



The electronic portfolio as a tool to develop and assess pre-service student teaching competences: Challenges for quality



Katrien Struyven^{a,*}, Yves Blicq^b, Véronique De Roeck^b

^a Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Educational Sciences Department, Belgium

^b KU Leuven, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Belgium

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 7 October 2013

Received in revised form 3 June 2014

Accepted 9 June 2014

Available online 10 July 2014

Keywords:

E-portfolio

Teacher education

Assessment for learning

Competences

Pre-service teaching practice

ABSTRACT

Many teacher education institutions aim to develop and assess teacher competences during teaching practice. This research study investigates the use and effects of a competence-based e-portfolio for the development and assessment of teacher competences during teaching practice in an academic teacher education programme. Questionnaires and interviews were administered to three parties: student teachers ($N = 41$), teacher trainers ($N = 25$) and mentors ($N = 46$). The results show that according to teacher trainers and mentors the e-portfolio has proven to be a useful instrument for the assessment of teacher competences. Student teachers, in contrast, believe that the e-portfolio is unable to reflect and demonstrate their teaching competences sufficiently. Why that is the case, is the central focus of this paper.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Introduction

During recent years, workplace learning has gained increasing importance as a significant learning experience in vocational programmes aimed at the development of professional competences (Tynjälä, 2008). The same applies to teacher training programmes, where teaching practice is considered important for the development of teacher competences. These teacher competences are regarded as the possession and development of sufficient skills, knowledge, appropriate attitudes and experience for the successful performance of one's professional role as a teacher (McNamara, 1992). Hence, many teacher education institutions aim to develop teacher competences (also) during teaching practice. However, the reliable measurement of competences is a major problem due to its holistic approach, job-related nature and the integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes (Tigelaar, Dolmans, Wolfhagen, & van der Vleuten, 2005). As a solution, (electronic) portfolios provide techniques that allow for the use of authentic, complex or ill-structured problem solving techniques associated with professional contexts and situations, where competent professionals need to (re)act (Birenbaum, 1996; Davies & Le Mahieu, 2003; Sambell, McDowell, & Brown, 1997). However, whether or not these methods can adequately serve the

purpose of competence learning and assessment is a question that needs to be further empirically addressed. Contributing to the delivery of this evidence is the aim of this study.

Competence-based teacher education: old wine in new bottles?

Although competence-based education is a 'hot' topic on the agendas of national and international educational policy, competence-based approaches to (teacher) education are by no means new (Whitty & Willmott, 1991). The concept of 'competences' first made its appearance in 1890, followed by a growing interest in the 1960s and 1970s, as a result of various publications on competence-based (teacher) education (CBTE) in the United States (Biemans, Nieuwenhuis, Poell, Mulder, & Wesselink, 2004; Popham, 1984, 1986). The concept of competency-based instruction emerged from the emphasis on goal-orientation and individualisation. Learning objectives – defined in behavioural and assessable terms – can be made explicit, by and for, the learner. The individual can then pursue learning activities and develop performance skills or competencies in the process. Renewed impulses, under the influence of the growing importance of information, communication technology and globalisation, have again made competence-based education a leading paradigm for innovation, both at the system level and at the level of learning environments (Dochy & Nickmans, 2005). Two plausible reasons are advocated that explain the popularity of competence-based education. Firstly, developing competences sheds light on the positive goals of education and training. Transforming students

* Corresponding author at: Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Educational Sciences Department, Pleinlaan 2, 1050 Brussels, Belgium. Tel.: +32 486221330.

E-mail address: Katrien.struyven@vub.ac.be (K. Struyven).

into competent learners is obviously a more positive, prescient and progressive purpose than the goal of the deficit model of education, which aims to remediate deficiencies in order to orient and select students. As such, competence-based education shifts the focus towards the strengths one has, instead of concentrating on one's deficiencies. Secondly, one expects that a competence-based education will bridge the gap between the demands of the economy and the job market, and the (traditional) pedagogies of education (Biemans et al., 2004; Wesselink, Lans, Mulder, & Biemans, 2003). More specifically, in the context of teacher education, benefits of competency-based approaches to education are: (1) the demystification of teacher education; (2) a clearer role for schools/colleges in the training process; (3) greater confidence of employers in what new teachers can do; and (4) clearer goals for students (Whitty & Willmott, 1991).

