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Candidate Success and edTPA: Looking at the Data

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This descriptive study looks at the correlations between Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA) data and numerous program data points, including GPA, major GPA, and benchmark assignment scores, gathered in an Early Childhood Education (ECE) program. Previous studies have looked to correlate grade point average (GPA) with pre-service teacher performance; however, correlating students' benchmark assessment scores and student performance on edTPA has not been attempted. This study looks to determine the relationships between overall GPA, major GPA (Early Childhood Education), and edTPA performance (overall score and task scores). Relationships were also investigated between program benchmark assessments (case study, family culture project, integrated investigation unit, student teaching evaluation) and edTPA performance (overall score and task scores). Findings suggest a relationship between overall GPA and edTPA overall score as well as GPA and individual edTPA task scores. In exploring benchmark assignments, correlations were found between the Integrated Investigation Unit and overall edTPA score and edTPA Task 1 and 3 scores.

Purpose

University programs that prepare teachers for license are responsible to many stakeholders. State agencies governing the PreK-12 education system as well as the higher education system have a stake in the development of high quality teachers. In addition, school partners, including teachers, PreK-12 students, parents, and administrators are impacted by the activities and products of teacher preparation programs. There are also professional organizations governing specific pieces of the educator preparation puzzle that have great influence over the accreditation and/or recognition of programs. And last, but certainly not least, are the faculty and teacher candidates who together navigate the web of standards, regulations, and the expected knowledge, skills, and dispositions required to move a teacher education student through a preparation program to become a licensed teacher. Throughout the process of untangling that web, teacher preparation programs must document teacher candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions with respect to state standards for the teaching profession, state content standards, and the standards of one or more specialty associations.

Numerous assessments for documenting teacher candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions are available and regularly used by teacher preparation programs. Some assessments include standardized tests for content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, program-developed assessments associated with key courses and assignments, field placement evaluations provided by school-based and university-based educators documenting candidate work in school settings, and performance assessments. Each assessment serves as a window into part of the teacher

preparation process and gives a glimpse of the abilities, strengths, and challenges of teacher candidates.

As numerous standards and assessments are introduced, adapted, revised, and discarded with precipitous regularity, teacher preparation programs are continually evaluating program components, including assessments that serve as benchmark indicators of candidate progress toward program completion and licensure. The onset of edTPA and the use of performance assessment associated with teacher preparation and licensure have opened the door for institutions to consider current practices in teacher preparation, in particular, the alignment of assessments that build toward teacher candidate success. Rather than jumping headlong into program overhaul, it is important to consider the value of current practices and how they align to mandated standards and correlate with required assessments. With the implementation of performance based assessments in high stakes contexts, identifying elements of future success can be highly beneficial to teacher preparation programs and their pre-service teachers.

In the state of Ohio, two major shifts have prompted the investigation of teacher preparation practices: the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES) and the Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA). Although the OTES is used to evaluate the performance of practicing teachers and the edTPA is intended for pre-service teachers, both require a performance assessment to guide teacher improvement. At this time, the edTPA is used only at the institution level and not for licensure by the state.

This study was designed to examine the current practices used by a Midwestern institution with benchmark assessments aligned to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation. As the university moves forward to provide support to candidates in a new era of teacher evaluation, research must consider current practices and their correlation with new assessment standards. In particular, this study looks to find relationships between current program-developed assessments, GPA, and pre-service teacher performance on the edTPA.

Two specific research questions are addressed by this study:

1. What is the relationship of GPA (major and overall) to edTPA performance (overall, individual task scores)?
2. What is the relationship between program benchmark assessments (case study, family culture project, integrated investigation unit, student teaching evaluation) and edTPA performance (overall, individual task scores)?

Background

State and national teacher accreditation agencies have moved from a system focus to a performance-based assessment approach to ensure quality teachers are emerging from colleges and universities. Graduating teachers are expected to be competent in content knowledge, pedagogy, planning, assessing, and differentiating instruction to meet the needs of diverse student populations. The Council for the Accreditation of Education Programs (CAEP) expects documented learning of knowledge, skills, and dispositions for all teachers graduating from an

accredited university teacher preparation program. In addition, the specialty associations (SPAs) governing teacher preparation accreditation in specific areas or grade bands, such as NAEYC, have similar expectations.

