

TITLE:

Standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context

by

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DECLARATION


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I declare that **Standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context** is my own work and that all the sources that I used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification nor at any other higher education institution.

Signature:

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Hennart van Schalkwyk'.

Date: November 2021

OPGEDRA AAN:

Hierdie tesis word opgedra aan my wyle broer in Jesus Christus,

MooiJohann Dreyer,

vriendelike vriend,

humorryke held,

meesterlike mentor,

leier begeleier,

en

uitsonderlik unieke

voortreflike voorbeeld.

Jou

saggiesproke wysheid

en

besielende passie vir ons beroep

word steeds hoog geag

en sal altyd

waarlik

gekoester

bly!

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Participants in hermeneutical phenomenological interviews – how I wish to thank you by name!

ABSTRACT OPSOMMING TSHOBOKANYO

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STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING THE COMPETENCE OF STUDENT TEACHERS AS ASSESSORS IN A DISTANCE EDUCATION CONTEXT

ABSTRACT

Competence as assessors drives effective learning and teaching. This study concentrates on such competence, and detailed descriptions of standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors. Scholarly literature reveals the significance of a firmly established set of standards as a means to improve and maintain teacher performance, including the ability to assess learners reliably and effectively. What is lacking in the literature are detailed descriptions of what every standard requires, particularly at student-teacher level. Clearly described standards and criteria for assessing student teachers' competence as assessors are critical in strengthening, supporting, and monitoring teacher education. This study concentrates on detailed descriptions of standards and criteria in this context.

Within an interpretivist paradigm, this study takes as its context a distance education institution in South Africa, namely the UNISA College of Education, in order to explore assessment of student teachers as assessors, including standards and criteria used. The central aim is to describe such standards and criteria using words and language, rather than numbers and statistics, and requiring a qualitative research approach. Qualitative document analysis as well as hermeneutical phenomenological interviews were employed.

The findings revealed that there is an inevitable fracture between the ideal striven for and the reality of what is achievable in a distance education context, including assessment of student teachers during teaching practice. Although several challenges are experienced in this context, the fracture is manageable when

particular approaches are followed. The most critical of these approaches is to apply clearly described standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context. This study describes such standards and criteria in detail and with clarity.

KEY WORDS:

Competence as assessors, Standards and Criteria, Distance Education, Initial Teacher Education, Learning, teaching and assessment practice.

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**STANDAARDE EN KRITERIA VIR DIE ASSESSERING VAN
PROEFONDERWYSERS SE BEVOEGDHEID AS ASSESSORS IN 'N
AFSTANDSONDERRIGKONTEKS**

OPSOMMING

Doeltreffende leer en onderrig word deur die bevoegdheid van assessors aangedryf. Hierdie studie konsentreer op sodanige bevoegdheid, tesame met uitvoerige beskrywings van standarde en kriteria vir die assessering van die bevoegdheid van proefonderwysers as assessors. Skoolliteratuur toon die belangrikheid van 'n aantal stewig gevestigde standarde as 'n manier om onderwyserprestasie te verbeter en te handhaaf – insluitende die vermoë om leerders op 'n betroubare en doeltreffende wyse te assesser. Wat ontbreek in die literatuur, is uitvoerige beskrywings van wat elke standaard vereis, veral op die vlak van proefonderwyser. Duidelik omskrewe standarde en kriteria vir die assessering van proefonderwysers se bevoegdheid as assessors is deurslaggewend om onderwyseronderrig te versterk, te ondersteun en te monitor. Hierdie studie fokus op uitvoerige beskrywings van standarde en kriteria in hierdie konteks.

Binne 'n interpretivistiese paradigma is die konteks van hierdie studie 'n afstandsonderrig-instelling in Suid-Afrika, naamlik UNISA se Kollege vir Opvoedkunde, met die oog daarop om die assessering van proefonderwysers as

assessors te ondersoek; dit sluit standaard en kriteria wat gebruik word, in. Die sentrale doelwit is om sodanige standarde en kriteria met woorde en taal te beskryf, eerder as syfers en statistiek, terwyl 'n kwalitatiewe navorsingsbenadering gebruik word. Kwalitatiewe dokumentontleding sowel as hermeneutiese fenomenologiese onderhoude is gebruik.