These arguments for competence-based education have been heard by educational governments and politicians in Flanders (Belgium), and its ideas are widely advocated in (and forced upon) higher education, and teacher education in particular. In 1996, consistent with changes in the UK (Cameron-Jones & O'Hara, 1995), a decree on the transformation of teacher education and professional training was promulgated. This included an emphasis

on the twin themes of required competence (and the possibilities for the reduction of the length of training due to former competence acquisition in other contexts/training (McNamara, 1992)), and of institutional influence on student teachers' training (Cameron-Jones & O'Hara, 1995). In 1998, the decree describing the basic competences for teachers became a fact. These 'basic' competences are considered as the minimum requirements for novice teachers at the conclusion of initial teacher training. From 1998 onwards, teacher education programmes, comprising both theoretical and practical components, ought to be based on the professional profiles and basic competences for teachers described in the decree. In 2007, supported by the advice of the Flemish Educational Board (VLOR), a revised version (with limited amendments) was put into force in 2007–2008. Revisions mainly concerned reformulations, additions or omissions of specific skills/knowledge. For example, based on the (new) priorities in educational policy, more emphasis was placed on the use of ICT, the importance of language education for second-language and underprivileged learners, and meeting the needs of (cultural) diversity.

In general, the descriptions of the basic competences for teachers (see Table 1) are found in two lines of thought. On the one

Table 1

Overview of the ten 'basic' competences in teacher education (Flanders, Belgium), organised by cluster of responsibility (Aelterman, 1995).

Basic competences (BC) for teacher education	
BC = FC + (each of the) attitudes	
10 functional components (FC) for (beginning) teachers	10 attitudes
Responsibility for the learner	
01. The teacher as guide of learning and development processes <i>Defining the initial situation and selecting learning goals</i> <i>Designing powerful learning environments</i> <i>Assessment for learning and of learning</i> <i>Meeting cultural diversity and special needs in learning</i>	A1. Decisiveness <i>The teacher dares to take a stand and acts on it in a responsible manner.</i>
02. The teacher as educator <i>Providing a positive climate</i> <i>Emancipating children</i> <i>Meeting diversity and (special) needs in emotion and relation</i> <i>Education in norms and values</i>	A2. Relational orientation <i>In his contacts with others the teacher is genuine, true and heartfelt.</i>
03. The teacher as subject expert <i>Being knowledgeable about and skilled in a domain(s) of expertise</i>	A3. Critical reflection <i>The teacher is prepared to question himself and the environment, and verifies the value of an opinion or event, the desirability and feasibility of learning goals, before taking a stand (making decisions and acting on them).</i>
04. The teacher as organiser <i>Classroom management</i> <i>Administrative work</i>	A4. Eagerness to learn <i>The teacher actively explores situations and initiatives to broaden and deepen his professionalism.</i>
05. The teacher as innovator – the teacher as researcher <i>Learning from experience and from collaboration with others</i> <i>Reflective practitioner</i> <i>Design-research/action-research/practice-based research</i>	A5. Organisational skills <i>The teacher wants to plan, coordinate and delegate his tasks in order to efficiently attain his goals.</i>
Responsibility for the school and educational community	
06. The teacher as partner of the parents/carers <i>Discrete and confidential about personal information</i> <i>Communication with (diversity of) parents</i>	A6. Sense of collaboration <i>The teacher is prepared to work at joint tasks collegially.</i>
07. The teacher as member of a teaching team <i>Consult and work together with other team members</i> <i>Discussing (own) approaches to teaching with colleagues</i>	A7. Sense of responsibility <i>The teacher feels responsible for his school and engages to enhance a positive development with learners.</i>
08. The teacher as partner of external parties <i>Communicate and work together with parties that offer education-related support (e.g. to students or teachers)</i>	A8. Creative orientation <i>The teacher should be creative and innovative in dealing with situations</i>
09. The teacher as member of the educational community <i>Participation in debate on teaching and education</i>	A9. Flexibility <i>The teacher easily adapts to changing circumstances.</i>
Responsibility for society	
10. The teacher as culture participant <i>Perception of and critical approach towards topical matters in different domains: political, economic, philosophical, aesthetical, scientific and cultural.</i>	A10. Orientation towards a correct and appropriate use of language and communication <i>The teachers uses language correctly, appropriately, adaptively and respectfully dependent on the receiver and situation.</i>

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6849184>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6849184>

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