The standards for most SPAs ask teacher preparation programs to provide data on pre-service teacher content knowledge, assessment, planning, teaching, and their effect on student learning. To gather these data for accreditation, course assignments must be designed to assess pre-service teachers' proficiency in these areas. While assessments are designed with the SPA teacher preparation standards in mind, constant reflective evaluation helps to ensure that assessments collectively address the standards. For example, developing an integrated investigation unit of instruction could provide documentation of teacher candidates' content knowledge on the investigation topic, ability to plan instruction around student needs, and ability to develop formative and summative assessments. Teaching that unit in a field placement could then provide documentation of the candidate's ability to use developmentally effective approaches to interact with children, collect student data, analyze that data to inform further instruction, and document student learning. Table 1 below shows the NAEYC standards that are relevant to the ECE program investigated in this study. Table 2 below shows the benchmark assessments in this ECE program and where they provide documentation of the NAEYC accreditation standards.

Table 1

NAEYC Standards

NAEYC Standards

1. Promoting Child Development and Learning
2. Building Family and Community Relations
3. Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families
4. Using Developmentally Effective Approaches
5. Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum
6. Becoming a Professional
7. Early Childhood Field Experiences

Table 2

Course Titles, Benchmark Assessments and Alignment to NAEYC Standards

Course Number and Title	Benchmark Assessment	Year	NEAYC Standards
Child Development: Birth to Age 8	Child Development Case Study	Sophomore	1, 2, 3, 4, 6
Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) for Preschool	Family Culture Paper	Junior	2, 6
DAP in Science for Primary Grades and DAP in Math for Primary Grades	Integrated Investigation Unit- Planning and Student Learning	Fall Senior	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
Student Teaching Primary Grades	Student Teaching Evaluation (Primary-Grade Placement)	Spring Senior	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Review of Literature

Different measures, including GPA, standardized tests, and performance assessments, have been used to determine pre-service teacher success in teacher preparation programs. The relationships among these measures have been examined in several studies. Academic GPA has long been a standard as an indicator of student success. While grade point average (GPA) only provides one indicator of pre-service teacher academic success and is inherently problematic as it can encompass many factors (i.e., test-taking ability, attendance, performance on written work, instructor judgment, study skills, etc.), it is consistently used by teacher education programs to determine pre-service teacher admittance, continuance, and success in the program. It is used as well by employers in hiring decisions. It has also been used to predict future success both on assessments for pre-service teachers and in job interviews. Mikitovics and Crehan (2002) reported that GPA was a central factor used to determine entrance into a teacher preparation program. Stegemann (2014) examined four elements used in determining teacher candidate success: incoming GPA, letter of intent, writing sample, and an interview. Her findings suggest a relationship between GPA, letter of intent, and student writing samples.

In addition to GPA, pre-service teacher scores on standardized achievement tests have also been used to gauge success. However, standardized tests have been shown to be weak predictors of pre-service teacher success in the classroom. Wilson and Robinson (2012) utilized five years of data to examine the relationships among standardized test scores for pre-service teachers (Praxis), program assessments (GPA), and performance assessments (Teacher Work Sample and Student Teaching Composite). Findings indicated that GPA was more strongly correlated to pre-service teachers' performance assessment scores than were standardized test scores. They conclude that standardized test scores have little relationship to pre-service teachers' ability to perform in a real classroom environment while GPA does have a relationship. In this case, Wilson and Robinson make the point that within-program assessments are "reflected in GPA" (p. 59) and thus GPA can serve as a proxy for all program assessments. In another study, a meta-analysis conducted by D'Agostino and Powers (2009), over 120 studies were investigated to determine the extent to which candidates' success in their teacher preparation program, as measured by GPA, and their scores on teacher license exams predicted competence in teaching. They found that test scores on license exams were a weaker predictor of success in the classroom than GPA. Likewise, Kirchner, Evans, and Norman (2010) identified a statistically significant relationship between pre-service teachers' GPA with their performance on the TeacherInsight Interview, an electronic "interview" protocol used by many school districts as a preliminary screening tool. Thus, while both GPA and standardized tests have been used as measures of pre-service teachers' success, only GPA has been established as an important predictor of pre-service teachers' success on measures of performance.