Die bevindinge het gewys dat daar 'n onafwendbare skeiding is tussen die ideaal wat nagestreef word, en die werklikheid van wat bereikbaar is in 'n afstandsonderrigkonteks, insluitende die assessering van proefonderwysers gedurende proefonderwys. Hoewel talle uitdagings in hierdie konteks ervaar word, is die skeiding bestuurbaar wanneer bepaalde benaderings gevolg word. Die mees deurslaggewende van hierdie benaderings is om duidelik omskrewe standarde en kriteria toe te pas vir die assessering van die bevoegdheid van proefonderwysers as assessors in 'n afstandsonderrigkonteks. Hierdie studie beskryf sulke standarde en kriteria duidelik en in besonderhede.

SLEUTELWOORDE:

Aanvanklike onderwyseropvoeding, Afstandsonderrig, Bevoegdheid as assessors, , Leer-, onderrig- en assesseringspraktyk, Standarde en Kriteria.

Hennart van Schalkwyk

Nomoro ya moithuti 04493249

**DIPEELO LE DITLHOKEGO TSA GO TLHATLHOBA BOKGONI JWA BAITHUTI
BA BARUTABANA JAAKA BATLHATLHOBI MO SEEMONG SA THUTO YA O
LE KGAKALA/O SE MO PHAPOSIBORUTELONG**

TSHOBOKANYO

Bokgoni jwa batlhatlhoobi bo tsamaisa go ithuta le go ruta go go bokgoni. Thutopatlisiso eno e totile bokgoni joo, le ditlhaloso ka botlalo tsa dipeelo le ditlhokego tsa go tlhatlhoba bokgoni jwa baithuti ba barutabana jaaka batlhatlhoobi. Dikwalo tsa borutegi di senola botlhokwa jwa dipeelo tse di beilweng sentle jaaka

tsela ya go tokafatsa le go tswetsa tiragatso ya barutabana, go akarediwa bokgoni jwa go tlathoba barutwana ka boikanyego le ka bokgoni. Se se tlhaelang mo dikwalong ke ditlhaloso ka botlalo tsa gore peelo nngwe le nngwe e tlhokang, bogolo segolo mo legatong la moithuti wa morutabana. Dipeelo le ditlhokego tse di tlhalositsweng sentle tsa go tlathoba bokgoni jwa baithuti ba barutabana jaaka batlathobi di botlhokwa go matlaafatsa, go tshegetsisa, le go baya leitlho thuto ya barutabana. Thutopatlisiso e lebeletse thata ditlhaloso tsa dipeelo le ditlhokego ka botlalo mo seemong seno.

Mo molebong wa boranodi, thutopatlisiso e dirisitse seemo sa setheo sa thuto ya o le kwa kgakala mo Aforikaborwa, e leng Kholetšhe ya Thuto ya UNISA, go tlhotlhomisa sentle go tlathobiwa ga baithuti ba barutabana jaaka batlathobi, go akarediwa dipeelo le ditlhokego tse di dirisiwang. Maikaelelo magolo ke go tlhalosa dipeelo le ditlhokego tseo ka go dirisa mafoko le puo, go na le dipalo le dipalopalo, le go tlhoka molebo wa patlisiso e e lebelelang mabaka. Go dirisitswe tokololo ya dikwalo ka mabaka gammogo le dipotsolotso tse di kokoanyang le go sekaseka maitemogelo.

Diphithlelelo di senotse gore go na le bothata jo bo ka se tilweng magareng ga se go elediwang gore se fitlhelwe le bonnete jwa se se ka fitlhelesegang mo seemong sa thuto ya o le kwa kgakala, go akarediwa go tlathobiwa ga baithuti ba barutabana ka nako ya tiragatso ya go ruta. Le fa go itemogelwa dikgwetlho di le mmalwa mo seemong seno, go ka samaganwa le bothata fa go ka latelwa melebo e e rileng. Molebo wa botlhokwa mo go eno ke go dirisa dipeelo le ditlhokego tse di tlhalositsweng sentle tsa go tlathoba bokgoni jwa baithuti ba barutabana jaaka batlathobi mo seemong sa thuto ya o le kwa kgakala. Thutopatlisiso e tlhalosa dipeelo le ditlhokego tseo ka botlalo.

