SELF-ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCE ON CONTINUING LICENSURE PROFICIENCIES AND THE EVIDENCE USED IN MAKING THESE RATINGS

Prepared for the O-QAT Title-II Initiative 3.1 Continuing Licensure Design Team

May 15, 2002

Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Synopsis</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related Research Questions</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection Sources and Methods</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areas rated highest</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areas rated lowest</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areas of most improvement</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areas of least improvement</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variations by preparation program</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence used to judge proficiency</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary and interpretive comments</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prepared by

Mark Schalock

Teaching Research Division
Western Oregon University

12.1
Questions Addressed

- In what areas do these early career teachers feel most capable?
- In what areas do they feel least capable?
- In which areas do they feel they improve the most with experience?
- In which areas do they feel they have improved the least?
- Do the self-assessments made by graduates reflect in any systematic way different emphases within their preparation programs?
- What types of evidence do these early career teachers use in making these judgments?

Measures Reported and Teacher Sample Involved

Continuing Licensure Proficiency Self-Assessment ratings and confirming evidence used to make these ratings for:
- 73 first-year teachers
- 58 second-year teachers
- 40 third-year teachers
Of these we have 35 teachers with first, second and third year data – an intact group.

Key Findings

- Early career teachers feel most confident in their ability to create a classroom climate conducive to teaching.
- Early career teachers feel least confident in their ability to collaborate with colleagues to improve schools and use emerging research to improve their practice.
- While these early career teachers' perceptions of their capabilities tended to become more positive over time, they felt they improved most around assessing students for planning purposes and designing instructional plans. They felt they improved least in collaborating to improve schools.
- From an overall perspective there is very little difference in the self-perceptions of graduates from programs rated moderate to very high on selected program characteristics of interest.
- Graduates from programs rated low on these characteristics, however, did rate themselves as significantly less capable on most CTL proficiencies. These differences were especially pronounced for graduates of programs rated low on having a development assessment system in place.
- When asked to cite the evidence used in making their self-ratings, the vast majority of participants simply provided a description of their practice. Relatively fewer accompanied this with some sort of reflective observation. Fewer still cited feedback from others.
- Based on an initial analysis of evidence cited, it would appear that early career teachers either get very little feedback on their practice, or put very little stock in this feedback.
Potential Implications for CONTINUING Licensure

- Early career teachers do seem able to distinguish between their strengths and weakness on the Proficiencies for Continuing Licensure.
- By the early part of their third year in teaching a sizable portion of these teachers feel fairly confident in their capabilities on most of the Proficiencies for Continuing Licensure.
- Several of the Advanced Proficiencies are dependent upon opportunities not yet experienced by these early career teachers, for example, working with colleagues to improve instructional programs. This lack of opportunity is not due to lack of effort, but rather school policy and practice, and in some cases simply environment (as in the case of a first year teacher being the only teacher in the school.)
- Notions of what constitutes “evidence” pertaining to their practice need to be instilled in early career teachers.
- Early career teachers need more frequent feedback from others on their development as teachers.

Potential Implications for INITIAL Licensure

- Providing pre-service teachers with regular and frequent feedback on their development seems to enhance their perceptions of competence as early career teachers.
- Overall, program designs ranging from being moderately to highly aligned with the three emphases of interest within the TEP-2 project result in very little variation in self-perceptions of confidence.
- The alignment of Initial and Continuing Licensure Proficiencies, and the focus in Initial Licensure on these proficiencies, appears to enhance the self-perception of competence on Continuing Licensure Proficiencies.
Introduction

The central objective of the TEP-2 Project (The Longitudinal Effects of Teacher Preparation on the Practice and Beliefs of New Teachers and the Learning of Their Students.) is to determine whether exposure to selected emphases within teacher preparation makes a difference in the practice, beliefs and thinking of new elementary school teachers and the learning of their students in Oregon’s standards-based schools.