The goal of pre-service teacher assessment is, ultimately, to judge the readiness and competence of new teachers with respect to their performance in real classroom situations. Therefore, in the studies cited (D'Agostino & Powers, 2009; Kirchner, Evans, & Norman, 2010; Wilson & Robinson, 2012) GPA and scores on standardized licensure exams have been judged against their relationship to pre-service teacher performance measures. Measures of performance have ranged from student teaching evaluations conducted by school and/or university educators to work samples completed during student teaching. Pre-service teacher performance during student

teaching was the subject of the study by Waggoner and Carroll (2014). They investigated the correlation between student teaching evaluations and state teaching licensure exams, as well as teacher work samples and lessons developed during student teaching. They found weak correlations among the assessment measures and suggested that the absence of moderate or strong correlations indicated that each assessment measured different constructs, and argued, therefore, for the need for a comprehensive set of assessments to determine candidate success.

The use of teacher performance assessments has gained momentum as a means to assess the performance of teachers in the context of connecting theory with practice (Gallant & Mayer, 2012). Previous literature on practices associated with teacher performance and on performance-based assessments has been limited to learning outcomes (Chung, 2008), policy change (Peck, Gallucci, & Sloan, 2010), and predictive scores from university supervisors (Sandholtz & Shea, 2011). Although past research has considered the role of performance assessment in evaluating teacher candidates' knowledge and skills (Chung, 2008), the research has not considered best practices in the context of teacher education programs that link past performance on benchmark assessments used for accreditation and candidate success on a summative performance assessment. This study's framework is designed to build on an existing, accredited program and drawing connections between benchmark assessments aligned to Early Childhood standards and pre-service teacher performance on the edTPA.

The edTPA is a nationally utilized performance-based assessment developed through SCALE (Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity) and Stanford University Faculty. The purpose of edTPA is to provide a nationally standardized, performance-based assessment that measures novice teachers' ability and readiness to teach—to plan, instruct, and analyze evidence of student learning. Candidates can submit an edTPA portfolio in early childhood, middle childhood, adolescent/young adult, and special education licensure bands as well as other teaching areas.

The edTPA structure consists of three tasks in which the novice teacher 1) plans for instruction and assessment, 2) instructs and engages students in learning, and 3) assesses student learning. Each of the three tasks is scored utilizing five rubrics for a total of fifteen rubrics. A score of one to five is assigned to each of the fifteen rubrics. Trained scorers read and score the novice teacher's edTPA portfolio, which results in a possible score ranging from fifteen to seventy-five.

With the understanding that the edTPA can provide guidance to program improvement, institutions are early in the process of examining the edTPA data for correlation information. This information can guide not only the preparation of teacher candidates, but can serve to advance and improve utilization of data. As suggested by Peck, Singer-Gabella, Sloan, and Lin (2014), this information can address multiple levels of teacher preparation, including teaching candidates, faculty members, programs, and the national status of teacher education. Though each of these groups has the opportunity to utilize performance assessment data, examining what the data do and do not identify with reliability and validity is critical as programs across the nation are generating and collecting such data. Therefore, it is suggested that programs begin to consider how that data is used for program improvement.

While past studies (Mikitovics & Crehan, 2002; Kirchner, et al., 2010; Stegemann, 2014; Waggoner & Carroll, 2014; Wilson & Robinson, 2012) and analysis (D'Agostino & Powers, 2009) provide interesting insights to the relationships among GPA, standardized test scores, and performance assessments, additional studies are critical to examine factors that may indicate pre-service teachers' future success. Because GPA has been an important predictor of pre-service teacher success, it is important to establish the relationship between GPA and edTPA. However, because GPA is a composite of many factors, it is important to look more closely at the program benchmark assignments to determine how they may predict pre-service teachers' success in the classroom as measured by edTPA.