MAFOKO A BOTLHOKWA:

Barutabana ba ba nang le maitemogelo, Bokgoni jaaka batlathobi, Bokgoni jwa motheo, Dipeelo le ditlhokego. Thuto ya o le kwa Kgakala

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AECT	Association for Educational Communications and Technology
AED2701	UNISA College of Education module for teaching assessment theory
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
ANA	Annual National Assessment (South Africa)
BEd	Bachelor in Education degree
CAEP	Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) (2013)
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy statement (South Africa)
CASS	Continuous assessment
CCFO	Critical Cross-field Outcomes
CCSSO	Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) (2013)
CESA	Clean Energy State Alliance
CHE	Council on Higher Education (South Africa)
CPD	Continued Professional Development
CUSD	Coronado Unified School District
DBE	Department of Basic Education (South Africa)
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training (South Africa)
EC	European Commission
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
FET	Further Education and Training – phase in the South African Education system
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework
HPI	Hermeneutical Phenomenological Interviews
IESALC	International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
InTASC	Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC)
INTO	Irish National Teacher Organisation (INTO, 2006)
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
ISPFTED	Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
MAC	Michigan Assessment Consortium

MRTEQ	Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications - document of the Department of Education and Training (2015)
NCATE	National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)
NPA	National Protocol for Assessment (Department of Basic Education, 2012)
NQF	National Qualifications Framework (South Africa)
NSE	Norms and Standards for Educators (South Africa) (2000)
ODL	Open Distance Learning
PGCE	Post Graduate Diploma in Education
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literary Study
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (South Africa)
QDA	Qualitative Document Analysis
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SBA	School-based Assessment in the CAPS curriculum
SDG's	Sustainable Development Goals
SPF	Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (Short version)
TCI	Teaching Council of Ireland
TIMMS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS),
TMS3713	UNISA College of Education module for teaching Geography
TMS3716	UNISA College of Education module for Home Language Methodology
TP	Teaching Practice
UK	United Kingdom
Umalusi	Quality Assurance Council in General and Further Education and Training.
UNISA	University of South Africa
UNPD	United Nations Development Programme
WEFGCI	World Economic Forum (WEF)'s Global Competitive Index
WIL	Work Integrated Learning

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study of standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context concentrates upon the fact that quality initial teacher education (ITE) benefits from the identification, establishment and implementation of certain standards and criteria which have to be underpinned by sound theory and applied in practice, teaching, learning and assessment of student teachers before they enter the profession.

The Department of Basic Education and the Department of Higher Education and Training (2012) formulated three strategies for ITE in South Africa: (i) growing ITE to an appropriate size in order to provide sufficient numbers of new teachers; (ii) developing and directing resources and capacity to ensure that teachers with appropriate specialisations graduate; and (iii) strengthening, supporting and monitoring teacher education to ensure that newly qualified teachers meet realistic expectations. This study contributes to the third strategy specifically. Describing standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors as understood in this study clarifies and defines expectations which qualified teachers have to meet with regard to assessing learners and learning. This, in turn, contributes to strengthening and supporting ITE in distance education in particular. When such expectations are met, better quality education follows. Competent teachers as assessors deliver quality education. Clearly described standards and criteria as envisaged in this study may also be applied in monitoring ITE, albeit limited to assessor competence only.

In South African initial teacher education, almost 50% of teachers qualify through distance education at UNISA's College of Education (UNISA College of Education Website, 2021). This, in turn, implies that research is required for improving teacher education in this distance education context. In scholarly literature there is agreement that teachers' competence as assessors is key to effective learning and teaching. (See Dreyer & Mawela, 2019; Brunker et al., 2019 and DeLuca et al., 2016). What is lacking

in research, is a focus on describing standards and criteria related to student teachers as assessors specifically. (See Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), (2013) and Gareis and Grant (2015) presented in the background to this study, below). Scholarly literature reveals the significance of a firmly established set of standards as a means to improve and maintain teacher performance, including the ability to assess learners reliably and effectively (Refer to 2.2.3). What is lacking in literature is detailed descriptions of what every standard requires. This study concentrates upon such standards and criteria, and detailed descriptions of standards and criteria. Clearly described standards and criteria for assessing student teachers' competence as assessors are critical in strengthening, supporting and monitoring teacher education.

Credible assessment of the competence of student teachers as assessors is a complex task. There is an urgent need to revisit existing standards and criteria for determining the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context because existing standards and criteria lack clarity. This lack of definition makes it difficult for student teachers to grow as confident and accurate assessors. A lack of clearly described standards and criteria also limits ITE providers in delivering competent assessors to the teaching profession. Several sets of standards related to teacher competence are used internationally, including standards related to assessor competence at experienced teacher level. What is lacking in many of such sets of standards are the criteria to be used to assess competence at student teacher level. This study describes such standards and criteria, and should the need arise, provides recommendations by re-designing standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context. In this study, standards refer to more general statements describing what is expected of practitioners, whereas criteria refer to detailed descriptions used to assess or appraise such standards. (See Section 1.10.1 for clarification of these closely related concepts).