As one part of this project we have focused on early career teacher development – their practice, attitudes and beliefs. To provide a common framework for this line of inquiry, as well as sensitize participating teachers to the proficiencies for Continuing Licensure, we have administered a Continuing Licensure Proficiency self-assessment instrument in each of the three years of the project. As part of this self-assessment we also asked participants to identify the evidence they use in making their judgments.

The ultimate role that self-assessment will play within the CTL licensing process is still unclear, but as a formative tool it can play an important role in evidence collection and portfolio development.

Related Research Questions

The questions pursued in this brief pertain to the self-perceptions these early career teachers have of their capabilities as beginning teachers, and what they base these perceptions upon. The confidence these early career teachers have in their capabilities is important for several reasons. First, confidence in teaching, as in most professions, is a powerful indicator of performance. It also weighs heavily in beliefs and attitudes of self-efficacy and commitment, both of which contribute to a decision to remain in the profession.

This brief then is as much concerned with attitudes and beliefs as it is with performance. Specific questions include:

- In what areas do these early career teachers feel most capable?
- In what areas do they least capable?
- In which areas do they feel they improve the most with experience?
- In which areas do they feel they improve the least?
- Do the self-assessments reflect in any systematic way different emphases within their preparation programs?
- What types of evidence do these early career teachers use in making these judgments?

Selected results will be presented to address each of these questions. For the most part simple descriptive statistics and the results of content analyses will be presented. Where warranted and appropriate, the results of parametric and/or non-parametric inferential statistical analyses also will be provided.

Data Collection Sources and Methods

These data were collected in February/March from first year teachers and December/January from second and third year teachers. Participants were asked to self-rate their current performance on each of the ten proficiencies for continuing licensure on a six-point scale. This tool was adapted, with consent, from the Professional Growth Assessment tool developed by the University of Oregon.

The scale ranges from: missing capacity (1) to Advanced proficiency (6). The level of proficiency expected for initial licensure is a (3).

For this brief we have categorized results into three levels: Missing/Developing (1/2); Beginning (3/4); Expanding/Advanced (5/6). A 3 or 4 is what might be expected of a first or second year teacher. A 5 or 6 is definitely edging toward the level of performance expected for Continuing Licensure. A 1 or 2 is a level of performance lower than hoped for in a beginning teacher.

We also asked participants – in an open-ended question format - to indicate what evidence they used in making their self-ratings. The results presented here are for:
73 first-year teachers; 58 second-year teachers; and 40 third year teachers. Of these we have 35 teachers with first, second and third year data – an intact group.

**Results**

**Areas in which these early career teachers feel most capable**

As a group, these early career teachers felt most confident and capable in their ability to “Create a classroom climate conducive to learning,” - CTL Proficiency 3. In each of the three years we asked for their self-assessment, this proficiency was rated highest. It is important to note, however, that even though this was the area in which they felt most confident, by year three almost 1 in 3 still felt they were at a beginning level of proficiency. This probably should not be unexpected when one considers that these teachers have experienced the dynamics of only three classrooms, each of which might have been at a different grade level, or have had greatly different groups of students. The distributions of self-ratings for this area of proficiency are shown in Table 12.1.

**Table 12.1. Self-Assessment Around CTL Proficiency 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1 (%)</th>
<th>Year 2 (%)</th>
<th>Year 3 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65.0%</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These early career teachers were somewhat inconsistent in their self-assessment on the other continuing licensure proficiencies. For example, in year one the proficiencies in which they felt next most capable was “Evaluating student progress in learning and refining instructional plans to accommodate differences in learners” - CTL Proficiency 6. In year two, however, they felt second most capable in “Designing instructional plans” - CTL Proficiency 2. In their third year of teaching, these early career teachers felt second most capable in “Collaborating with parents, colleagues and others to provide support to students and families” - CTL Proficiency 5. These shifting perceptions of strengths as teachers may be related to many factors including: mentoring, professional development, opportunity to learn, and school environment. We will not attempt to sort this out in this brief.

