



The Utility and Cost of Requiring Wisconsin Teachers Pass the FoRT and edTPA assessments

Curtis J Jones, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee

Barbara Bales, University of Wisconsin System

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Background

- In this study, conducted by The Office of Socially Responsible Evaluation in Education at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee and the University of Wisconsin System, we explore the utility and impact of the requirement that preservice teachers meet a minimum score on the both the Educative Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA) and the Wisconsin Foundations of Reading Test (FoRT).
- While no research was found on the ability of the FoRT to predict future teacher effectiveness, prior national research on edTPA has shown it to be modestly predictive of future teacher effectiveness (Bastian et al., 2016; Bastian & Lys, 2016; Goldhaber, Cowan, & Theobald 2016). Further, a recent analysis of the edTPA suggest scores may depend on the person scoring and discriminates against African American teachers (Gitomer, Martinez, & Battey, 2020).

Study Questions

1. How do the FoRT and edTPA impact the number of students who become teachers?
2. How well do the FoRT and edTPA predict the effectiveness of new teachers?

Little is known regarding the unique “value added” of the edTPA and FoRT for predicting teacher effectiveness, i.e. how much better are we at predicting the future effectiveness of a teacher when we know their edTPA and FoRT scores than we are by just knowing how well they performed in their preparation program and where they received their certification.

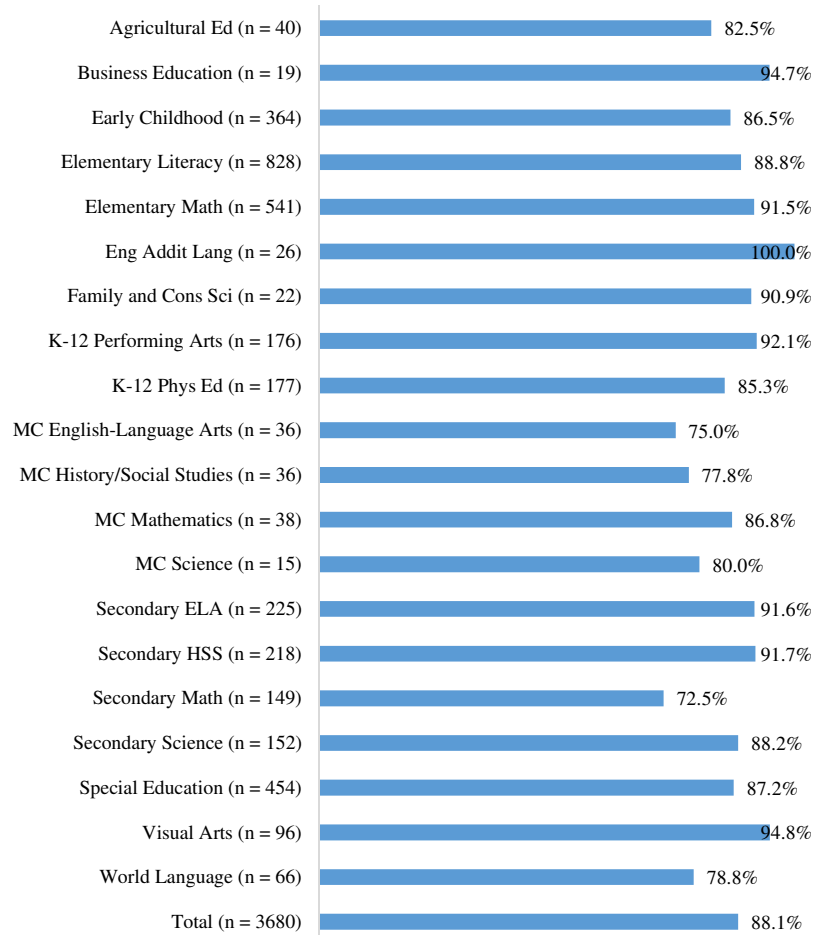
Who participated in the study?

