *A Nation Prepared, Goals 2000, What Matters Most, No Child left Behind and Race to the Top* (Cornbleth, 2013).

The focus of the reforms ultimately centered on teacher preparation programs for the poor quality of teachers they produced. The national accreditation of teacher preparation programs ushered in a rigorous set of performance standards to ensure accountability of teacher education preparation programs. These standards filtered down to state accreditation agencies to ensure the preparation, licensing and professional development of teachers. While most states used some type of standardized content and pedagogy assessments as licensure requirements, they were now challenged with how to adequately assess the qualifications of teacher candidates to ensure their readiness to teach.

Changes in state and national accreditation processes demanded that teacher preparation programs provide evidence that their graduates not only know how to teach, but can apply what they have learned to their teaching practices. In response to the demand of increasing accountability of teacher preparation programs to improve the quality of their teacher candidates, the use of performance assessments has been widely accepted as a means of assessing teacher candidates' knowledge and instructional practices. The edTPA, a performance-based assessment modeled after the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards and the Performance Assessment of California teachers has gained popularity among teacher preparation programs. It has been widely adopted by teacher preparation programs as a means of assessing teacher candidates' preparedness and readiness to teach. In Tennessee, eight universities implemented the edTPA between 2010-2013. The State Board of Education in Tennessee adopted the edTPA as a requirement for licensure in 2016 with implementation beginning in 2019.

Once the edTPA became a licensure requirement, it became a consequential high-stakes assessment for candidates. While some states require the edTPA as a summative assessment required for licensure, it also is a formative assessment used to improve the teaching and

instructional practices of early-career teachers. Improving teacher preparation programs to ensure teacher candidates can apply their acquired knowledge and ability to teach to improve student learning is critical to the success of P-12 students, schools, communities, and states.

# CHAPTER III

# METHODOLOGY

## Introduction

This chapter describes and explains the methodology used in the study including the research design, population and sample, instrumentation, procedures, and analysis of data. Approval of the study by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga was acquired prior to accessing the extant data from the school system and surveying the sample participants involved in the study. This approval process was required to protect the rights of the study participants.

The purpose of this study was to investigate early-career teachers' performance on the edTPA assessment in relation to their level of performance (LOE) as a certified teacher. This study also investigated whether teacher candidates' performance on the edTPA differed when education level, certification area, and GPA were considered. This study also investigated perceptions of early-career teachers about how well the edTPA prepared them from the onset to teach.

## Research Procedures Overview

This study employed a correlational nonexperimental quantitative research design to explore the relationship between variables using statistical analyses (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Descriptive statistics were used to describe the sample demographics and

attribute variables of the study participants. The quantitative edTPA assessment data were collected by Pearson Education, Inc. (Pearson Evaluation Systems, 2018). The edTPA data were retrieved from Pearson Education Institutional Reports as reported to the participating university.

The university-provided survey employed a 5-point Likert scale using a commercial survey instrument, Qualtrics (Qualtrics, 2020). The survey data were retrieved from the College of Education Student Teaching and Licensure office. Participants' student level, certification area, and GPA were retrieved from the participating university Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

Correlational statistical analysis was used to evaluate the relationship between early-career teachers' performance on the edTPA and their LOE score. The LOE, a state assigned effectiveness score, was provided by the local school system that employs the early-career teachers. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to evaluate the differences of the early-career teachers' edTPA performance based on education level, area of certification, and GPA. To evaluate the differences of early-career teachers' perception of the value of the edTPA during their preparation program and entering the teaching workforce, Qualtrics was used to analyze survey responses. The purposive sample completing the survey represents a basis for wider generalization of the results for teacher preparation programs using the edTPA.

## Population and Sample of Participants

The participants in the study consisted of 134 early-career teachers who completed their educator preparation program from the same large Tennessee university and were employed in the same school district. These early-career teachers completed the edTPA assessment during the final semester of the educator preparation program during Fall 2014 through Spring 2018. They

completed the edTPA electronic portfolio in their certification content area for fulfillment of requirements for graduation and recommendation for licensure.

## Variables Analysis

This study investigated early-career teachers' performance on the edTPA assessment in relation to their level of performance (LOE) as a certified teacher. The LOE was measured by teacher observation data, student growth data and student achievement data. In addition, the perceived value of the edTPA judged by early-career teachers who completed the edTPA as part of their teacher preparation program was examined. The dependent variables were the overall scores on the edTPA, survey responses, and LOE scores. Scores on the edTPA ranged from 1-5 on 15 indicators with a possible high score of 75. LOE scores were reported as levels 1-5 from scale scores ranging 100-500. The survey employs a 1-5 Likert scale on each question. The independent attribute variables include the early-career teachers' responses to the survey questions. Attribute variables such as education levels, area of certification and GPAs of the survey participants were examined (see Appendix A for variable analysis).

## Instrumentation

The qualitative research instruments in this study were the edTPA performance portfolio assessment, a survey of early-career teachers, and early-career teachers' LOE scores. Early-career teachers from this former TBR university were mandated to complete the edTPA as a requirement of the teacher preparation program beginning the Fall 2013 semester. The Tennessee State Board of Education recently voted to require the edTPA in lieu of the Praxis Principles of

Learning and Teaching exam beginning January 1, 2019, as a licensure requirement (Tennessee Board of Education, 2018).

As a result of extensive field tests during the standard-setting process by SCALE, the practitioner and policy panels recommended a professional standard score, or benchmark passing score of 42 on the edTPA portfolio (Stanford Center for Assessment and Learning and Equity, 2013). Scores within standard error of measurement of the maximum recommended cut score fall within a band of 37-42. The SCALE standard-setting committee suggested that states consider setting the initial cut score at the lower end to give programs time to provide activities and support for teacher candidates in the preparation and submission of the edTPA (Stanford Center for Assessment and Learning and Equity, 2013).

SCALE used the teacher candidate's total score across all 15 rubrics to make inferences about the candidate's readiness to teach (Stanford Center for Assessment and Learning and Equity, 2013). To ensure construct validity, SCALE used factor analysis to study the internal structure of items or tasks on the assessment and determine which rubrics were most strongly related. The factor analysis indicated positive results for all factors of moderate to large magnitude (Stanford Center for Assessment and Learning and Equity, 2013).

As stated previously, the edTPA is scored by trained scorers with a background in the subject-area for which they are scoring. SCALE studied the agreement rates or inter-rater reliability by employing several reliability analyses. One analysis used was the adjacent agreement rate, which refers "to the proportion of cases in which two independent scorers assign either the exact or same score or a score within 1 point of each other" (Stanford Center for Assessment and Learning and Equity, 2013, p. 23). The kappa-n ($\kappa_n$) was used to account for agreement by chance when scorers assigned the same score. The inter-rater reliability rates

averaged an adjacent agreement rate of .92 and an average kappa-n rate of .83, which are relatively high (Stanford Center for Assessment and Learning and Equity, 2013).

