Professional Experience is a key component of teacher education programs, bringing together the different disciplines of Education into a real-world setting. Helping pre-service teachers see theory in practice and begin to put theory into practice requires a close and explicit linkage between the coursework and practicum. A shared discourse accessible to pre-service teachers, field-based colleague teachers and university lecturers is an essential element in this process, particularly as there is an embedded assessment component. This project describes the evaluation of an assessment rubric developed for Professional Experience in the Bachelor of Teaching at UTAS.

The Professional Experience Assessment Rubric

The rubric was constructed to provide indicators that articulate the sequential development expected of pre-service teachers as they progress through their two year degree. The rationale behind this format was to provide a common framework and shared language accessible to all key stakeholders.

Although initially designed to assist colleague teachers with both formative and summative assessment, the rubric also provides pre-service teachers with a clarification of expectations for each practicum and allows greater opportunity for self-assessment. The links between theory and practice contained in the rubric provided a catalyst for review of coursework to ensure that content and sequencing is in synergy with what is expected during the practicum.

Evaluation

The evaluation of the rubric was conducted in eleven schools, encompassing Primary, Secondary and Senior Secondary from both Government and non-Government sectors. The research gathered data on the effectiveness of the rubric, from each of the stakeholder groups, using a semi-structured research instrument.

The data indicated that the rubric was successful in:

- clarifying expectations of student performance (for both colleague teacher and pre-service teacher)
- ascribing appropriate learning experiences in the field setting for pre-service teachers at each developmental stage
- providing a starting point for supportive and focussed feedback
- providing for students to be stretched to meet ‘aspirational’ outcomes and giving opportunity for high achieving students to be recognised
- highlighting specific areas of further development for students at risk

Recommendations

1. That the use of the rubric continues and the present indicators are maintained
2. That extending the use of the rubric to allow charting of student progress over successive professional experiences is investigated
3. That expansion of the indicators in some specialist areas, such as LOTE, is investigated

Supporting Assessment in the Professional Experience Context

What am I expected to know and do?

Where am I going well?

Where do I need to improve?

Will I pass?

Are we preparing pre-service teachers appropriately?

What opportunities should I provide?

Pre-service teacher

Colleague Teacher

Assessment Rubric

University Supervisor

What should I expect?

What sort of feedback should I give?

How will I know if they are achieving at the required level?

How can we ensure pre-service teachers have developmentally appropriate experiences and assessment?

Professional Experience Rubric: Towards a shared understanding