- Seven University of Wisconsin teacher preparation programs provided student data (assessment scores, completion status, and GPA) from the 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18 school years.
- These seven programs enrolled 7,742 students and graduated 3,808 teachers during this time; numbers that represent roughly 50% of all teachers in training attending Wisconsin teacher education programs and 45% of all graduates.
- Teachers who graduated these seven UW preparation programs were matched to state education data. These data provided information about which district teachers worked in and the effectiveness ratings assigned to them as part of the state's EE process.
- 2,676 of the 3,808 graduates matched to state data. Of these, effectiveness ratings were recorded for 1,740.

What methods did we use to answer the two study questions?

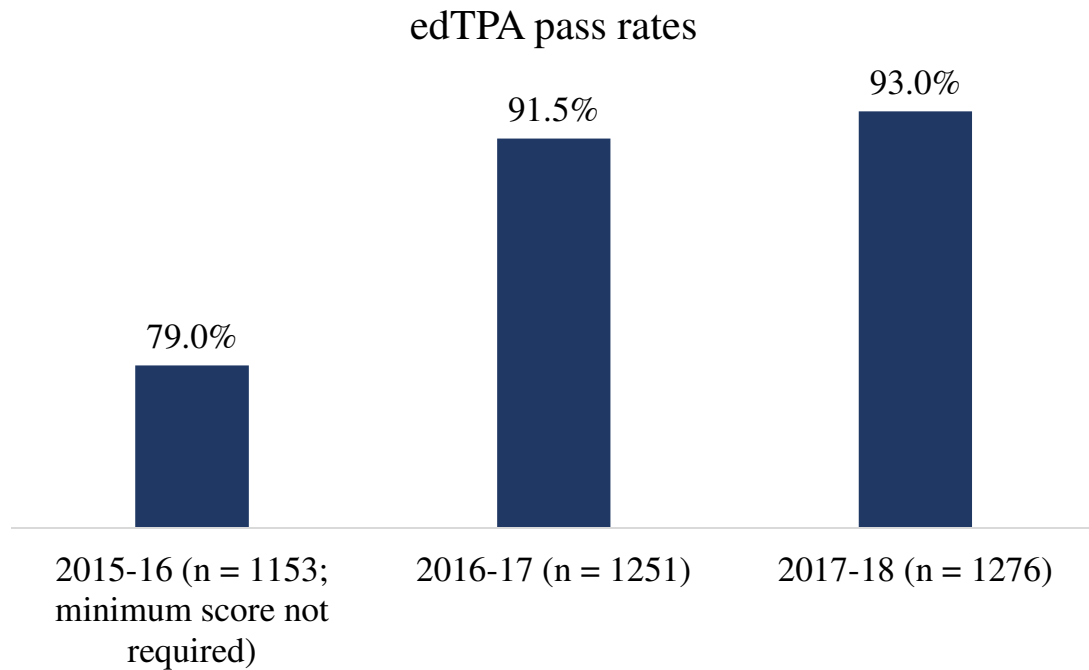
- Pass rates were first analyzed to determine the number of students who did not meet the requirements for each assessment. This was done overall and by demographic subgroups to explore the possibility the assessments may be disproportionately preventing persons of color from becoming teachers.
- Bivariate correlations were then used to determine if FORT and edTPA were correlated with new teacher effectiveness ratings.
- Next, we used statistical modeling to isolate the “value-added” of the FORT and edTPA for predicting teacher effectiveness in addition to the information we already have about teacher-candidates, such as their GPA.
- Finally, we capitalized on the DPI policy that required all 2015-16 teacher candidates to take the edTPA but did not attach any stakes to scores. We compare the effectiveness of teachers who scored below the threshold implemented the next year with that of teachers who scored above the threshold.

Most students “passed” the edTPA



Within the seven UW campuses participating in the study during the 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18 school years, 88.1% of all edTPA administrations met the required minimum score. However, there were some education areas where teacher-candidates were more likely to pass than others suggesting that some of its subject area tests make represent more of a roadblock for specific subject areas.