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Creswell and Poth (2018:131) argue that in qualitative research the intent is to provide a rationale or a need for studying a particular issue or problem. The background to this study of standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers

as assessors in a distance education context provides such a rationale and clarifies the need for the study.

McMillan (2013) indicates that for preceding decades, research shows that teachers, and by implication, student teachers lack test construction skills as well as the ability to interpret test results. According to Schwille et al in IEA (2013), traditional approaches to accreditation have generally dealt with course characteristics or “inputs,” as described by the institution being evaluated for purposes of accreditation. More recently, and as it occurs in many other professions, increasing weight is being placed on evidence about the quality of graduates as measured against the standards expected of beginning teachers. In this study, such standards are closely related to standards and criteria used in assessing student teachers (See 1.10.1 and 1.10. 3). According to Ingvarson in IEA (2013) evidence of quality might be based on classroom observations, tests of professional knowledge, portfolio entries, surveys of graduate preparedness, and achievement tests of students. This study views the standards expected of experienced teachers as a benchmark by which standards expected from student teachers at the completion of their ITE and that of beginner teachers may be derived and set as standards and criteria for assessing their competence as assessors (See 1.4 below and 2.4 in Chapter 2).

In a qualification context in South Africa, the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ) document of the Department of Education and Training (2015) includes the ability to assess as one of eleven basic competencies that newly qualified teachers should be able to apply. The document states that teachers should be able to assess learners in reliable and varied ways, and use the results of assessment to improve their daily classroom teaching and learning.

In their report on extensive research concerning assessment literacy, and competence as assessors in the context of this study, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) (2013) found that insufficient efforts have been made to “unpack” existing, assessment-related standards to provide meaningful guidance for development of pre-service program curricula, instructional materials, and practical student teaching experiences to enable candidates to build a solid foundation in assessment literacy (competence) upon graduation and certification. This is the focus

of this study. Secondly, they determined that attempts were made to define assessment-related competencies, yet the resulting objectives are incomplete, the measures themselves are superficial and generally lacking performance-based requirements, which are established as means to gauge mastery. This notion that competence should be described in performance-based terms or requirements is central to this study. Standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers, particularly in a distance education context, should describe such competence in observable and assessable terms. According to Gareis and Grant (2015), a number of scholarly works related to teachers' assessment practices reveal three key themes. The first is that several theoretical foundations support the role that effective classroom assessment practices play in the learning and achievement of students. Second, the need for empirical research to bolster this theoretical position is identified, and third, understanding of the effectiveness of specific assessment practices for pre-service and in-service teachers is still only at the nascent stage, in spite of sophisticated and robust educational testing and measurement developed during the past half century. These themes are relevant since this study adds empirical evidence to the understanding that assessment is integrated with learning and teaching. It adds to the field of research on the effectiveness of pre-service assessment practices, specifically.

According to DeLuca and Klinger (2010) most of the research conducted into assessment in education has focused on the effectiveness of explicit pre-service assessment courses in promoting the competence of teacher candidates to assess the work of learners. They found that when teacher candidates are provided with explicit opportunities to learn about assessment, they demonstrate positive growth and development as measured by their perceived confidence, competency, and readiness to assess learning. According to DeLuca et al. (2013), what remains absent from literature about assessment education is an understanding of the pedagogical conditions that develop student teachers' competence as assessors. This study contributes to a better understanding of such conditions that support teacher candidates' development, and ultimate competence, as assessors in a distance education context. Standards and criteria relevant to student teachers that are clearly distinguished from those required of beginner teachers and experienced teachers enable continued assessor competence development in a seamless way, provided

they met those standards and criteria and have a clear understanding of what is required of them as beginner teachers and later as experienced teachers.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) (2013) calls for improved competence of assessors in the United States education system, contending that the current education system treats assessment as a function largely separated from teaching. The CCSSO posits that teachers are expected to use data to improve instruction and support learner success. CCSSO provides a detailed and comprehensive account of teacher standards, including assessor standards in the InTASC teacher standards document (CCSSO, 2013). The core teaching standards in the USA recognize that, to meet this expectation, teachers need to: (i) have greater knowledge and skill of how to balance formative and summative assessments, (ii) develop a variety of assessments, (iii) use standards when documenting learner progress, (iv) plan and adjust instruction where needed, (v) provide feedback to learners, and (vi) use assessment data to understand learner progress at individual level. The InTASC document describes teacher standards including assessor standards at three levels during their development as teachers, after being appointed but the document does not describe competence at student teacher level specifically. In this study, the focus is on student teacher level, using standard documents including the InTASC document as benchmarks to derive assessor competence at student teacher level. Such research addresses the gap illustrated here, that there is a lack of clearly described standards and criteria at student teacher level, specifically. This is done by describing the competence of student teachers as assessors in more detail by clearly describing standards and criteria for assessing student teachers as assessors prior to entering the profession.