With the implementation of performance based assessments in high stakes contexts, identifying elements of future success can be highly beneficial to teacher preparation programs and their pre-service teachers. At the national level, correlational information regarding edTPA data and GPA could provide important data to inform the national debate currently taking place regarding the use of performance assessments to license teachers or determine pre-service teachers' readiness for employment. This study bridges the gap by correlating a nationally graded teacher performance assessment (edTPA) with GPA, and furthers the discussion by looking at the individual relationships between edTPA rubrics and benchmark assessments aligned with NAEYC Professional Practice Standards.

Methods and Analysis

Data were collected from 43 graduates of an Early Childhood Education Program in the spring of 2014. All students were enrolled in a four-year degree program at a private Midwestern university. The program was a B.S. program that included three and one-half years of course work and one semester of full-time student teaching. A total of 60 candidates were originally part of the study; however, those who did not complete all benchmark assessments and edTPA were dropped. Data included overall GPA, major GPA, benchmark assessments (case study, family culture project, integrated investigation unit, student teaching assessment), Early Childhood edTPA overall score, and Early Childhood edTPA task scores. Prior to data collection, IRB approval was granted.

Of the final 43 participants used for the study, a total of 42 (97.6%) of the participants were female while one (2.3%) was male. All participants were enrolled at the university for the entire time of data collection, starting with their first course and commencing with student teaching. At the time of the completion of the study, all participants had successfully graduated. Forty (93.0%) of the participants were White while three (6.9%) were African American. The average overall GPA was 3.68, while the average major GPA was 3.86.

Using a structure similar to those utilized in past research with correlations and GPA (Wilson & Robinson, 2012), multiple factors were correlated. As the data were not normally distributed, Spearman's rank order correlation coefficients were performed. Those items that were significant in the first analysis, GPA and edTPA performance, were investigated further by breaking down edTPA performance by individual tasks and investigating specific benchmark assessments that were used in courses that provided grades for pre-service teacher GPA, thus addressing the second research question. Bonferroni corrections were used to control for Type I errors. edTPA

rubrics used for this analysis included rubrics 1-5 under the planning task (Task 1), rubrics 6-10 under the teaching and instruction task (Task 2), and rubrics 11-15 under the assessing student learning task (Task 3). Each of the rubrics had a range of one to five points possible with one being lowest and scores of five being highest.

Findings

Research Question 1: GPA and edTPA Performance

The first research question aimed to find the relationship between teacher candidates' GPA (overall and teacher education) and edTPA performance. Correlations were run using Spearman's Rho, as multiple items were correlated at the same time a Bonferroni correction was used with an adjusted significance level of .006 to control Type I errors (see Table 3). Spearman's Rho revealed a statistically significant relationship between the overall GPA and edTPA overall score. A statistically significant relationship was also revealed between the overall GPA and edTPA Task 1, edTPA Task 2, and edTPA Task 3. Each of these relationships would be described as moderate.

Table 3

Correlations between GPA (Major and Overall) and edTPA for Early Childhood Majors Overall score and Tasks 1-3 score

		edTPA Overall	edTPA Task 1	edTPA Task 2	edTPA Task3
Overall GPA	Spearman's Rho	.613	.519	.519	.597
	<i>p</i>	<.050	<.001	<.001	<.001
Major GPA	Spearman's Rho	.643	.511	.591	.618
	<i>p</i>	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001

N = 43

Correlations were run to determine the relationship between major GPA and edTPA performance. Analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship existed between major GPA and edTPA overall score. In looking at the three individual tasks, a relationship was detected between major GPA and each edTPA task. For edTPA Task 1 and Task 2, a statistically significant relationship, moderate in size, was identified with major GPA. The statistically significant relationship of major GPA with edTPA Task 3 was substantial.