Nearly all students passed the edTPA after DPI required students to meet a minimum score.



While only 79% of teacher-candidates scored at or above the required score in 2015-16, in the 2016-17 and 2017-18, 91.5% and 93%, respectively, of assessment results were at or above the threshold. Further, teachers who failed to meet the minimum score these years often retook the edTPA and met the requirement. By the end of these years, 96% and 97% of teacher-candidates met this certification requirement, respectively.

Only about half of FORT administrations were “passed”

- Although 70% of teacher candidates only took the FORT one time, the other 30% were likely to take it multiple times. 39% of all teacher-candidates who had to retake the FORT, retook it three or more times. As a result of students having to take the FORT multiple times, the overall FORT pass rate was only 54.4%.
- **The FORT is a greater impediment to certification than the edTPA**

The FORT represents a greater impediment to certification for students of color

- The average White teacher candidate took the FORT 1.5 times, while persons of color took it 1.8 times on average.
- Latinx students took the assessment 2.0 times on average.
- That students of color typically have to take the assessment more times to pass suggests the requirement is more of a roadblock for students of color.

EdTPA and FORT scores were associated with teacher effectiveness ratings

| | edTPA score | FORT score | Grade Point Average | CESA6 Strong Model ratings | FfT ratings |
|--|----------------|---------------|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| edTPA score | 1 | | | | |
| FORT score | .159** | 1 | | | |
| Grade Point Average | .202** | .337** | 1 | | |
| CESA6 Strong Model ratings | .025 | .218* | .155** | 1 | . |
| FfT ratings | .112** | -.019 | .135** | .c | 1 |
| FfT Domain 1 – Planning and Preparation | .103** | .021 | .121** | .c | .905** |
| FfT Domain 2 – The Classroom Environment | .067* | -.028 | .100** | .c | .872** |
| FfT Domain 3 – Instruction | .123** | -.008 | .118** | .c | .902** |
| FfT Domain 4 – Professional Responsibilities | .110** | -.054 | .149** | .c | .855** |
| District Size | .001 | .044 | -0.008 | -.006 | -.240** |
| District % eligible f/r lunch | -.077** | -.002 | -.073** | -.023 | -.270** |
| District % White | .007 | .015 | .033 | .036 | .246** |
| District % AA | -.016 | .053 | -.058* | -.007 | -.223** |
| District % Latinx | .03 | -.109* | -.017 | -.043 | -.143** |

As a group, teachers with higher edTPA scores were rated as more effective teachers if they were in a district using the FfT ($r = .112$, $p < .001$) but not if they were in a district using the Stronge Framework ($r = .025$, $p > .05$). Conversely, teachers with higher FORT scores were rated as more effective if they were in a district using the Stronge Framework ($r = .218$, $p < .05$) but not if they were in a district using the FfT ($r = -.019$, $p > .05$).

EdTPA scores add to our ability to predict the future effectiveness of teacher candidates. FORT does not.

After accounting for preparation program, the district, the teacher's GPA, their race, and gender:

