



## Development and evaluation of a summative assessment program for senior teacher competence



Anouke Bakx<sup>a,\*</sup>, Liesbeth Baartman<sup>b</sup>, Tamara van Schilt-Mol<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Fontys University of Applied Sciences, FHKE, pabo Eindhoven, De Lismortel 25, 5612 AR Eindhoven, The Netherlands

<sup>b</sup> Utrecht University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Education, Research Group Vocational Education, P.O. Box 14007, 3508 SB Utrecht, The Netherlands

<sup>c</sup> HAN University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Education, Research Centre for Quality for Learning, P.O. Box 30011, 6503 HN Nijmegen, The Netherlands

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 13 March 2013

Received in revised form 24 November 2013

Accepted 25 November 2013

Available online 18 December 2013

#### Keywords:

Teacher evaluation  
Evaluation methods  
Secondary education

### ABSTRACT

The focus of this article is the development and evaluation of an assessment program for measuring senior teachers' competences in secondary schools. The goals of the developed instrument were measuring senior teachers' competences and providing the opportunity for self-reflection for the teachers assessed. This instrument was developed and evaluated in four steps: (1) the content of assessment was determined, defined in senior teacher competences; (2) criteria and standards were specified for the assessment of the competences; (3) the assessment methods were determined; and (4) the assessment program was evaluated by means of a pilot study. The target group consisted of eight potential senior teachers, who were assessed with the new instrument. In total, eleven teachers and 70 pupils evaluated the new assessment instrument. The assessment seems fit for the purpose. Pupils are positive about the assessment program, whereas the teachers are more sceptic about it.

© 2013 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

### Introduction

For many years, the quality of education in general and of teachers in particular has been the object of discussion and research. Indeed, teacher quality is important because teachers play a crucial role in realizing the quality of the learning environment (Hattie, 2009) and determine to a great extent the school's quality (Marzano, 2011). In this respect, Rasmussen and Friche (2011) state that schools experience a pressure to increase and demonstrate the quality of their education and teachers. In the Netherlands, this pressure to increase the quality of education in general and of teachers in particular has been addressed by the Teaching Advisory Board of the Dutch government. As a way to increase teacher quality, they advised to create more opportunities for career development and differentiation within the teaching profession. This should increase the attractiveness of the teaching profession and prevent good teachers from leaving schools and choosing other career paths (Teaching Advisory Board, 2007). The Dutch Ministry of Education decided that secondary schools should introduce integral personnel management in order to (1) stimulate teachers' development; (2) offer opportunities for differentiation in the teacher profession; and (3) raise the quality

of Dutch secondary education. It was assumed that the introduction of integral personnel management in secondary education would lead to increased educational quality. It might help putting the best teachers on the most complex tasks and pupil groups, and the possibility to address weak teaching practices (Borko, Whitcomb, & Liston, 2009).

To integrate an effective and fair integral personnel management system, instruments are needed that validly and reliably assess teacher quality (van der Schaaf, Stokking, & Verloop, 2005). At the moment, no specific standardized procedures or guidelines for teacher assessment are available and Dutch secondary schools emphasize those aspects which are important for their particular schools. The common practice is that teachers gain a raise of salary each year, simply by having worked a year more as a teacher. In order to effectuate this, one annual dialogue between teacher and management takes place. This can hardly be looked upon as an assessment method for teacher quality. The question then arises whether there are possibilities to assess teacher quality validly. Whereas assessment and development of *student teachers* has quite often been studied (e.g. Hegender, 2010; Noell & Burns, 2006), summative assessment of teachers working in schools has been studied distinctively less often. Therefore the aim of the current study is to develop and evaluate a summative assessment program for senior teachers in secondary education. Besides this summative function, the assessment program should have a formative function to enable and stimulate teachers to reflect on their own competence development.

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +31 8778 75 993.

E-mail addresses: [a.bakx@fontys.nl](mailto:a.bakx@fontys.nl) (A. Bakx), [Liesbeth.baartman@hu.nl](mailto:Liesbeth.baartman@hu.nl) (L. Baartman), [Tamara.vanschiltmol@han.nl](mailto:Tamara.vanschiltmol@han.nl) (T. van Schilt-Mol).

Indeed, literature shows different perspectives on how teacher competence is defined and measured, many of these focusing on the *effectiveness* of teachers in accomplishing high student learning outcomes (e.g. Chen, Mason, Staniszewski, Upton, & Valley, 2011; Mangiante, 2011; Praslova, 2010; Seidel & Shavelson, 2007). These studies rely on the assumption that certain teacher behaviour (den Brok, Brekelmans, & Wubbels, 2004) and teachers' (pedagogical) content knowledge (e.g. Baumert et al., 2010; Kleickmann et al., 2013; Shulman, 1986) have an influence on student achievement. Research results about teacher competences were used as input for the 'assessment development team who would construct a school-specific assessment method' and based on this together with input from the teachers themselves, an assessment instrument was developed.