A survey instrument developed and administered by the educator preparation program at the participating university involved in this study was used to gather data on early-career teachers' perceptions concerning the value of the edTPA during their preparation and into early-career teaching. The survey employed a 5-point Likert scale to measure the early-career teachers' perceptions and understanding of the edTPA on improving teacher readiness and effectiveness (see Appendix B for edTPA survey). Survey responses answered Research Question 3.

The Level of Effectiveness (LOE) score consisted of three components: qualitative teacher evaluation data, student growth data, and student achievement data. The scale score range was between 100 and 500 with an overall score reported on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest (Tennessee Department of Education, 2017). Level of Effectiveness scores are as follows:

> Level 5: Significantly Above Expectations (425-500): A teacher at this level exemplifies the instructional skills, knowledge, and responsibilities described in the rubric, and implements them without fail. He/she is adept at using data to set and reach ambitious teaching and learning goals. He/she makes a significant impact on student achievement and should be considered a model of exemplary teaching.
>
> Level 4: Above Expectations (350-424.99): A teacher at this level comprehends the instructional skills, knowledge, and responsibilities described in the rubric and implements them consistently. He/she is skilled at using data to set and reach appropriate teaching and learning goals and makes a strong impact on student achievement.

Level 3: At Expectations (275-349.99): A teacher at this level understands and implements most of the instructional skills, knowledge, and responsibilities described in the rubric. He/she uses data to set and reach teaching and learning goals and makes the expected impact on student achievement.

Level 2: Below Expectations (200-274.99): A teacher at this level demonstrates some knowledge of the instructional skills, knowledge, and responsibilities described in the rubric, but implements them inconsistently. He/she may struggle to use data to set and reach appropriate teaching and learning goals. His/her impact on student achievement is less than expected.

Level 1: Significantly Below Expectations (Under 200): A teacher at this level has limited knowledge of the instructional skills, knowledge, and responsibilities described in the rubric, and struggles to implement them. He/she makes little attempt to use data to set and reach appropriate teaching and learning goals, and has little to no impact on student achievement. (Tennessee Department of Education, 2017, "Educator Effectiveness Descriptors," para. 4)

## Procedure

The following procedures were followed to ensure rights of the potential study participants were protected.

- Received approval for IRB application to conduct the study.
- Reviewed university archived data to identify exact number of study participants who completed their educator preparation program from 2014 – 2018 and are teaching in the identified school district. State licensure data indicate over 225 university graduates employed in the identified school district.

- All participants were assigned an identification number in order to protect their personal identification.
- Requested participants' characteristic and attribute information from the University Instructional Technology Department.
- Contacted the identified school district to request study participants' Level of Effectiveness evaluation data.
- Retrieved participants' extant edTPA data provided by Pearson to the university.
- Contacted study participants to request their participation in completing a perception survey.
- Delivered the electronic survey to participants requesting their participation and securing informed consent.
- Monitored survey returns and sent periodical prompts to maximize rate of return.
- Entered all collected attribute, test, evaluation and survey data into SPSS for analysis.

## Analysis

Descriptive analyses were used to examine and report the characteristics and attribute variables of the study participants, such as gender, age, race, ethnicity, education levels, area of certification, and GPA. The edTPA performance data and LOE data were reported as numerical scores and matched to the study participants. In order to examine the relationship between early-career teachers' performance on the edTPA assessment and their level of effectiveness (LOE) score, correlational analysis was employed.

The survey responses were analyzed by calculating the frequencies within the identified response categories. An item-by-item analysis was conducted on the 5-point Likert-scale survey This analysis was used to determine any changes in perception of early-career teachers about the value of the edTPA during their teacher preparation and later teaching performance. Descriptive analysis was used to examine and report the characteristics and attribute variables of the study

participants, such as gender, age, race, ethnicity, education levels, area of certification, and GPA. The edTPA performance data and LOE data were reported as numerical scores and matched to the study participants.

Research Question One

Does a relationship exist between early-career teachers' performance on the edTPA assessment and their level of effectiveness (LOE) score? A *t*-test will be employed to analyze the data.

Research Question Two

Is there a difference in the performance on the edTPA outcomes of early-career teachers based on education level, area of certification, or GPA? ANOVA will be used to analyze the data.

Research Question Three

Is there a difference in the perception of the value of edTPA in early-career teachers since completing the edTPA during their preparation program and entering the teaching workforce based on area of certification? ANOVA will be used to analyze the data.

# CHAPTER IV

# PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

The purpose of this study was first to investigate if a relationship existed between early-career teachers' performance on the edTPA as a measure for improving readiness to teach and their level of effectiveness (LOE) evaluation score once they began teaching. Early-career teachers all graduated from the same teacher preparation program and were employed in the same school district. A quantitative score on the edTPA rubric determined the candidates' performance on the edTPA portfolio. The LOE was determined by qualitative data, student growth data, and student achievement data. A second aspect of the study was to investigate whether the teacher candidates' performance on the edTPA differed with respect to the demographic attributes of education level (undergraduate and graduate), grade level certification (K-5 and 6-12), and GPA (2.5 – 4.0). Finally, the study surveyed the perceptions of the early-career teachers concerning the value of the edTPA during their teacher preparation program and into early-career teaching.

There were 134 participants in the study representing programs consisting of four different certification levels: early childhood education grades K-3, elementary education grades K-5, middle grades education grades 6-8, and secondary education grades 7-12. Combined, there were 64 (48%) study participants certified to teach in grades K-5 and 70 (52%) certified in

grades 6-12. A total of 115 (86%) participants were undergraduates and 19 (14%) were graduate students when completing the edTPA (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Grade Level Certification and Education Level Demographics

| Program | N | Grade Level Certification | Undergraduate | Graduate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Early Childhood (ECE) | 8 | K-3 | 8 | 0 |
| Elementary (E) | 56 | K-5 | 44 | 12 |
| Middle Grades (M) | 11 | 6-8 | 10 | 1 |
| Secondary (S) | 59 | 6-12 | 53 | 6 |

The grade point average (GPA) of the participants ranged from 2.7 to 4.0 on a 4.0 scale. A total of 12 (9%) participants graduated with a GPA between 2.70-2.99, 72 (54%) participants in 6-12 with a GPA range of 3.0-3.49 and 50 (37%) participants graduated with a GPA range of 3.5 – 4.0 (see table 4.2 below).