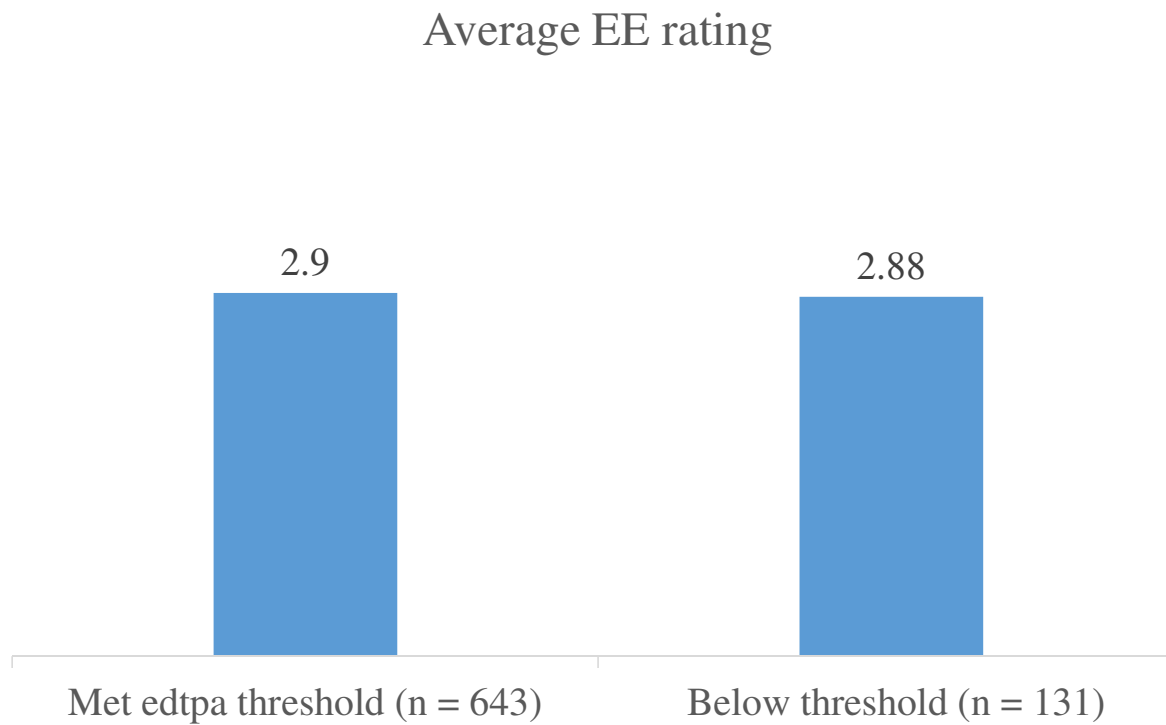
- edTPA scores were found to be uniquely predictive of FfT effectiveness ratings ($B = 0.081$, $p = .011$) but not Stronge ratings ($B = -0.025$, $p = .53$).
- FORT scores did not uniquely predict FfT effectiveness ratings ($B = -0.029$, $p = .607$) or Stronge ratings ($B = 0.053$, $p = .297$).

GPA was a much better predictor than FoRT or edTPA.

Effect Sizes of edTPA and Fort predicting effectiveness ratings

| | | |
|------------------|------------|--------------|
| Combined ratings | edTPA | 0.046 |
| | GPA | 0.128 |
| FfT ratings | edTPA | 0.081 |
| | GPA | 0.093 |
| Stronge ratings | edTPA | -0.025 |
| | GPA | 0.184 |
| Combined ratings | FORT | 0.001 |
| | GPA | 0.085 |
| FfT ratings | FORT | -0.029 |
| | GPA | 0.097 |
| Stronge ratings | FORT | 0.053 |
| | GPA | 0.096 |

Teachers who scored below the minimum edTPA requirement were just as effective as teachers who met the required threshold



Summary

- There is little evidence edTPA represents a significant logistical barrier to students becoming teachers. However, our analysis does not speak to the possibility that some potential teachers would decide not to pursue a teaching career because of the cost of taking the edTPA.
- The FoRT assessment represents a greater barrier for students to become certified teachers.
- There is evidence that students of color score lower on the FoRT than White students.
- Both edTPA and FoRT has modest associations with the effectiveness ratings assigned to teachers.

Summary

- GPA was a much better predictor of teacher effectiveness than either edTPA or FoRT, although its relationship was still small.
- FoRT scores were not associated with teacher effectiveness ratings when also accounting for other known information about teachers.
- edTPA scores were still modestly associated with FfT effectiveness ratings after accounting for other factors. However, our analysis of teachers who scored below the threshold and later became teachers anyway, suggests they were rated as just as effective as those who scored above the threshold.
- This finding challenges the utility of the assessment and begs the question of if the education system would be better off had these students never become teachers. Considering the teacher shortage across Wisconsin, the answer to this question would seem to be no.