It is believed that clearly described standards and criteria as envisaged in this study make a contribution: (i) to more effective assessment of student teachers as assessors in ITE in a distance education context in South Africa, and (ii) in preparing student teachers better for their task as assessors in the classroom, and ultimately to more effective assessment of learner achievements, a critical need in the South African education system which is currently performing dismally in relation to other poorer countries spending less on education. Placier et al. (2016) indicate that South African education is ranked at the bottom on international assessments such as the Progress

in International Reading Literary Study (PIRLS), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), World Economic Forum (WEF)'s Global Competitive Index, with a dismal average score of 10.8 % in South Africa's own Annual National Assessment (ANA), in Grade 9 mathematics, in 2014. Gravett (2020) aptly argues that initial teacher education needs to be prioritised for school education to improve. There can be no doubt that research such as done in this study is urgent since it contributes to improving teacher education as well as school education.

Before the central problem of this study is clarified, the boundaries of the study are delineated to provide a perspective of the field studied in terms of what was included and excluded in the study. The researcher decided on these boundaries early in the study to remain focused on teacher education and assessment in the context of this study.

1.3 BOUNDARIES OF THE STUDY

The focus area of this study was limited in terms of:

- Including the only accredited institution offering ITE exclusively in a distance education context mode of delivery in South Africa as research site
- Including only two specific ITE programmes
- Including student teachers preparing for teaching beyond the foundation phase only, and
- Focusing on the assessment of student teachers as assessors within a wider teaching practice context

Including only the UNISA College of Education as research site

The study was limited to student teachers in a developing country, South Africa, and to teacher education in a distance education context in particular. Only one institution providing pre-service teacher education or initial teacher education (ITE) in a distance education context is included, namely the College of Education of the University of South Africa (UNISA). Prinsloo (2009), Gerber (2019) and UNISA's website (2021) indicate that UNISA is the only university in South Africa accredited to deliver education in a distance education mode exclusively. Several other universities and

institutions for higher education in South Africa are currently offering ITE, using blended approaches, or as a means of emergency remote teaching because of the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic (Fraser-Moleketi, 2021). UNISA's College of Education website (2021) indicates that almost 50% of students enrolled for ITE in South Africa are enrolled with UNISA, rendering it the most significant single mode distance education ITE in South Africa. Any improvement in ITE at the college has a significant impact upon teacher competence in South Africa as almost 50% of teachers in South Africa qualify through the UNISA College of Education, as indicated in the introduction to this study.

The inclusion of only two relevant qualifications

In this study, student teachers are understood as undergraduate as well as graduated students registered for, and participating in, learning programmes preparing them for the teaching profession at entry level, such as Bachelor in Education (B Ed) and Post-graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) offered by UNISA's College of Education. These qualifications meet the requirements set out in the Higher Education Act, (Act No. 101 of 1997), Department of Higher Education and Training (2007), including the level on the NQF, namely NQF Level 7.

The inclusion of student teachers preparing for teaching beyond the Foundation phase only

According to De Witt (in Dreyer, 2014), methodologies used in the foundation phase are quite different from those in the phases for older learners, in the sense that literacy and numeracy are still emerging, assessment is mostly done through observation and verbal questioning, and assessment and teaching are integrated throughout the phase. According to Gouws (in Dreyer, 2014) as well as Nieman and Dreyer (in Dreyer & Mawela, 2019), in the phases following the foundation phase, the emphasis in assessment is fundamentally subject-based and more easily distinguished from teaching and learning. This enhanced the focus of this study on assessment of student teachers with similar needs in the Intermediate, Senior and FET phases in terms of their competence as assessors during ITE.

Focusing on assessment of student teachers as assessors within a wider teaching practice context

The focus was on the components of competence as assessors related to the ability to assess learners only. This study emphasises the importance of revisiting entire teaching practice models and approaches, and upon describing the standards and criteria used in existing models and approaches in assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors, particularly. The background to the study, including the rationale for, and boundaries of the study, provided a benchmark against which to formulate the research problem more precisely.