The focus of this instrument was on senior teachers, because of their important role in the school; they have the most important (teaching) positions in schools and are responsible for coaching starting teachers, for example. It is assumed that these senior teachers determine the quality of the school to a large extent. Next to this, there was additional funding from the government, meant for the best teachers, in order to motivate them additionally and keep them in school. For the integral personal management of a school it is important to be able to 'spot' and assess these key teachers in a valid way, presumably in a way that is accepted by the school team. In the study described in this paper, senior teachers have already been effective teachers for many years and for the new program to be developed, competences were needed that would have an additional value beyond 'being a very effective teacher'.

Thus, the main focus of our study was to develop and test an assessment program for distinguishing average senior teachers from very good senior teachers. The assessment program should contribute to an opportunity of self-reflection for the teachers as well. Therefore, the central question of our study is: How can senior teachers' competence in secondary education be assessed, while providing the opportunity for self-reflection by the senior teachers? The assessment program was developed in close collaboration with a large secondary school and a pilot study was organized in which we carried out and evaluated the assessment program. In order to do so, the following steps were carried out: first, literature was explored on what 'good teachers' are and the content of the teacher competence had to be determined. Second, criteria and standards were defined in order to validly assess the competences of senior teachers. Third, the program sections of the assessment were determined. The final step was to carry out a pilot with eight participating senior teachers. The new assessment program was evaluated. Below, these four steps are described in detail.

## Theoretical background

### *Defining good teachers*

The ability to distinguish average senior teachers from very good senior teachers depends on how senior teacher competence is defined and what assessment criteria and standards are set (Uhlenbeck, 2002). In general, all assessments require a clear notion of the construct to be assessed (Messick, 1995; Sadler, 1998). This is especially important for the development process described in this article because the assessment program being developed in this study can be considered a 'high stake' assessment. A positive assessment result would lead to a salary raise, while negative outcomes of the assessment program would lead to a 'frozen salary'. Senior teachers, as we focus on in this study, ought to be the school's best teachers. Defining good teachers is complex and there is no consensus on this topic, yet (e.g. Berliner, 2001; Fenstermacher & Richardson, 2005).

Contemporary educational research on *good teachers* is scattered across a variety of research traditions, showing a diversity of definitions, instruments and results related to the issue of good teaching. These traditions can be broadly categorized as: (1) perception studies of ideal teaching, including learning environment research (Allen & Fraser, 2007); (2) effectiveness research (e.g. den Brok et al., 2004; Seidel & Shavelson, 2007), (3) studies on teachers' professional knowledge (e.g. Berliner, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Verloop, 2005), and (4) research on teachers' professional identity (e.g. Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Day, Sammons, Stobart, Kingston, & Gu, 2007). These four traditions have their own specific perspective of studying good teaching practices.

The first perspective, perception studies of ideal teaching, for example, show that students (aged 7–16 years) value a nice personality and teaching ability very important (e.g. Beishuizen, Hof, van Putten, Bouwmeester, & Asscher, 2001), as well as competent instructing, focusing on transfer of knowledge and skills. Kutnick and Vena (1993) mentioned physical presentation, teachers' care for students, and trustworthiness as being important for good teachers whereas Hamacheck (1969) adds being helpful in schoolwork, clear explanation and humour.

The second tradition, effectiveness research, mainly focusses on the results of teachers' actions on students' learning processes, achievement or attitude towards learning (Seidel & Shavelson, 2007). Seidel and Shavelson (2007) used an interesting framework of teachers' effectiveness based on cognitive models of teaching (and student learning) in their meta-analysis on teachers' effectiveness studies. One of their conclusions was that domain-specific components of teaching resulted in the largest effects for students' learning. Studies within this perspective show that the combination of teaching skills with communicative competence are important for gaining positive achievement by the students (e.g. Hattie, 2009; Marzano, 2003; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Scheerens, 2007). Further, Brophy and Good (1986) stated instruction and classroom management techniques are very important teacher behaviours. This is in line with findings from learning environment research as described above. More specifically, effectiveness studies show that in order to gain high student outcomes, teachers should be able to realize an appropriate level of difficulty for the instruction, continuous progress at a high success rate, effective diagnosis of learning needs and prescription of learning activities and monitoring of progress and continuous practice, integrating new learning (Brophy & Good, 1986; Marzano, 2003). This also fits the perception perspective, in which students also state that teaching ability is important and that they are preferably taught by competent instructors, who can transfer knowledge and skills (Beishuizen et al., 2001).

The third tradition described, concerns the (practical and theoretical) professional knowledge required for good teaching. Teachers' domain-specific knowledge is important for explaining properly and asking the stimulating, specific, subject-related questions (Darling-Hammond, 1999). In order to be able to instruct well (professional) knowledge of teachers is considered a requirement (Clausen, Reusser, & Klieme, 2003; Wise & Okey, 1983). More specifically, teachers' subject matter knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge have been argued to be essential for realizing quality of education (e.g. Hill, Rowan, & Loewenberg-Ball, 2005; Shulman, 1986). Teachers' pedagogical and subject-related knowledge are often linked to their quality of instruction (Elbaz, 1991; Shulman, 1987).

Finally, the fourth tradition concerns research on teachers' professional identity, taking the teacher as a person as focus for research, stating that the teacher's personality is 'omnipresent' in his way of teaching and professional learning (Beijaard et al., 2004). The identity perspective claims that teachers perceive

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/372658>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/372658>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)