Table 4.2 Grade Level Certification and GPA

| Program | N | GPA 2.7-2.99 | GPA 3.0-3.49 | GPA 3.5-4.0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Early Childhood (ECE) | 8 | 0 | 5 | 3 |
| Elementary (E) | 56 | 5 | 26 | 25 |
| Middle Grades (M) | 11 | 3 | 7 | 1 |
| Secondary (S) | 59 | 4 | 34 | 21 |
| Total | 134 | 12 | 72 | 50 |

## Research Questions and Data Analysis

### Research Question One

Research Question One asked: Does a relationship exist between early-career Teachers' performance on the edTPA assessment and their first year Level of Effectiveness (LOE) score? More specifically, do early career teachers' performance on the edTPA assessment relate to their Level of Effectiveness (LOE) score in their first-year teaching? To address this question a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (Pearson's *r*) was initially selected to test for the relationship between first-year teachers' Level of Effectiveness (LOE) score and their performance on the edTPA. However, to assure assumptions were met, the Shapiro-Wilk test was performed as a means of assessing normality of each variable. This test yielded significant values for both the edTPA and LOE scale scores of less than .05, confirming the data did not meet the assumption of normal distribution. Therefore, a non-parametric statistical test was required, precluding the use of the planned Pearson *r*. Since the data were not normally distributed, the non-parametric Spearman rank-order correlation (Spearman rho) was selected to test the association of the two variables. The results of the Spearman rho indicated no significant association between the first-year teachers' LOE and edTPA scores, $r_s$ (134) = .148, $p$ = .089.

### Research Question Two

Research Question Two asked: Given grade level certification as defined by student grade range, is there a difference in the performance on the edTPA outcomes of early-career teachers relative to education level or GPA? More specifically, the first part of the research question examines the edTPA performance of candidates in relation to their education level and grade level certification. Education levels were defined as undergraduate and graduate. Grade

level certification was defined as grades K-5 and 6-12. Table 4.3 presents the descriptive statistics and distribution of undergraduate and graduate subjects and the number of subjects with certification in grades 6-12 and K-5. The 134 study participants consisted of 115 (86%) undergraduates and 19 (14%) graduates. A total of 70 (52%) subjects were certified in grades 6-12, representing 63 undergraduates and seven graduates. A total of 64 (38%) subjects were certified in grades K-5, representing 52 undergraduates and 12 graduates.

Table 4.3 Descriptive Statistics Dependent Variable edTPA

| Education Level | Grade Level Certification | Mean edTPA | Std. Deviation | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Graduate | Grades 6-12 | 45.71 | 4.786 | 7 |
| | Grades K-5 | 45.33 | 4.141 | 12 |
| | Total | 45.47 | 4.261 | 19 |
| Undergraduate | Grades 6-12 | 45.84 | 5.652 | 63 |
| | Grades K-5 | 45.19 | 5.179 | 52 |
| | Total | 45.55 | 5.429 | 115 |
| Total | Grades 6-12 | 45.83 | 5.540 | 70 |
| | Grades K-5 | 45.22 | 4.971 | 64 |
| | Total | 45.54 | 5.265 | 134 |

To address the first part of research question two, a two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of education level and grade level certification on edTPA performance. Analysis was first performed to determine if the assumptions of the two-way ANOVA were met.

Outliers were assessed by studentized residuals that were greater than 2.5 or ± 3 standard deviations away from the mean. Normality was assessed using Shapiro-Wilk's normality test for each cell of the design and homogeneity of variances was assessed by Levene's test (see Table 4.4). There were no outliers, residuals were normally distributed ($p > .05$) and there was homogeneity of variances ($p = .654$). Since all assumptions were met, the two-way ANOVA was deemed an acceptable test.

Table 4.4 Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances[a,b]

| EDTPA | Levene Statistic | df1 | df2 | df3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Based on Mean | .543 | 3 | 130 | .654 |
| Based on Median | .560 | 3 | 130 | .643 |
| Based on Median and with adjusted df | .560 | 3 | 126.293 | .643 |
| Based on trimmed mean | .547 | 3 | 130 | .651 |

Table 4.5 presents the results of the ANOVA. Neither education level $F(1, 134) = .268$, $p = .605$, nor grade level certification $F(1, 134) = .256$, $p = .614$ were significant. Additionally, the interaction effect between education level and grade level certification on edTPA performance was not statistically significant, $F(1, 130) = .000$, $p = .990$. The education level and grade level certification had no significant interaction nor effect on edTPA.

Table 4.5 ANOVA Tests Between Subjects Effects

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | f | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Education Level | 9.501 | 1 | 9.501 | .268 | .605 |
| Grade Level Certification | 9.502 | 1 | 9.502 | .256 | .614 |
| Education Level*Grade level Certification | .005 | 1 | .005 | .000 | .990 |
| Error | 4602.909 | 130 | 35.407 | | |
| Total | 279780.000 | 134 | | | |

The second part of research question two specifically examined the potential relationship of the demographic attributes grade level certification and grade point average on edTPA performance. To complete the analysis a two-way ANOVA was conducted. Table 4.6 presents the scale for the three levels of GPA and the two levels of grade level certification used in the study.

Table 4.6 GPA and Grade Level Certification Variables

| GPA Level | GPA Range | Grade Level Certification |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2.7 – 2.9 | Grades K-5 and Grades 6-12 |
| 2 | 3.0 – 3.4 | |
| 3 | 3.5 – 4.0 | |

The descriptive statistics are show below in Table 4.7. The 134 participants reveal 12 (9%) students with a level one GPA, 72 (54%) with a level two GPA, and 50 (37%) with a level

three GPA. The 64 study participants with a K-5 grade level certification indicate five (8%) students with a level one GPA, 31 (48%) students with a level two GPA, and 28 (44%) students with a level 3 GPA. The 70 study participants with a 6-12 grade level certification indicate seven (10%) students with a level one GPA, 41 (59%) students with a level 2 GPA, and 22 (31%) students with a level 3 GPA.

Table 4.7 Descriptive Statistics Dependent Variable edTPA

| Grade Level Certification | GPA | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grades 6-12 | 1 | 46.33 | 6.079 | 7 |
| | 2 | 44.41 | 4.889 | 41 |
| | 3 | 48.27 | 5.873 | 22 |
| | Total | 45.83 | 5.540 | 70 |
| Grades K-5 | 1 | 45.20 | 6.380 | 5 |
| | 2 | 43.74 | 4.419 | 31 |
| | 3 | 46.86 | 4.964 | 28 |
| | Total | 45.22 | 4.971 | 64 |
| Total | 1 | 45.92 | 5.946 | 12 |
| | 2 | 44.13 | 4.672 | 72 |
| | 3 | 47.48 | 5.373 | 50 |
| | Total | 45.54 | 5.265 | 134 |

Analysis was performed to test for the assumptions of the two-way ANOVA. Outliers were assessed by studentized residuals that were greater than ±2.5 or ±3.0 standard deviations away from the mean. Normality was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk's normality test for each cell of the design and homogeneity of variances was assessed by Levene's test (see Table 4.8). There were no outliers, residuals were normally distributed ($p > .05$), and there was homogeneity of variances ($p = .742$). Therefore, ANOVA assumptions were met.