**Areas in which these early career teachers feel least capable**

As a group, these early career teachers consistently felt least confident and capable in “Participating in groups to improve teaching and learning in schools” – CTL Proficiency 9, and “Using research to enhance practice” – CTL Proficiency 8. In each of the three years we administered this self-assessment these early career teachers as a group rated themselves lowest on these proficiencies. These distributions are shown in Tables 12.2 and 12.3.

**Table 12.2. Self-Assessment Around CTL Proficiency 9**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1 (%)</th>
<th>Year 2 (%)</th>
<th>Year 3 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55.1%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>59.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Capability on this proficiency is greatly effected by opportunities to participate in related activities.
While we continue to be surprised at how many beginning teachers serve on School Site Councils and other school improvement teams, a great many simply have not had an opportunity to gain experience in such activities. As a result it should come as no surprise that this proficiency consistently was rated lowest.

Table 12.3. Self-Assessment Around CTL Proficiency 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>61.6%</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translating</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Translating research to practice has long been an area of contention in education. In some regard these findings might be viewed as good news in that such a large portion feel fairly capable in doing so.

**Areas in which these early career teachers feel they have improved the most.**

To address this question we use only self-ratings from the intact group for which we have data from all three years. The most efficient way to answer this question is to compare mean rating for each proficiency in years one and three. A paired t-test was conducted for this purpose. *Mean scores at year three were significantly higher than for year one on all of the proficiencies except Proficiency 9.* Based on t-values, these early career teachers felt they improved the most on Proficiencies 1 and 2: “Assessing Students for Planning” and “Instructional Planning.” Mean ratings changed from 3.29 to 4.26 on Proficiency 1, and from 3.60 to 4.34 on Proficiency 2. These mean scores are shown in Table 12.4.

**Areas in which these early career teachers feel they have improved the least.**

To address this question we again employed a paired t-test with the intact group. The only difference in mean scores not to reach significance was for Proficiency 9: “Collaborating to Improve Schools.” Mean ratings for this proficiency changed from 3.09 to 3.56. The distributions of self-ratings on this proficiency are shown in Table 12.2. Even by year 3 nearly 1 in 4 participants felt they were below an initial level of proficiency in this important aspect of their work.

Again, perceptions of competence on this proficiency are very much dependent upon opportunities and experiences which not all participating teachers have had.

**Variations in self-assessments by type of preparation program emphases and other characteristics**

To address this question we used an overall proficiency rating score, which is the sum of the 10 individual ratings of proficiency provided by a teacher. Results reported here are for 1st year teachers only. Results are presented for several classifications of preparation programs.
Orientation to Oregon’s Standards-Based Model of Schooling: The mean overall rating scores differed very little for participants graduating from a program rated low, moderate or high on this particular characteristic. Mean scores ranged from 34.67 to 37.21. Self-perceptions and confidence do not seem to be related to this dimension of preparation.

Strong Connection Between Teaching and Learning: There were basically no differences in self-ratings between graduates from programs with a moderate or high rating on this dimension of preparation. The group N’s are so uneven for teachers graduating from programs rated low and moderate/high on this dimension of preparation that it is inappropriate to make comparisons between these groups.

Developmental Teacher Assessment: While there is relatively little difference in the overall mean scores for self-ratings by graduates from moderate and high exposure programs on this dimension of preparation (37.58 and 36.89 respectively), graduates from programs rated low on this dimension rate themselves much lower in overall proficiency (29.11). There seems to be an appreciable relationship between having experienced a developmental assessment system as a pre-service teacher and self-perceptions of competence as a first year teacher.

Combined Emphases of Interest: When the three dimensions of program emphasis are combined into an overall rating of Low, Moderate, High, and Very High there is relatively little difference in the self-perceptions of competence on Continuing Licensure Proficiencies for graduates from programs rated moderate to very high. In fact graduates from programs with a moderate rating had the highest self-assessment ratings. Graduates from programs with an overall rating of low, however, did rate themselves significantly lower on most CTL proficiencies. These data are shown in Table 12.6.

Graduate vs. Undergraduate Program: From an overall perspective, participants from graduate level teacher preparation programs rated themselves slightly higher than graduates from undergraduate programs, thought the difference was very small.