1.4 FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM

This researcher has extensive experience as teacher, teacher educator, designer of a teaching practice model and author of study guides and texts for teacher education in the field of assessment in education. Given such experience, the need to improve the assessment of student teachers specifically with regards to their competence as assessors, became an area of personal concern and interest. The problem that is identified, formulated and addressed in this study, is a lack of adequately described, clear and effective standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context. (Refer to standards and criteria in documents such as Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) (ELRC: 2003) and the set of standards for educators published by the South African Council for Educators (SACE): (2020) in this regard.) While the researcher was involved with assessment of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context over some time, the need for clarifying such standards and criteria became apparent.

According to DeLuca et al. (2016) measures to assess assessor ability have primarily been pilot-tested with in-service teachers. These are used widely to measure the ability of pre-service teachers to assess. They argue that these two teacher populations have differing learning needs in assessment and value different learning structures. This research clarifies the standards and criteria related to the student teacher population as assessors, specifically. The implication of the argument by DeLuca et al. (2016) for this study is that two sets of standards and criteria for assessing teacher competence as assessors needed to be described: one set for student teachers prior to entering the teaching profession, and another set for beginner teachers. Both sets had to be related to the competence of experienced teachers.

The focus of this study was to determine what the minimum requirements for student teachers are with regard to their competence as assessors, given the reality that more is expected of practising beginners and even more from experienced teachers. A focus on student teacher, beginner teacher and experienced teacher levels of competence is congruent with the teacher education continuum as indicated by McMahon et al. (2015) which describes the continuum as the formal and informal educational and developmental activities in which teachers engage, as lifelong learners, during their teaching careers. According to the Teaching Council of Ireland (2011) and McMahon et al. (2015) such a continuum encompasses initial teacher education (ITE), induction, early and continuing professional development (CPD) and even late career support. It is not possible to contemplate standards and criteria for assessing competence as assessors for one population of student teachers without doing so for the other group of beginner teachers. Flores et al. (2015) indicate that in Higher Education (HE), as a means to improve the effectiveness, fairness and feedback of assessments, faculty needs to develop assessment and pedagogical practices that foster self-regulatory competencies in students. This implies that students need to understand relevant assessment standards and criteria in order to direct their own learning. Deacon (2016) reporting on ITE at several universities in South Africa, including the UNISA College of Education, found that the assessment instruments' indicators of competence were insufficiently explicit and lacked the detail needed to provide adequate formative and motivational feedback to students. In related research, Lock et al. (2018) established that, through a process of signature pedagogics, future practitioners learn to think like professionals, develop a deep understanding of the knowledge of the field, and acquire a commitment to the standards of practice for the profession, that are standards and criteria in this study. Lock et al. (2018) indicate that, within a discipline, novices, that is student and beginner teachers for the purposes of this study, become proficient in critical aspects of professional work: to think, to perform, and to act with integrity. Describing standards and criteria for assessing student teachers as assessors meets these urgent needs and contributes to more effective assessment of the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context.

These views mean that current understanding of standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors, particularly in a distance education context in South Africa, merits revisiting. The importance of standards and criteria is

central: thinking, performing and acting on a professional level without clear indications of the required standards seem improbable, if not impossible. This applies to preparing student teachers in ITE programmes.

Given this researcher's experience in the specific area of assessment-related teacher education in distance education and the need to narrow the research to a manageable context, this study is limited to a distance education context in South Africa. UNISA (UNISA Website, n.d.) regards distance education or Open and Distance Education (ODL) as a specific way in which learners learn. Assessing student teachers in a distance education or an ODL context, presents particular challenges that should be accounted for, in part at least, in describing standards and criteria as envisaged in this study. Two salient observations by this researcher when the study commenced are relevant in this regard when the assessment instruments used by the UNISA College of Education in assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors are considered.