Research Question 2: Benchmark Assessments and edTPA Overall and Task Performance

The first research question sought to identify the relationship between GPA (overall and major) and edTPA performance while the second research question aimed to dig deeper into looking at specific assessments that were used as part of determining GPA and were also used as benchmark assessments for accreditation (see Table 2 for alignment of benchmark assessments with NAEYC standards). Initial investigation of the data revealed a non-normal distribution; therefore, a non-parametric analysis was necessary for further investigation. A Bonferroni-adjusted significance level of .003 was calculated to account for the increased possibility of a

Type I error. Spearman's Rho failed to detect statistically significant relationships between the overall Case Study and edTPA overall score and individual task scores. The analysis also failed to detect significant relationships between the Family Culture Study and edTPA performance in both overall and specific tasks (see Table 4).

Table 4

Correlations between benchmark assessments and edTPA for Early Childhood Majors Overall Score and Tasks 1-3 score

		edTPA Overall	edTPA Task 1	edTPA Task 2	edTPA Task 3
Case Study	Spearman's Rho	.189	.180	.165	.175
	<i>p</i>	.225	.249	.290	.261
Family Culture Study	Spearman's Rho	.294	.335	.273	.254
	<i>p</i>	.056	.028	.077	.101
Integrated Investigation Unit	Spearman's Rho	.571	.555	.414	.516
	<i>p</i>	<.001	<.001	.006	<.001
Student Teaching	Spearman's Rho	.406	.248	.438	.404
	<i>p</i>	.007	.108	.003	.007

N = 43

Looking at the third benchmark assessment, measuring planning and student learning (Integrated Investigation Unit), Spearman's Rho revealed a statistically significant relationship between the assessment and edTPA overall score. The strength of the relationship was moderate. There was a statistically significant relationship between the assessment and the first edTPA task; however, not between the Investigation assignment and edTPA Task 2. edTPA Task 3 showed a statistically significant, moderate correlation with the Investigation benchmark assessment. The final benchmark assessment, Student Teaching Evaluation, was not significantly related to the overall edTPA score, the benchmark assessment, or the specific tasks (Task 1, 2, 3).

Discussion

The research study began by exploring whether a relationship existed between pre-service teachers' GPA and their edTPA performance. Previous studies (D'Agostino & Powers, 2009; Kirchner, Evans, & Norman, 2010; Wilson & Robinson, 2012) have demonstrated the predictive relationship between GPA and pre-service teacher success in the classroom. As expected, this study also showed a positive, moderate correlation between overall GPA and the edTPA overall and individual task scores. This suggests that pre-service teachers who are generally perceived as "good students" as determined by their overall GPA generally do well on all components of the edTPA.

As we dig deeper into the make-up of the overall GPA, we see a similar, but more pronounced positive correlation between the specific education GPA and the edTPA Task 3 score. While the overall GPA had a positive, moderate correlation with the edTPA overall and with all task scores, the education GPA has positive, moderate correlation with edTPA overall and Task 1 and 2 scores and a positive, strong correlation with the edTPA Task 3 scores. edTPA Task 3 requires

pre-service teachers to examine student learning data and make adjustments to instruction based on student learning needs. The strong correlation between edTPA Task 3 and the education GPA and the only moderate correlation between edTPA Task 3 and overall GPA suggest that the courses specific to education that make up the major GPA are critical in preparing pre-service teachers as reflective practitioners who can collect and analyze student learning data, who know and understand student learning needs, and who can make adjustments to instruction to further student learning.

Because GPA has been a standard of measure of pre-service teacher success and is used for many purposes all the way from teacher preparation program admission to job placements, it was important to establish its correlation to the edTPA. However, in order to get to specific assessments that help prepare pre-service teachers for success in the classroom, it was important to determine the relationships between the edTPA and specific program benchmark assessments that are the cornerstones of our program. Our analysis went deeper to determine if benchmark assessments, those used for accreditation purposes, were also statistically related to edTPA performance on the three tasks. The results were mixed. Assignments completed during early parts of the program (case study and family culture project) had no correlations to edTPA performance. The assignments in the later part of the program (integrated investigation) showed correlations to parts of the edTPA performance. Lastly, the final assessment (student teaching evaluation) was not correlated to edTPA performance.

