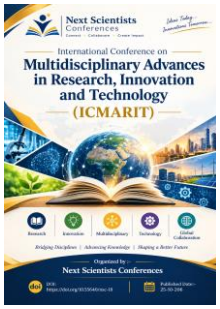
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Criteria And Indicators For Assessing The Professional Competence Of Prospective Primary School Teachers During Teaching Practice

Madraximova Mohiraxon Imomaliyevna
Independent researcher at Fergana State University, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

Teaching practice provides an opportunity to evaluate whether prospective primary school teachers can apply professional knowledge in authentic classrooms. However, assessment becomes inconsistent when supervisors rely mainly on general impressions or isolated lesson observations. This thesis develops a criteria-based framework for examining professional competence through observable teaching behaviours and documented evidence. A qualitative synthesis of pedagogical scholarship and established teacher standards was used to identify assessment dimensions, operational indicators, evidence sources, and performance descriptors. The proposed framework combines instructional planning, classroom interaction, inclusive management, formative assessment, and professional reflection.

KEYWORDS: Professional competence; prospective primary school teachers; teaching practice; assessment criteria; performance indicators; observation rubric; reflective practice.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching practice is a decisive stage in initial teacher preparation because it brings university coursework into contact with pupils' diverse learning needs. Consequently, academic achievement alone cannot demonstrate readiness for independent teaching.

Shulman [1] established the importance of integrating subject knowledge with pedagogical reasoning, while Darling-Hammond [2] argued for multiple sources of evidence in the evaluation of teacher preparation. These perspectives suggest that professional competence should be interpreted as the demonstrated capacity to plan, deliver, monitor, and improve instruction in context. The purpose of this thesis is to specify assessment criteria and observable indicators suitable for prospective primary school teachers during supervised teaching practice.

A qualitative documentary analysis and conceptual synthesis were employed. Foundational scholarship on pedagogical knowledge and programme evaluation was examined alongside the InTASC teaching standards [3] and the Framework for Teaching [4]. Relevant constructs were selected according to three principles: direct relevance to primary classrooms, visibility during supervised practice, and feasibility of collecting evidence without disrupting lessons.

The resulting framework is a methodological proposal rather than a report of empirical testing. Suggested evidence includes lesson plans, structured observations, samples of pupil work, mentor feedback, and reflective journals. To distinguish competence from a single successful lesson, assessors should examine repeated performances across different teaching situations.

The conceptual analysis produced five complementary assessment criteria. Instructional planning concerns the alignment of learning objectives, curriculum content, developmental

characteristics, and lesson activities. Its indicators include clear measurable objectives, appropriate task sequencing, differentiated materials, and realistic time allocation. Evaluators can verify these features through written plans and their implementation in classrooms.

Instructional interaction concerns the ability to explain concepts, ask purposeful questions, support participation, and adapt explanations when pupils misunderstand. Observable indicators include accurate subject explanations, accessible language, constructive questioning, and meaningful involvement of quieter learners.

Classroom management and inclusion concern the creation of a respectful, safe, and supportive learning environment. Indicators include consistent routines, constructive responses to disruptive behaviour, equitable participation, and adaptations for pupils with differing learning needs. The emphasis is on sustaining learning rather than merely maintaining silence or compliance.

Formative assessment concerns gathering and using information about pupils' understanding during instruction. Its indicators comprise checks for understanding, feedback specifying the next learning step, identification of misconceptions, and instructional adjustment based on pupils' responses. Evidence may be obtained from questioning episodes, pupil work, and brief records of changes made during a lesson.

Professional reflection and responsibility concern ethical conduct, collaboration with mentors, responsiveness to feedback, and the ability to identify improvements. Indicators include punctual fulfilment of assigned duties, evidence-based reflection, respectful communication, and implementation of agreed developmental goals. A reflective journal should demonstrate what changed in subsequent practice, not simply describe completed activities.

For each criterion, a four-level analytic rubric is proposed: emerging, developing, proficient, and accomplished. Descriptors should refer to observable quality and consistency. For instance, proficient formative assessment requires appropriate checks for understanding and an instructional response to identified difficulties; accomplished performance additionally shows flexible, timely adaptation across different pupils. Mentors and university supervisors can apply the same descriptors, compare judgements, and resolve substantial discrepancies using lesson evidence. These levels are proposed categories and have not yet been statistically validated.

The framework shifts attention from personality-based judgements towards demonstrable professional actions. Combining observations with planning documents, pupil work, and reflection reduces dependence on one observer's impression, consistent with the multiple-measures approach [2]. Nevertheless, collecting more evidence does not automatically ensure fairness. Assessors need common interpretations of rubric descriptors, opportunities for calibration, and sensitivity to differences in placement conditions.

A further challenge is separating a novice teacher's competence from circumstances beyond their control, including class size, available resources, and mentor support. The framework should therefore guide formative conferences as well as final evaluation. Future empirical work should test inter-rater agreement, the feasibility of evidence collection, and whether rubric scores predict subsequent teaching performance. Until such studies are conducted, the proposed dimensions should be treated as a reasoned assessment model, not a validated measurement instrument.

Assessing prospective primary school teachers during teaching practice requires criteria that reflect the actual work of teaching and indicators that can be supported by evidence. The proposed five-dimensional framework links planning, interaction, inclusion, formative assessment, and reflection within a common rubric. Applied consistently, it can clarify expectations, support targeted feedback, and document professional growth. Its next stage is pilot testing in partner primary schools, followed by refinement of descriptors and examination of assessment reliability.

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