



## Self-assessment in Initial Teacher Training Programmes. How do Pre-Service teachers perceive their performance in professional practice?

Marta Quiroga-Lobos, Paula Soto-Lillo'

Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile

### Abstract

*Initial teacher training programmes in Chile include a final course called professional practice, in which preservice teachers (PSTs) have to display all the knowledge they have acquired during their training process. Evaluation of this professional practice considers the assessment of the mentor teacher in the school, assessment of the university supervisor, and self-assessment of PSTs. Self-assessment, the focus of this research, allows PSTs to assess their work, which might help them improve their performance on the assigned tasks. We carried out a quantitative census study considering the self-assessment of all the 436 PSTs of fourteen teacher training programmes of a Chilean university, who performed their professional practice during 2021. They used the same scoring rubric that considers ten criteria provided by the university. After analysing the self-assessment of the PSTs, findings show that they have positive views about their performance, but most PSTs (92%) assign higher scores in tasks related to work inside the classroom and interaction with students and lower scores (52%) to tasks outside the classroom.*

**Keywords:** *Self-assessment- teacher training- scoring rubrics*

### 1. Practical training in the initial teacher training programmes

Practical training is a critical aspect of the teacher training programmes because it allows for the development and verification of the teaching skills of the PSTs.

A tutor usually evaluates the PSTs from the university and a mentor from the school. There is little research on the evaluation function of tutors and mentors [1] [2]. Still, there is even less research on the self-assessment function of PSTs about their development. This aspect will be approached in this study.

Gorichon, Rufinelli, Pardo and Cisternas [3] carried out a study with Chilean newly qualified teachers (NQT), to identify aspects of the initial teacher training process that promote a better transition from PST to qualified teachers. One important aspect of this study was that 85% of the NQT are satisfied or very satisfied with their training programmes, and more than 90% of them considered to be prepared or well prepared to teach. There are two possible explanations for these results. On the one hand, we could state that NQTs are very well prepared to teach, or their lack of experience does not let them analyse their professional action properly.

Another important conclusion from that study was that NQT highly value training processes that allow practising planning lessons and pedagogical decision making in opposition to highly theoretical training processes.

### 2. Self-assessment.

Self-assessment involves "the participation of learners in making judgements about their learning, particularly their achievements and learning outcomes" [4]. According to Kiliç [5] including students in the assessment process contributes to their engagement in the learning process and helps them take control of their learning and strengthen professional skills. However, student-marking self-assessment results are rarely used as teachers consider them inaccurate [6].

From the perspective of Self-Regulated Learning, self-assessment can be used in the preparatory phase to identify the knowledge, strategies, personal and environmental resources and identify a reasonable learning goal; in the task development phase, it allows monitoring of the learning process, promoting self-correction and ensuring that learning activities are directed in the right direction; in the evaluation phase, (reflective) self-assessment can reflect on learning outcomes and identify its



strengths and weaknesses as well as directions for future learning. This study analyses data from this phase.

### 2.1 Self-assessment in teacher training programmes.

The theory of individual teacher change proposes that teacher change happens through “reflection on experience and self-efficacy beliefs mediate the influence of self-assessment on teacher practice”[7]. Self-assessment can improve the teaching practice and should be looked at closely in teacher training.

### 3. Methodology

This study aims to understand how trainee teachers self-assess their performance after completing their professional practice. The research question is: What are the strengths and weaknesses identified by trainees in their performance?

An exploratory, non-experimental, cross-sectional quantitative research [8] will be implemented, with a single measurement carried out at the end of the final practice. A total of 436 subjects, 297 women and 139 men from thirteen teacher training programmes of a Chilean university, responded to the self-assessment, which corresponds to the universe; therefore, it is a census-type sample. The distribution by each programme is shown in table 1:

Table 1: Participants and percentage in each teacher training programme.