Table 4.8 Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances[a,b]

| EDTPA | Levene Statistic | df1 | df2 | df3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Based on Mean | .545 | 5 | 128 | .742 |
| Based on Median | .478 | 5 | 128 | .792 |
| Based on Median and with adjusted df | .478 | 5 | 117.714 | .792 |
| Based on trimmed mean | .528 | 5 | 128 | .755 |

Table 4.9 displays the results of the ANOVA and reveals that there was no statistical significant difference in mean grade level certification, $F(1, 134) = .883$, $p = .349$, nor in the interaction between grade level certification and GPA, $F(2, 134) = .081$, $p = .923$. However, GPA reveled a statistically significant difference, GPA $F(2, 134) = 6.828$, $p = .002$. Since there was a statistically significant difference with GPA, further investigation was warranted.

Table 4.9 ANOVA Test of Between Subjects Effects

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade Level Certification | 22.888 | 1 | 22.888 | .883 | .349 |
| GPA | 353.812 | 2 | 176.906 | 6.828 | .002 |
| Grade level Certification * GPA | 4.171 | 2 | 2.086 | .081 | .923 |
| Error | 3316.193 | 128 | 25.908 | | |
| Total | 281556.000 | 134 | | | |

An analysis of simple main effect (Table 4.10) was conducted to determine where the differences in mean GPA lie. The simple main effect of GPA on mean edTPA score for the K-5 grade level certification was not statistically significant, $F(2,128) = 2.755$, $p = .067$. The simple main effect of GPA on mean edTPA score for 6-12 grade level certification was statistically significant, $F(2,128) = 4.17$, $p = .018$. Further testing was needed to determine exactly where the mean differences in 6-12 grade level certification were significant.

Table 4.10 Simple Main Effect

| Grade Level Certification | Contrast / Error | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grades 6-12 | Contrast | 215.914 | 2 | 107.957 | 4.167 | .018 |
| | Error | 3316.193 | 128 | 25.908 | | |
| Grades K-5 | Contrast | 142.773 | 2 | 71.387 | 2.755 | .067 |
| | Error | 3316.193 | 128 | 25.908 | | |

Post-hoc multiple comparisons using the Tukey HSD test (Table 4.11) indicated the mean difference between 6-12 grade level certification students with a GPA of 3.5-4.0 and 2.5-2.9 was not significant $p = .61$. However, the difference between students with a GPA of 3.5-4.0 and 3.0-3.4 was statistically significant, $p = .001$. Students with the higher GPA of 3.5-4.0 scored on average 3.35 points higher on the edTPA than students with a GPA of 3.0-3.4.

Table 4.11 Multiple Comparisons Tukey HSD

| Dependent Variable EDTPA | | | | | 95% Confidence Level | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (I) GPA | (J) GPA | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| 2 | 1 | -1.79 | 1.587 | 0.498 | -5.56 | 1.97 |
| | 3 | -3.35* | 0.937 | 0.001 | -5.58 | -1.13 |
| 3 | 1 | 1.56 | 1.636 | 0.606 | -2.32 | 5.44 |
| | 2 | 3.35* | 0.937 | 0.001 | 1.13 | 5.58 |

## Research Question Three

Research Question Three asked: Given grade level certification as defined by student grade range, is there a difference in the perception of the value of edTPA in early career teachers during their preparation program and following entry into the teaching workforce? A survey was conducted to gather the perceptions of early career teachers who completed their teacher preparation program between Fall 2015 and Spring 2018. The 5-point Likert scale survey consisted of demographic questions, as well as perception questions (Appendix B). There were four perception questions related to the completion of the edTPA during student teaching, and four perception questions related to the participants perceived value of the edTPA in early career teaching.

A total of 70 (52%) of the 134 study participants responded to the survey. Table 4.12 presents the descriptive statistics of the survey respondents. Survey respondents consisted of 54 females (77%) and 16 males (23%). The age range of survey participants was 21-40 years of age, consisting of 30 (43%) age 21-25, 33 (47%) age 26-30, 3 (4%) age 31-35 and 4 (6%) age 36-40. Sixty (86%) survey respondents identified as white, five (7%) identified as African-American and five (7%) identified as other. Survey respondents included 57 (81%) undergraduates and 13

(19%) graduates. In addition, 38 (54%) of survey respondents were endorsed in grades 6-12 and 32 (46%) in grades K-5. In this study, early career teachers were defined as those teachers with 1-3 years of experience. There were 17 (24%) survey respondents with one-year teaching experience, 23 (33%) with two years of experience and 30 (43%) with three-years teaching experience.

Table 4.12 Survey Respondents Descriptive Statistics

| Characteristic | | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 16 | 23% |
| | Female | 54 | 77% |
| Age | 21-25 | 30 | 43% |
| | 26-30 | 33 | 47% |
| | 31-35 | 3 | 4% |
| | 36-40 | 4 | 6% |
| Race | White | 60 | 86% |
| | African American | 5 | 7% |
| | Other | 5 | 7% |
| Education Level | Undergraduate | 57 | 81% |
| | Graduate | 13 | 19% |
| Grade Level Certification | Elementary K-5 | 32 | 46% |
| | Secondary 6-12 | 38 | 54% |
| Experience | 1 Year | 17 | 24% |
| | 2 Years | 23 | 33% |
| | 3 Years | 30 | 43% |

The second part of Research Question Three asked the survey respondents to share their perception of completing the edTPA during student teaching of their teacher preparation program (see Figure 4.2). The survey results reveal that 94% of survey respondents either agreed (n=19) or strongly agreed (n=47) that the edTPA was stressful and time consuming, while 4% (n=3) were neutral and 2% (n=1) responded that they strongly disagreed. In addition, 94% of survey respondents agreed (n=31) or strongly agreed (n= 35) that their main focus was on meeting the

required passing score on the edTPA, while 6% (n=4) were neutral, indicating they did not agree or disagree. When asked if their edTPA score was an accurate assessment of their teaching ability, the responses were more distributed across the scale with 29% agreeing (n=18) and strongly agreeing (n=2), while 34% (n=24) were neutral and 37% disagreed (n=17) or strongly disagreed (n=4). Regarding the respondents understanding of the edTPA tasks and rubrics during student teaching, 57% agreed (n=31) and strongly agreed (n=9) that they had a good understanding, and 13% (n=13) neither agreed nor disagreed while 30% disagreed (n=17) or strongly disagreed (n=4).