Case Study

The first ECE benchmark assessment, Case Study, was completed during the candidates' sophomore year as they engaged in a weekly three hour practicum at the university's Family Learning Center. The candidates engage with the children, help teachers as needed, and complete observational data regarding the development of one child through a running narrative and anecdotal notes compiled on a child skills checklist. The final activity in the course is a comprehensive reflection paper that identifies the developmental skills of the child and skills the child should work on next (Case Study Benchmark Assessment). The candidates defend their next steps, particularly as related to what is happening in the classroom. The candidates then share this information with parents and teachers to begin to develop respectful, reciprocal relationships among teachers, parents, and the community. This assessment aligns to NAEYC Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 (see Tables 1 and 2). The Spearman's Rho failed to detect a statistically significant relationship between this benchmark assessment and edTPA performance (overall score and task scores). It is not surprising that statistically significant relationships were not present, as this assessment does not directly address the three edTPA components of the teaching practice (planning, instructing, and assessing) and occurs very early in a candidate's program. While candidates begin to use observation as assessment, and start to look at language development, the developmental level of the candidates and the expectations of the assessment lead to only a foundational understanding of the role of assessment in planning and instruction.

Family Culture Project

The second benchmark assessment, Family Culture Project, was completed in the junior year of the Early Childhood Program. Candidates were placed in a Head Start or Title I preschool classroom in an urban setting for a weekly three hour practicum. They explore the community

where the center is located, communicate with parents through introductory and final letters, and research the community cultures. The final activity in the course is a comprehensive reflection paper (Family Culture project) addressing their own culture, the culture(s) of the community, and communication styles utilized during interactions with families. This assessment is designed to increase the candidates' knowledge of different cultures, improve communication skills, and engage in reflective practice. In this assessment, the candidate also learns to reflect on one's own communication style and vocabulary use when working with children from different cultural groups as the candidate engages in activities with children and families. NAEYC standards addressed in this benchmark assessment include NAEYC Standard 2 (Building Family and Community Relationships) and Standard 6 (Becoming a Professional). As this assessment appears to be well aligned with the requirements of edTPA Task 1, which focuses on working with children with varied needs, using knowledge of children (including those from a different culture) for planning, and supporting language development, one would anticipate a relationship. Therefore, it is reasonable that a correlation might exist between edTPA Task 1 and the Family Culture Project. However, statistical analysis failed to reveal a correlation between this assessment and the edTPA Task 1.

Integrated Investigation Unit

During the first term of senior year, candidates developed and taught a five lesson integrated investigation unit with science as the primary focus. Using a format similar to edTPA, but developed as a benchmark assessment prior to the use of edTPA, pre-service teachers pre-assessed, planned, taught, assessed and reflected on the investigation. Data analysis revealed that the benchmark assessment was moderately correlated to two edTPA tasks (Task 1 and 3).

For Task 1, each of the rubrics within the task fall under the title of Planning. The investigation requires pre-service teachers to pre-assess and plan based on their students' needs. The NAEYC standards for this assessment include Standards 1 (Promoting Child Development and Learning), 3 (Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families), and 5 (Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum). As is stated in the expectations of the benchmark assessments, the candidates are asked to pre-assess students on a specific science content standard. This requires both an understanding of the content, a plan for promoting student learning, and evidence of how to use assessments, all three of which are aligned to the NAEYC standards. The next step in the benchmark assessment is to plan five lessons centered on that content. edTPA Task 1 (Rubrics 1-5) falls under the heading of planning for instruction and includes references to planning that understands and values the students' past learning, their active nature, and their learning needs, and assessment to support learning. The benchmark assessment is in alignment with all of the requirements of the first task of edTPA, thus the correlation between the task and benchmark appears appropriate.