PROGRAMME	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE	PROGRAMME	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE
SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS	57	13,1%	BIOLOGY AND NATURAL SCIENCES	29	6,7%
ENGLISH LANGUAGE	52	11,9%	EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION	34	7,8%
PRIMARY EDUCATION	35	8,0%	MATHEMATICS	42	9,6%
SPANISH LANGUAGE	48	11,0%	PHYSICS	7	1,6%
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	69	15,8%	CHEMISTRY AND NATURAL SCIENCES	2	0,5%
HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY AND SOCIAL SCIENCES	44	10,1%	PHILOSOPHY	5	1,1%
MUSICAL EDUCATION	12	2,8%	TOTAL	436	100,0

One of the first tests applied was the calculation of Cronbach's  $\alpha$  alpha which showed that the self-assessment instrument is reliable with 0.83.

#### 3.1 Context of the study.

During their last year of teacher training, PSTs of the thirteen programmes deliver lessons in a school for 16 weeks. They are supported and assessed by their tutor and mentor. The training process is structured with three formative stages: delivering lessons in the classroom (daily), taking part in reflective triad meetings in the school with the tutor and mentor (once a month) and participating in practice workshop meetings at the university (once a week).

During their practice process, PSTs prepare different reports. At the end of the 16 weeks, they complete a self-assessment rubric that considers four dimensions and ten criteria, shown in tables 2, 3, 4 and 5. This assessment is worth 5% of the final grade of each PST.



a) Analysis of the work done in the triads and practice workshops: Composed of four criteria (1A, 1B, 1C, 1D) as shown in table 2.

Table 2. Evaluation criteria associated with the dimension "Analysis of the work carried out in the triad meetings and practice workshops"

1A) I actively participated during the whole practice process with contributions and interventions to enrich the work with my colleagues by providing and exchanging didactic strategies and learning resources.	1B) I frequently encouraged instances of collaborative work and/or co-teaching with other professionals working with my class to diversify teaching strategies and provide more learning opportunities for all students.	1C) I always read the suggested bibliography and prepared the topics to make contributions and actively participate in workshops or triad meetings.	1D) I sought to gain an in-depth understanding of the mentor, and tutor's opinions, recommendations and advice by asking questions that allowed me to explore their views and theoretical conceptions for the context of teaching and learning in my discipline.
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Source: Own elaboration

b). Analysis of reflective processes: 2 criteria (2A and 2B) are shown in table 3.

Table 3. Assessment criteria associated with the dimension "Analysis of reflective processes".

2A) I developed my own register in which I systematically included information about class sessions and reflections that helped me deeply understand my students' learning process and the adjustments made to my pedagogical practices.	2B) I developed deep reflection processes on my students' learning with my mentor teacher, which allowed me to enrich my professional knowledge.
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Source: Own elaboration

c). Analysis of the work carried out in the classroom: This is composed of three criteria (3A, 3B and 3C), as table 4 shows.

Table 4: Assessment criteria associated with the dimension "Analysis of the work carried out in the classroom"

3A) My interactions as a PST with all my students were very welcoming and highly favourable to all students' emotional and conceptual learning, creating a positive learning environment.	3B) I delivered learning activities based on the characteristics of my students and didactic references of my area, providing formative feedback to promote self-regulation of all my students	3C) Always use the learning outcomes of my students for feedback on learning and pedagogical practice.
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Source: Own elaboration

d). Professional responsibilities: composed of a single criterion (4A), shown in table 5.

Table 5: Assessment criteria associated with the dimension "Professional responsibilities"

4A) I fully complied with all the formal requirements regarding timetables, attendance, dress code, and personal appearance during the development of my Teaching Internship.
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Source: Own elaboration

Students could self-assess themselves at one of the following levels associated with scores for each criterion. Outstanding (8-7), Proficient (6-5), Basic (4-3) and Insufficient (2-1). This study uses the scores in its analysis. The level outstanding means they complete a task at a higher level or do the task more often than the lower levels.