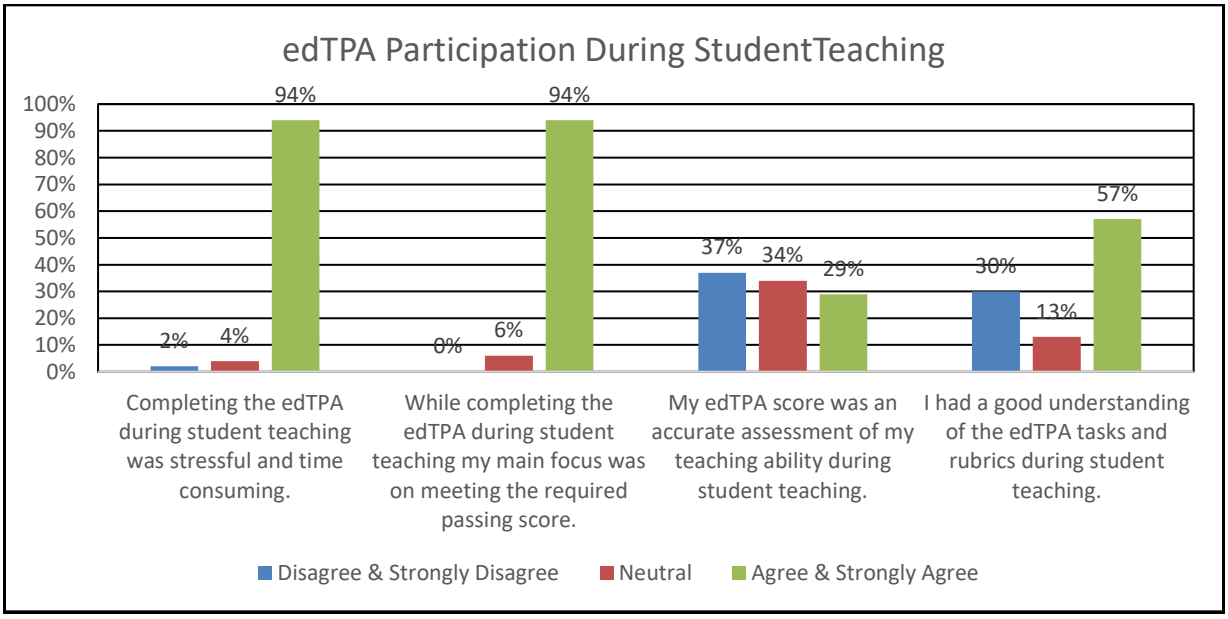


Figure 4.2 edTPA Participation During Student Teaching

The last four questions of the survey were related to the participant's perceived value of the edTPA in early career teaching. Survey responses show that 49% agreed (n=23) or strongly agreed (n=11) that their belief about the value of the edTPA improved from student teaching to

becoming an early career teacher. Twenty-three percent (23%) of respondents indicated that they disagreed (n=10) or strongly disagreed (n=9) regarding an improvement in their belief about the value of the edTPA, while 24% were neutral indicating no change in their belief. When asked if their understanding of the edTPA tasks and rubrics has improved since becoming a licensed practicing teacher, 47% agreed (n=22) or strongly agreed (n=11), 20% were neutral (n=14), and 33% either disagreed (n=12) or strongly disagreed (n=11). Over half (51%) of the early career teachers responded that they agree (n=30) or strongly agree (n=6) that they have a better understanding of the goals and components of the edTPA and how they relate to the knowledge and performance of teaching, while (19%) were neutral in their response and 30% either disagreed (n=11) or strongly disagreed (n=10). Previously the majority of respondents indicated that they believed the edTPA was stressful, time consuming and their focus was mainly on achieving a passing score during student teaching. However, when asked if they believed their participation in the edTPA had better prepared them to be a more effective teacher, 54% responded they agreed (n=28) or strongly agreed (n=10), 16% (n=11) were neutral and 30% either disagreed (n=13) or strongly disagreed (n=9). Figure 4.3 presents the responses to these perception questions.

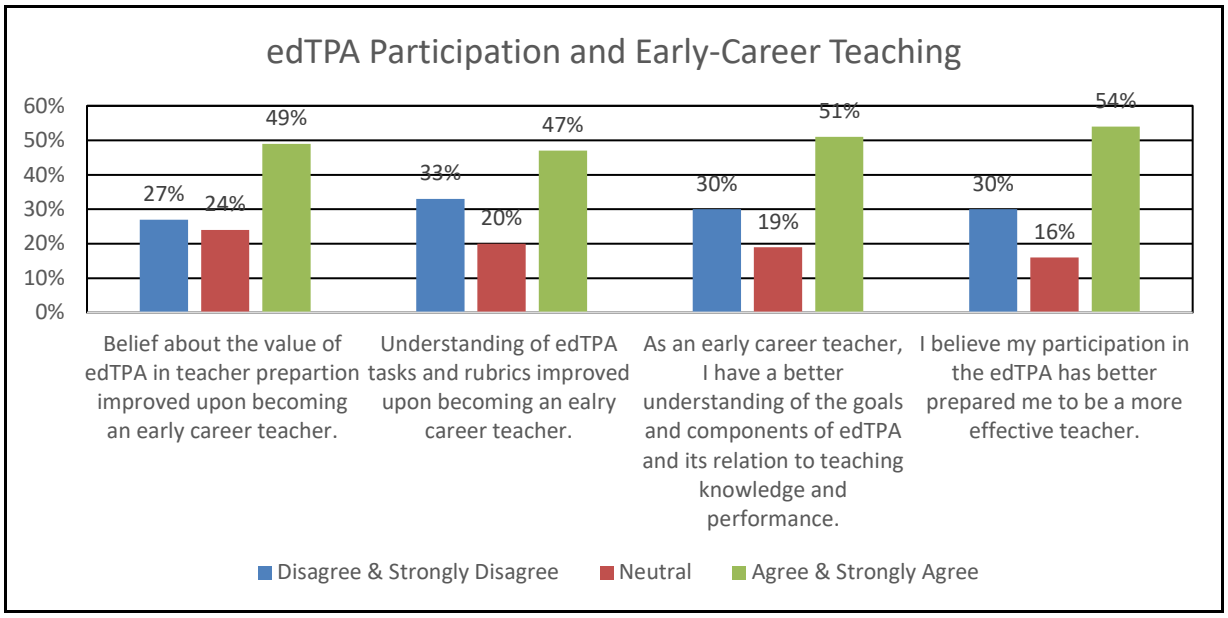


Figure 4.3 edTPA Participation and Early-Career Teaching

## Summary

In summary, the results for Research Question One indicated no significant association between first-year teachers' edTPa and LOE scores. The results for Research Question Two, part one indicated no significant interaction between education level and grade level certification on edTPA performance. The second part of Research Question Two also revealed no statistically significant difference in mean grade level certification, nor in the interaction between grade level certification and GPA. However, GPA revealed a statistically significant difference. Upon further investigation, the Tukey HSD revealed the difference between students with a GPA of 3.5-4.0 and 3.0-3.4 was statistically significant. Students with the higher GPA of 3.5-4.0 score on average scored 3.35 points higher on the edTPA than students with a GPA of 3.0-3.4.