- The first is that as far as assessing student teachers in the theoretical module on school assessment is concerned, only foundational competencies (knowledge and understanding of assessment theory) and planning for assessments are assessed. Practical ability to assess learners is not assessed. A learning context in which formal assessment of learners in school is conducted by student teachers is complex. Assessing student teachers in such a context is difficult. Such a context depends upon the readiness or willingness of the mentor teacher in whose classroom the student teacher is received during teaching practice placements. The level of competence of the receiving teacher as an assessor and as a mentor to the student teacher is critical yet cannot be ensured by either the institution of higher education or by the receiving school. (See participant Joey's account of this dilemma in Chapter 5, section 5.2). The result is that some student teachers have better opportunities to learn and be assessed in their ability to assess learners in classroom and school contexts, than others.
- The second observation in line with Deacon (2016), is that criteria focused on the ability to assess learners included in instruments used for assessing

student teachers during teaching practice placements are limited in scope and rather vague. These require the assessor of the student teacher to observe a lesson to make judgements on how effective formative assessment was applied and how effective summative assessment was applied. These two criteria seem inadequate and too vague to describe the degree of competence that a student teacher needs to be regarded as a competent assessor of school learning prior to entering the profession. In some subject methodology modules there is more pertinent focus on assessing assessor competence, specifically. It is questionable whether summative assessment by the student teacher can be observed during lessons taught in teaching practice placement. (See participant experiences described in Chapter 5, section 5.2 in this regard).

Essentially, the problem under scrutiny in this study is a lack of clearly defined standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers in a distance education context. This problem was researched in this study in terms of pertinent research questions.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

Based on the research problem identified in the previous section, the following central research question was formulated:

How should standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context be described?

Sub-questions derived from the central research question were:

- 1.5.1 What does literature reveal about assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors and the standards and criteria used in this regard?
- 1.5.2 How do documents describe the way student teachers are assessed, particularly with regard to their ability to assess learners?

- 1.5.3 How do documents describe standards and criteria related to the competence of student teachers, beginner teachers and experienced teachers, as assessors?
- 1.5.4 How do information-rich participants experience standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context?

1.6 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.6.1 Aim of the study

Defining the aim of a research project is critical because such a definition determines the most appropriate method for conducting it: quantitative, qualitative or mixed method. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014) quantitative designs emphasise objectivity and maximise such objectivity by employing numbers, statistics, structure and control to describe the phenomenon studied; while qualitative studies stress the gathering of data on naturally occurring phenomena, using words rather than numbers, where the researcher searches and explores using a variety of methods to achieve deep understanding of the phenomenon studied. Creswell and Poth (2018:132) regard the clear definition of an aim as the most important statement in a qualitative study and add that such a purpose statement has to be constructed carefully and written in clear and concise language. Since there is lack of clearly described and effective standards and criteria to assess the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context, the central aim of this study is to describe such standards and criteria using words and language, rather than numbers and statistics. Only a qualitative approach yields such clearly described standards and criteria. The researcher thus applied a qualitative approach using words rather than numbers to search, explore and understand standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context as phenomena in context.

Considering this is a qualitative phenomenological study, the following research objectives were formulated:

1.6.2 Research Objectives

- 1.6.2.1 To conduct literature overviews related to two broad areas, namely the context in which student teachers are assessed in a distance education context in South Africa, and standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors.
- 1.6.2.2 To analyse documents describing the context in which student teachers are assessed in a distance education context in South Africa, as well as documents describing standards and/or standards and criteria related to teacher competence as assessors at various levels of competence, to hear the voices of authors who have experienced the phenomena.
- 1.6.2.3 To hear and describe the voices of information-rich participants regarding the context in which student teachers are assessed as assessors, as well as their experiences related to standards and criteria in this regard.
- 1.6.2.4 To present clearly described standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context in South Africa.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design plans scientific work. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) indicate that research design explains procedures for conducting a research study, including when, from whom, and under what conditions the data will be obtained. They view research design as the general plan: how the research is set up, what happens to the subjects, and what methods of data collection are used. Creswell and Poth, (2018:8) define qualitative research as beginning with assumptions and using interpretative or conceptual frameworks that inform the study of a social or human research problem.

This study was planned within an interpretivist paradigm, applied a qualitative approach and a hermeneutical phenomenological research strategy, including document analysis and hermeneutical phenomenological interviews.

1.7.1 An interpretivist paradigm

Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) regard paradigms as human constructions which deal with first principles: where the researcher is coming from, so as to construct meaning embedded in data. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) regard paradigms as important because they provide beliefs and dictate what should be studied, how it should be studied, and how the results of the study should be interpreted in a particular field of study. The chosen paradigm defines a researcher's philosophical orientation and has significant implications for every decision made in the research process, including choice of methodology and methods. Snape and Spencer (2003) as well as Denzin and Lincoln (2005) regard qualitative research as naturalistic and interpretive in nature.