edTPA Task 3 addresses assessing children's learning, which is a key element required in accreditation and recognition of program assessments, that is, evidence of student learning. Through this assessment, candidates are building those skills of using assessment to inform practice. In reviewing the expectation for the benchmark assessment, the researchers found it was again a mirror of edTPA rubric expectations. Candidates are asked to review the assessment data and reflect upon student learning. During the final stages of the integrated investigation,

candidates are required to film small group practice in which feedback is provided to support evidence of student learning and plans for individual student goals. Finally, candidates are asked to write individual daily and overall reflections that reference the charting of student data and explain next steps in the learning cycle. Once again, the expectations of the benchmark are reflective of edTPA Rubrics 11-15, which explains the correlation between the Integrated Investigation Unit and edTPA Task 3.

Student Teaching Evaluation

The Student Teaching Evaluation used by the program was designed around the seven standards of the Ohio Standards for the Teaching Profession, and the first six NAEYC standards. The Spearman Rho failed to detect a correlation between the Student Teaching Evaluation and edTPA overall score and the individual tasks (Task 1, 2, and 3). In considering what is valued in student teaching and reflecting back to the assessment and the edTPA tasks, the first task requires pre-service teachers to consider the context of the classroom and to understand the needs of their students, while also planning for instruction. In student teaching, the candidate is taking on all of those tasks but the emphasis of the evaluation is the practice of teaching. This is more reflective of Task 2 and Task 3 of edTPA.

The rubrics and expectations for edTPA Task 2 require candidates to demonstrate their teaching ability through videos. Three of these rubrics in edTPA Task 2 require evidence that is only observable in the video clips and not in the written commentary. While all of the work leading up to “teaching” has obvious importance (knowing your students, planning, assessment, reflection), the focus on Task 2 is on the pre-service teacher’s ability to teach. This only becomes apparent when they are in the classroom, in front of a group of students, and engaging in activities that ensure student learning.

In Task 3 of edTPA, the candidates were asked how student learning was evaluated. The expectation includes using both written responses of the candidates, and feedback provided to the student. Student teaching post-observation conferences with candidates are often focused around evidence of student learning as part of the lesson observed. The NAEYC standards associated with this benchmark assessment include using content knowledge to help build meaningful curriculum. As is evident in lesson delivery, candidates should be modeling and helping students to apply vocabulary to demonstrate understanding and mastery of the content.

Conclusions

The findings of this study suggest that early childhood education programs must consider how to best meet the needs of pre-service teachers by considering overall and education-specific GPAs and by looking for patterns in the success of candidates on benchmark assessments and in their performance on the edTPA. Multiple measures of candidate success at different points in the program can help faculty to pinpoint candidate’s strengths and weaknesses in order to provide specific interventions and coaching to help them improve knowledge and skills. As the edTPA is one tool for assessing candidate readiness and not currently used in Ohio for licensure, it is the recommendation of the researchers to consider data from the edTPA as another source of information that can be used towards program improvement. Further investigation into how

student teaching is evaluated and the connections to edTPA and other assessments should be considered: That is, how are the writing of lesson plans and the reflections of candidates on their practice, versus the actual act of teaching during the lesson, evaluated?

Measuring the success of pre-service teacher candidates has taken several forms. Prior research has determined the relationships among pre-service teachers' GPAs, standardized tests scores, and performance in student teaching. In an attempt to 1) determine the relationship between GPA and the new performance assessment edTPA and 2) determine more specifically how program assessments contribute to pre-service teacher development in knowledge and skills related to real classroom performance, this study examined the relationship between three program benchmark assessments and the edTPA. Because the edTPA is relatively new and is used for different purposes in different states, limited research exists with edTPA data. This study identified the relationships between pre-service teachers' overall GPA, education-specific GPA, three program benchmark assignments, and the edTPA. Future research should strive to find the link between pre-service teacher preparation, pre-service teacher performance, and data from graduates teaching in the field (Floden, 2012; Henry, et al., 2013). Limitations of this study include the small sample size. As the edTPA is new to Ohio and not required for licensure, the number of participants is limited. Future studies should include a larger sample and multiple years of data.

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