

The Changing Nature of Assessment in Teacher Education

Suresh Kamar Singh

*School of Education, University of Limpopo, Private Bag X1106, Sovenga
Limpopo, South Africa 0727*

Telephone +27 15 268 2967; Fax +27 15 268 2246; E-mail: Suresh.Singh@ul.ac.za

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ABSTRACT Major changes in education policy in South Africa have affected teacher education on the whole and assessment in particular. Assessment policies changed to include transparency in assessment. The Norms and Standards for Educators identified seven roles that teachers must demonstrate when they teach, including foundational, practical and reflective competencies which inform the training and assessing of student teachers in schools. The new *Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications* proposes 11 basic competencies of a beginner teacher, but retains the seven roles of the teacher. It is against this background that this article explores the changing nature of assessment in teacher education. Currently student teachers at the University of Limpopo are assessed on content knowledge in major subjects and practical skills of teaching. Re-conceptualisation of the initial teacher education qualification in the new policy documents requires institutions to examine their assessment practices. This article examines the implications of policy changes on assessment practices at higher education institutions through a critical analysis of the policy documents. It suggests ways in which changes in assessment practice can be implemented in order to address the changing school curriculum, as put forward in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement. The recommendation is that the assessment of student teachers should change and a different format should be adopted, considering the amount of time that they spend in the field. There should also be greater focus on mentoring, reflection, cooperative and collaborative learning and different methods of assessing.