The survey used in Research Question Three yielded a response of 52% with 70 of 134 student participants responding. Survey respondents overwhelming responded (94%), that during

student teaching, completion of the edTPA was stressful, time consuming and their focus was mainly on achieving a passing score. However, when asked if their participation in the edTPA had better prepared them to be a more effective teacher, 54% agreed or strongly agreed.

# CHAPTER V

# DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of Chapter V is to summarize the critical elements related to the study of the use of the Educative Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA) as a measure of teacher readiness for teacher candidates who graduated from the same university and were employed in the same school district. This chapter will also include the purpose and objectives of the study and a brief discussion and summary of the findings. Conclusions based on data analysis and survey responses will be presented, as well as recommendations for further study.

## Purpose of the Study

How to effectively prepare and access teacher candidates' readiness to teach has perplexed policymakers, educators, and stakeholders for centuries. According to Darling-Hammond (2006, 2010a), teacher preparation programs have the responsibility to train teacher candidates to be ready to teach as they enter the classroom, to positively impact student learning, and to meet requirements for state licensure or certification. Historically, standardized teacher certification exams have been used to generally access content knowledge, teaching theory knowledge, and pedagogy knowledge. More recently, teacher preparation programs have moved to using performance assessment instruments, such as the edTPA, to evaluate teacher candidates' knowledge and skills.

The conceptual framework that provided the structure for this study was based on the edTPA performance-based portfolio assessment, which consists of multiple sources of collected evidence of the elements of effective teaching as well as the knowledge and performance of teacher candidates and early-career teachers. The edTPA was implemented by eight Tennessee teacher preparation programs in 2013 and later adopted by the Tennessee State Board of Education in 2019 as a licensure requirement. This study examines the use of the edTPA at one large Tennessee teacher preparation program and its impact on teacher readiness and perceptions.

The purpose of this study was to investigate if a relationship existed between early career teachers' performance on the edTPA as a measure for improving readiness to teach and their level of effectiveness (LOE) evaluation score once they began teaching. The study also investigated whether teacher candidates' performance on the edTPA differed when education level, certification area, and GPA were considered. Finally, the study examined the perceptions of early-career teachers, with one to three years teaching experience, who completed the edTPA as a requirement of their preparation program on how well the edTPA prepared them to teach. A survey was conducted to collect and record the teachers' perceptions.

## Summary of the Findings

The data analysis for this correlational non-experimental quantitative study utilized the two-way ANOVA to determine the interaction of the dependent variable edTPA and the two independent variables education level and GPA. The first research question investigated the relationship of early career teachers' performance on the edTPA assessment and their first-year

Level of Effectiveness (LOE) score. The data analysis yielded no significant association between candidates' edTPA scores and first-year teachers' LOE scores regardless of certification levels or education level.

The second research question investigated the relationship of edTPA outcomes of candidates certified in grades K-5 and grades 6-12 to education level and GPA. The results showed no significant interaction between education level (graduate and undergraduate) and grade level certification (K-5 and 6-12) nor effect on edTPA performance. The mean edTPA score for graduate candidates (n=19) was 45.47 and the mean edTPA score for undergraduate candidates (n=115) was 45.19, which was not significantly different.

The second part of Research Question Two examined the potential relationship between grade level certification and grade point average on edTPA performance. The results showed no statistically significant difference in mean grade level certification, nor in the interaction between grade level certification and GPA. However, a significant statistical difference was revealed with GPA. Candidates with a 6-12 grade level certification and a GPA of 3.5-4.0 scored on average 3.35 points higher on the edTPA than candidates with a 3.0-3.4 GPA. It is worth noting that there was not a significant difference in GPA and performance on the edTPA for candidates with the K-5 grade level certification. While it is generally expected that students with a higher GPA score higher on academic measures, further investigation is needed to identify as to why this is evident for the 6-12 grade level certified candidates and not the K-5 certified candidates.

Research Question Three investigated the perceptions of early career teachers regarding the value of edTPA during their preparation program and entry into teaching. A quantitative Likert scale survey consisting of eight perception questions was distributed to all 134 study

participants. A response rate of 52% (n=70) was recorded and analyzed. The edTPA perception questions were categorized in two groups, perceptions of the edTPA during their preparation program and perceptions once they entered the teaching profession. When asked if completing the edTPA during student teaching was stressful and time consuming, 94% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed. In addition, 94% of respondents also agreed or strongly agreed that their main focus was on meeting the required passing edTPA score. Only 29% of respondents felt that their edTPA score was an accurate assessment of their teaching ability, while 57% felt they had a good understanding of the edTPA tasks and rubrics during student teaching.

The other four survey questions were related to the participant's perceived value of the edTPA in early career teaching. Survey results indicated 49% of respondents indicated their belief about the value of edTPA improved once they began teaching, while 47% responded their understanding of the edTPA task and rubrics improved as well. Fifty-one percent of survey respondents indicated they had a better understanding of the goals and components of edTPA and its relation to teaching knowledge and performance. The most significant survey finding was that 54% of respondents indicated that the edTPA had better prepared them to be an effective teacher.

## Conclusion

The findings of this study illuminated several issues with the use of the edTPA as an assessment to improve the readiness of teacher candidates to begin teaching. The edTPA was adopted by a number of educator preparation providers in Tennessee to improve teacher candidates' readiness to teach and effectiveness as a teacher. The data collected and analyzed by

the university in this study revealed no significant relationship between the candidates' edTPA performance and their first-year LOE score, which is the state mandated assessment measure used to determine teacher effectiveness. The study participants in this study consisted of 134 candidates who completed their educator preparation program between Fall 2014 and Spring 2018. Therefore, the study participants completed the edTPA prior to it being required as a licensure requirement. The change in state licensure policy elevated the importance of the edTPA for teacher preparation providers and raised the consequences for teacher candidates. A contributing factor for the study participants performance on the edTPA might be the perception of the edTPA as non-consequential for obtaining a teaching license. However, there are many factors to consider why a significant relationship between candidates' edTPA scores and LOE scores was not evident in this study, such as the depth of integration of the edTPA components in pre-residency coursework in the various academic programs. The implementation of the edTPA was still relatively new during the time period of this study, and many academic programs were still attempting to integrate the edTPA components in the curriculum. Another factor might be the gender of the study participants, as the teacher preparation program at this university is approximately 87% white female, leading to unintentional possible gender and racial bias toward academic measures.