Out-of-state vs. Oregon Public vs. Oregon Private: Overall, participants from both Oregon Public and Oregon Private teacher preparation programs rated themselves slightly more capable on the Continuing Licensure Proficiencies than participants from out-of-state preparation programs. This is especially evident on Proficiencies 1 and 7: “Assessing students for planning” and “Documenting student learning.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Strength as a 1st Year Teacher: Overall Program Rating on Characteristics of Interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12.6. Self-Perceived Strength as a 1st Year Teacher by Combined Program Characteristics of Interest

Types of evidence these early career teachers use in making their judgments of self-proficiency

When asked to identify the evidence they used in making judgments relative to their own proficiency the pattern of response remained fairly stable from year 1 to year 3. A content analysis of a sample of self-assessments produced the following top three sources of evidence used:

Year 1
- Statement of Practice (81);
- Self-Observation (21);
- Observations by Others (12).
Year 3
- Statement of Practice (91);
- Self-Observation (33);
- Observations by Others (20).

Simply put, when asked to cite the evidence they used in making the ratings they provided, these early career teachers typically described what they did in a proficiency related area, or relied on their own observation/judgments. Far relied on (or had the opportunity to rely upon) observation or feedback from others. Beyond these top three sources of evidence, these teachers mentioned at much lower rates the products they developed, feedback from students, student work/behavior and student performance.

The one proficiency area in which observation and feedback from others was cited fairly often was in “Creating a classroom conducive to learning.” It is probably not accidental that the area in which these early career teachers feel most capable is also the area in which they have had the most feedback from others.

Summary

When asked to provide a self-rating of their capabilities as early career teachers, TEP-2 participants were able to discriminate between their strengths and weaknesses. As a group, however, over their first three years of teaching, they consistently felt most capable in creating a climate conducive to learning.

Interestingly they were even more consistent in their perceptions of where they were weakest as early career teachers. In each of the three years, as a group, TEP-2 participants rated themselves least capable in collaborating to improve schools and using emerging research to improve teaching. While difficulty in using research to improve practice is pervasive in education, participants were active in trying to stay abreast of various literatures. They just didn’t feel particularly competent in applying the research they were trying to stay abreast of to their practice. On the other hand, a significant portion of the participants who rated themselves fairly low on collaborating to improve schools, stated that they simply had not yet had the opportunity to do this.

The patterns of self-ratings varied little across graduates from teacher preparation programs that varied from moderate to very high on the three program emphases of interest. Graduates from programs rated low - largely graduates from out-of-state programs – did have a significantly less positive view of their capabilities on most of the 10 proficiencies to be demonstrated for Continuing Licensure. This may be due in part to the alignment between proficiencies required for Initial and Continuing Licensure in Oregon.

The teacher preparation program emphases that seemed to be most related to self-perceptions of proficiency is the degree to which a program had a developmental assessment system in place. Early career teachers who had experienced such a system – even only to a moderate degree – were much more confident in their capabilities than teachers who had not experienced such a system.

Based on the evidence cited in the self-assessment protocol, as well as descriptions on mentoring and other forms of support, it appears that these early career teachers do not receive a lot of feedback on their performance. Or, if they do, they do not put much stock in it. The vast majority of responses we received in regard to the evidence used to make a self-rating was simply a description of what they did. In far fewer cases this was enhanced by some level of reflection that included their own observations about impact on students. Relatively fewer (though more in year three than year one) cited feedback from others as a source of evidence as to their capabilities as an early career teacher.

Overall as expected, these early career teachers’ perceptions of their capabilities grew more positive over time. By early in their third year of teaching about 40% of the ratings made were in the Expanding/Advanced range – clearly moving toward the level of proficiency expected for Continuing Licensure. On the other hand almost 5% of the ratings provided at this time were still in the Missing/Developing range – below what is
expected for an initial license to teach. Many of these ratings were for proficiencies not encountered in an initial preparation program and for which many TEP-2 teachers had had no opportunity to engage.