## 4. Results and analysis

Table 6 shows the descriptive statistical analysis done for this study



### Descriptives

	1A	1B	1C	1D	2A	2B	3A	3B	3C	4A
N	436	436	436	436	436	436	436	436	436	436
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	7.47	7.57	7.22	7.84	7.49	7.73	7.84	7.67	7.64	7.80
Median	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00
Mode	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00
Standard deviation	1.02	0.903	1.06	0.506	0.885	0.645	0.506	0.750	0.740	0.517
Minimum	0	4	3	3	3	4	4	2	3	4
Maximum	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8

It is interesting to note that criteria 1A and 1C have the highest standard deviations, which are those associated with sharing learning resources (1A) and reviewing and reading literature (1C). On the other hand, the lowest deviation is associated with fulfilling their professional duties (4A), which may be associated with course approval requirements, attendance at all sessions, and the formal presentation requirements of the institutions in which they carry out their practice. The latter, if not fulfilled, may be grounds for requesting a change of school or maybe failing to pass the practice. The criteria with the lowest standard deviation are 3A (interactions with the mentor teacher) and 1D (reflection on learning with the mentor), which shows the importance that prospective teachers attach to their mentors.

The criteria with the highest rate are 3A and 1D. 92% of the PST rated these two criteria with 8 points. Then, 81% of them self-evaluate with 8 points in criteria 3B. On the other hand, the criteria with the lowest percentage of high scores are 2A, with 69% of PSTs rating 8 points and 1C, with only 57% of PSTs rating the highest score.

It seems that PSTs rate themselves with the highest scores in those tasks that are more related to the daily work with students (3A and 3B) or those activities that, according to them, could have an impact on their daily work in the classroom (1D), such as mentor's and tutor's advice. They might perceive these activities as more important for their professional development, and they accomplished these tasks at the highest level in the rubric during their 16 weeks in school. This situation is coincidental with Gorichon, Rufinelli, Pardo, and Cisternas related to the importance of having many practical activities to develop their abilities to be effective teachers.

On the other hand, those criteria related to activities that might be considered administrative tasks or taking part outside the classroom, like creating records with information (2A) or reading a bibliography to participate in the triad meetings or workshops (1C) rate with lower scores. As these are more theoretical tasks, these outcomes might match the findings of Gorichon, Rufinelli, Pardo and Cisternas.[3] Another explanation is that they do not feel well prepared for these tasks or do not manage to accomplish this at the highest level stated by the rubric. That might be the case with creating records as this is a very time-consuming activity, and they rate themselves as doing it but not at the high level that the university expects.

Particularly worrying is that only 57% of the PSTs read bibliography to attend the workshops. This low percentage is consistent with the results of a study conducted by Santos, Juárez and Trigo [9] that states that PSTs see the academic text as a tool just to pass a subject instead of helping them



improve. It could be that they do not see how this text could help them improve their classroom practice.

It will be interesting to contrast these results with the assessment carried out by tutors and mentors in these criteria. This analysis might provide a new perspective on the perception of PSTs about their performance.

## 5. Conclusions

Self-assessment has the potential to improve the teaching practice of the PSTs, but, according to the literature, it is not extensively used. In the case studied, it is worth only 5% of the final grade of the PSTs.

Interestingly, PSTs rate themselves as highly prepared for practical tasks inside the classroom or impact their development with the students, in contrast with those related to more administrative aspects of the teaching development. One possible explanation could be that they perceive these latter tasks as less important for their professional development, in opposition to those that let them improve their abilities with the students.

This situation presents a challenge for the teacher training programmes. How do convince the PSTs that all the training activities are equally important for their development?

One of the interesting proposals to answer this question is Meer and Chapman's [10], in which students act as co-designers of the criteria and performance levels of the assessment instruments. This practice enhances teacher-student dialogue and empowers students' epistemic resources as accurate and valid evaluators of their work, skills, and abilities. [11]

Considering the potential that self-assessment has for improving the teaching practice, how can we, as teacher trainers, take more advantage of this assessment tool?

The present investigation opens possibilities for future research in the self-assessment of teacher training programmes.

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