In addition, the study participants were teaching in numerous schools with different principals who conducted the teachers' evaluations, which could contribute to variances in the LOE scores. Another contributing factor to the teachers' LOE score could be the demographics and academic achievement of the school where they teach. Research indicates the socio-economic status of schools and lack of parental support directly impact students' academic achievement (AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education, 2005). Since student

achievement is one component of the teachers' LOE score, it is plausible to consider the school demographics and its potential effect on the teachers overall LOE score.

The LOE score is comprised of multiple measures, qualitative teacher observation data, student growth data and student achievement data. This study might have had different outcomes if the investigation centered only on the candidates' edTPA score in relation to the qualitative teacher observation scores instead of the LOE. Since the study focused on the candidates' readiness to teach as they entered the classroom, their qualitative observation score might have been a better indicator of their readiness to teach year-one. The edTPA and the state observation model Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) are similar in construct focusing on planning, instruction, and assessment (Tennessee Board of Education, 2020). The participating university in this study employs the TEAM observation model as an assessment of teacher candidates during student teaching. A comparison of the candidates' TEAM evaluation scores during student teaching to first year teaching could be a possible indicator of progress and readiness to teach.

The study participants' survey responses strongly indicated that the edTPA was highly stressful and time consuming and not perceived as an accurate assessment of their teaching ability. They further indicated that their focus was mainly on achieving a passing score set by the university. Their perceptions may be attributed to the design and timing of the edTPA, which is completed during the first half of their final semester of student teaching. The edTPA requires a considerable amount of writing commentaries, collection of artifacts, videotaping learning segments, synthesis and reflection on teaching performance as discussed in the Theoretical Conceptual Framework for Performance-Based Portfolio Assessments in Chapter 1 (Figure 1.1).

This occurs at the same time they are required to develop lesson plans and assume teaching responsibilities during student teaching.

The perceptions of the study participants were formed during their educator preparation prior to January 2019, when the edTPA was not a licensure requirement. Requiring a passing score on the edTPA as a licensure requirement established the edTPA as a high-stakes assessment. This policy change would most likely raise the stress and concern of teacher candidates even more than when the edTPA was not consequential for licensure. Requiring the edTPA as a licensure requirement made it a consequential summative assessment instead of a formative assessment for which it was initially intended (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2014).

The survey results also indicated that study participants' perceptions of the edTPA changed once they began teaching. The survey respondents indicated that once they began teaching, they developed a better understanding of the components of edTPA in relation to teaching knowledge and performance and that their participation in the edTPA better prepared them to be an effective teacher. While they viewed the edTPA as stressful and time-consuming during student teaching, they developed a different perceptive once they began teaching.

## Implications for Practice

To better prepare teacher candidates for the rigors of completing the edTPA, universities need to align and integrate the language and rubrics of edTPA in coursework and pre-residency field experiences throughout the preparation program. Candidates need to have a better understanding of how the edTPA rubrics apply to the practice of teaching prior to their final Residency II (student teaching) clinical experience. University faculty need to be sufficiently trained on the edTPA in order to redesign coursework to integrate its components. The

components of the edTPA, planning, instruction, and assessment are considered to be the underpinnings of good teaching (Cummings et al., 2008). Curriculum should be aligned to desired outcomes for candidates. Faculty are tasked with preparing teacher candidates to be able to teach and affect student learning. If the edTPA is implemented as a measure of what a teacher candidate should know and be able to do to obtain licensure, then it should be part of the teacher preparation curriculum. Due to the limited sample participants in this study, further study is needed to access the relevance of the outcomes of this study regarding generalization to the larger teaching population.

Educator preparation programs need to identify strategies to lessen the workload and stress of teacher candidates while completing the edTPA. It is critically important that teacher candidates have time to focus on improving their teaching practice during Residency II in addition to meeting professional assessment requirements. One solution is redesigning the timeframe in which teacher candidates are required to complete the edTPA. Residency II is typically completed during the final semester. A clinical experience that spans over one-year would allow candidates additional time to complete the edTPA. An extended clinical experience the semester prior to Residency II in the same school and classroom with the same students would allow candidates to complete the edTPA Task One Context for Learning before student teaching. Further study is needed to identify possible supports for teacher candidates during the completion of the edTPA portfolio.

The edTPA became a licensure requirement in Tennessee in January 2019. Since the state requires three years teaching experience for mentor teachers, there are very few mentor teachers who have experienced the edTPA firsthand as a licensure requirement. Training mentor teachers on the requirements, expectations, and processes of edTPA, as well as how to support teacher

candidates as they navigate the edTPA, would help minimize the stress of teacher candidates. Trained mentors would be better able to assist teacher candidates in connecting the edTPA to teacher practice and student learning by linking theory to practice.

The university supervisor is an important person in the success of the teacher candidate during Residency II. They serve as the conduit between the university, candidate, partner school and mentor teacher. Universities supervisors should be highly trained educators who can assist and support the growth, learning, and progress of teacher candidates. They should be trained in the edTPA requirements and processes in order to support teacher candidates including participating in all edTPA candidate seminars. Supervisors training should be current and up to date as edTPA changes are implemented.

## Recommendations for Future Research

This study's findings raise several issues for further research. First, further investigation is needed on the use of the edTPA as a professional assessment to determine teacher candidates' readiness to teach and their effectiveness once they begin teaching. More research with a larger sample is needed to determine if a relationship exist between early-career teacher's performance on the edTPA assessment and their LOE score. The results of this particular question investigated in the study do not support the theory that the two are related as the data analysis indicated no significant relationship. One limitation of this study was that study participants were all from the same university and employed by the same school district, which limited the scope of the study. In order to generalize these findings, it is important to determine if the same results are applicable to other teacher preparation programs and school districts. The results of such study would be important in informing educator preparation providers, State Department of

Education officials, students, and policy makers on the use of the edTPA as a measurement of teacher candidates' readiness to teach.

A second area necessitating further research is teacher candidates' and university faculty perceptions on the use of the edTPA as a requirement for teacher licensure. The participants in this study completed the edTPA as a university requirement prior to the state requiring it for licensure. Based on the survey responses of the study participants the edTPA was very time consuming and stressful to complete during their final clinical experience, it would be informative to know if current candidates' perceptions vary from the study participants now that the edTPA is required for licensure. Requiring the edTPA as a licensure requirement makes it a high-stakes consequential summative assessment. The study participants also responded that they did not perceive their performance on the edTPA as an accurate assessment of their ability to teach, since they were mainly focused on achieving a passing grade. One might hypothesize that requiring the edTPA as a licensure requirement could escalate candidates' stress and anxiety, which would affect their focus on their teaching performance. It would also be informative to review the time at which the edTPA is required to be submitted. Investigation of possible changes to the timeline of submission might possibly minimize candidate's stress.

In addition, it is important to know the perceptions of the university teacher preparation faculty relative to requiring the edTPA as a licensure requirement. The original intent of implementing the edTPA in teacher preparation as a formative assessment was to improve the teaching knowledge and performance of teacher candidates, not a requirement for licensure (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2014). Implementing the edTPA as a consequential assessment may result in how the edTPA is integrated into pre-residency coursework. Surveying current early-career teachers and university teacher preparation faculty regarding the use of the edTPA

as a licensure requirement would add to the body of knowledge on how to best support teacher candidates' during the edTPA process.

A third recommendation for research is to conduct a cost benefit analysis study using the edTPA as a licensure requirement. It is important to know if the potential improvement in early-career teachers' performance and the achievement of their students justify the cost of the edTPA in preparing teachers to obtain a teaching license. The edTPA is twice as expensive as the Praxis Principles of Teaching and Learning (PLT) exam formerly used as a teaching requirement and replaced with the edTPA. The current cost of the edTPA is $300 per student for the first submission. If a candidate fails any of the three tasks on the edTPA, they must resubmit their portfolio for scoring at the cost of an additional $100 per task. The former PLT costs $146. If a student failed the PLT, they retake the entire exam at an additional cost of $146. Pearson Evaluation Systems provides data to preparation providers and the State Department of Education on the progress of candidates' who complete the edTPA including the number of retakes submitted for scoring by candidates. This would be valuable information for policy makers and stakeholders to evaluate the use of the edTPA as a summative assessment for required for licensure.

Finally, it would be informative for this participating university, and possibly other teacher preparation programs who use the TEAM to observe and evaluate their teacher candidates, to reconduct the current study using the TEAM observation scores in relation to edTPA scores instead of the LOE score. The teacher preparation programs would then be able to measure the progress of the candidates during their first-year teaching. This investigation has the potential to be a stronger indicator of the candidates' readiness to teacher year one.

These recommendations for future research would add to the body of knowledge on education reform efforts regarding the use of the edTPA as a measurement of teacher readiness, teacher effectiveness, and licensure requirements. This information could be used to inform universities of programmatic changes needed to their teacher preparation program, as well as how to better support teacher candidates during the edTPA process. In addition, it would provide much needed data for policy makers in determining future policies regarding the use of the edTPA in teacher preparation and licensure. Most importantly, these recommendations have the potential to affect the student learning of the students in the early-career teachers' classrooms. To positively affect student learning is essentially the center focus and ultimate goal of teacher education programs.

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# APPENDIX A

# IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF VARIABLES

**Teacher Candidate Perceptions of the Impact of the edTPA on Educator Preparedness**

This study investigates early-career teachers' perceptions of the edTPA teacher performance assessment on preparing classroom teachers using a 5-point Likert scale survey. The relationship of edTPA scores and LOEs will be examined. Attribute variables such as education level, certification area, and GPA will also be examined.

| | **Variable Labels** | **Variable Levels** | **Scale of Measurement** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Dependent Variables** | edTPA – Teacher Performance Assessment | Overall edTPA score 1-75 | Scale |
| | Early-Career Teacher Survey | 5-point Likert Scale on each Survey Question | Scale |
| | LOE Scores | Level of Effectiveness 1-5 | Scale |
| **Independent Attribute Variables** | Survey Participant Characteristics | Early-Career Teachers | Nominal |
| | GPA | 1= 2.7-2.99 2= 3.0-3.49<br>3= 3.5 - 4.0 | Scale / Ordinal |
| | Education Level | 1 = Undergraduate<br>2 = Post-Baccalaureate / Graduate | Nominal |
| | Area of Certification | 1 = Early Childhood<br>2 = Elementary<br>3 = Middle Grades<br>4 = Secondary | Nominal |

# APPENDIX B

# EARLY-CAREER TEACHER SURVEY

# Early-Career Teacher Survey

## I. Early Career Teacher Demographics

1. Gender

- ○ Female
- ○ Male

2. Age

- ○ 21 to 25
- ○ 26 to 30
- ○ 31 to 35
- ○ 36 to 40
- ○ over 40

3. Ethnicity

- ○ Hispanic or Latino
- ○ Non-Hispanic or Latino

4. Race

- ○ American Indian or Alaskan Native
- ○ African American or Black
- ○ Asian
- ○ Pacific Islander
- ○ White
- ○ Multiracial

5. Education Level during Student Teaching:

- ○ Undergraduate
- ○ Graduate
- ○ Post-Baccalaureate

6. Completion Date of Student Teaching:

7. Certification Area: (drop down menu)

8. edTPA Handbook Completed: (drop down menu)

9. Teaching Experience

## II. edTPA Participation During Student Teaching

Please rate the following based on your beliefs regarding your participation in the edTPA during student teaching using a scale of 1-5.

1. Completion of the edTPA during student teaching was stressful and time-consuming.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

2. While completing the edTPA during student teaching, my main focus was on meeting the required passing score.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

3. I believe my edTPA score was an accurate assessment of my teaching ability during student teaching.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

4. I had a good understanding of the edTPA tasks and rubrics during student teaching.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

## IV. edTPA Participation and Early-Career Teaching

5. My belief about the value of edTPA in preparing me to teach improved from my time as a student teacher to an early-career teacher.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

6. My understanding of the edTPA tasks and rubrics has improved since becoming a licensed practicing teacher.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

7. As an early career teacher, I have a better understanding of the goals and components of edTPA and how they relate to my knowledge about teaching and my teaching performance.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

8. I believe my participation in the edTPA has better prepared me to be a more effective teacher.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

# VITA

Barbara (Bobbi) Beeler Lussier was born in Knoxville, Tennessee to Elizabeth and Bill Beeler. She was the youngest of three daughters. She attended public schools and graduated from Karns High School. She attended East Tennessee State University before transferring to Mars Hill University in North Carolina where she obtained her bachelor's degree. She received her master's degree in Education from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville where she was a graduate assistant. She taught middle school with Knox County Schools before accepting a middle school science position with Oak Ridge Schools. She later became a Middle School Assistant Principal and an Elementary Principal with the Oak Ridge Schools. In 2005, she accepted a position with the Tennessee Department of Education as the Executive Director of the Office of Early Learning to implement Governor Bredesen's Voluntary Pre-K program. In 2012, she briefly served as Assistant Commissioner of the Office of Special Populations before accepting a position at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU). In January 2013, she became the Executive Director of the Office of Professional Laboratory Experiences at MTSU responsible for clinical experiences, teacher licensure, and partnerships. She has served on numerous local, state and national committees and has received several awards, including Knox County Teacher of the Year, Tennessee Association of Middle Grades Educator of the Year, State Level Middle Grades Educator of the Year, and Oak Ridge YWCA Woman of Distinction.