This study was conducted within an interpretivist research paradigm where predominantly interpretive and pragmatic thinking was used to study a specific phenomenon through the implementation of qualitative evidence-based inquiry.

1.7.2 A qualitative research approach

Since this was an exploratory study, the interpretivist research paradigm, research questions, aim and objectives of the study required a qualitative research approach. Creswell and Poth (2018:46) argue that qualitative research is conducted because primarily, a problem or issue needs to be explored, and when more secondary purposes are relevant. These secondary purposes may include a need for complex and detailed understanding, a lack of fit between the problem and quantitative measures, a need for understanding of the contexts, or when individuals are sought to be empowered.

Primarily, as indicated, there is an urgent need to explore a lack of adequately described and effective standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context. This primary aim presupposes a detailed understanding of the complexities embedded in assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors, especially in a distance education context. This informed the decision to follow a qualitative approach, deploying a hermeneutical phenomenological research strategy.

1.7.3 A hermeneutical phenomenological research strategy

A hermeneutical phenomenological strategy requires an understanding of phenomenology as a broader strategy within which a more particular strategy, hermeneutical phenomenological research, is undertaken. Chun (2013) as well as McMillan and Schumacher (2014) regard phenomenological research as describing and interpreting the experience of participants regarding a particular event in order to understand the meaning ascribed to that event, and in so doing capture the essence of the experience as perceived by the participants. They regard personal in-depth interviews as the main strategy used by phenomenologists for collecting data. Creswell and Poth (2018) assert that a phenomenological study illustrates a common meaning that several individuals hold of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon. They indicate that phenomenologists focus on describing what all participants have in common since they experience a phenomenon with the purpose of reducing individual lived experiences to describe the universal essence of the concept or phenomenon. Creswell and Poth (2018) discern two basic types of phenomenology: hermeneutical phenomenology and empirical phenomenology, the latter also referred to as transcendental, or psychological phenomenology. The authors regard hermeneutical phenomenology as oriented toward lived experience and interpreting the "texts" of life, whereas empirical, transcendental, or psychological phenomenology is more focused on textural and structural descriptions of what participants experience.

The researcher adopted a hermeneutical phenomenological strategy because a central concern was how the phenomenon, assessment of student teachers as assessors including standards and criteria applied, was experienced by authors of relevant documents and information rich participants as practical lived experiences in a distance education context. According to Adams and Van Manen (2017), as well as Bynam and Varpio (2018) hermeneutic phenomenology seeks to gain a thorough understanding of lived experiences and does so by asking how a certain phenomenon is experienced by a person who lives through it in order to better understand the phenomenon examined. For Philipsen et al. (2019) this means that such an inquiry relies on the collection of pre-reflective, remembered moments. According to Van Manen (2016) a phenomenological method sets out and interprets lived experiences

or remembered moments, and their meanings in a rich and deep way. Friesen (2012) characterise hermeneutics as both the science and art of interpretation and meaning. Consequently, hermeneutic phenomenology is the study of experience together with its meanings, and like hermeneutics, is open to revision and reinterpretation.

A hermeneutic strategy was selected because standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors were studied as phenomena-in-context. The study seeks to capture the essence of being a competent assessor, the essential standards and criteria used in assessing such competence of student teachers as assessors: such competence as assessor and related standards and criteria are revealed in lived experiences in reality. The goal was to analyse documents that already describe the phenomenon in some way, form and context. Such descriptions provided a platform that allows information-rich participants to relate their experiences and understanding of, and insights into, standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context to the researcher during in-depth interviews, to explain their views resulting in more detailed qualitative, deep and rich descriptions of being competent as an assessor and of such standards and criteria as phenomena-in-context. (See Chapter 4, sections 4.2 and 4.3 for a detailed account of the research design applied in this study). Two appropriate research methods were employed in this study.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODS

The choice of methods implemented in this study is substantiated and informed by established research theory. McMillan and Schumacher (2014), as well as Creswell and Poth (2018) indicate that qualitative research may use a variety of methods. This study applied document analysis and interviews only. Both inductive and deductive strategies were used in analysing the data collected by the two methods applied. The findings of this study were validated by means of corroboration and triangulation between interviews and document analysis, as well as data obtained in follow-up interviews conducted with selected participants. The researcher planned to collect data using document analysis first, and then interview participants in view of the results of literature overviews and document analyses. This planned process included

document selection and participant sampling, instruments, and data analysis. A brief overview of the actual implementation in four phases is provided.

1.8.1 Selection of documents and sampling of participants

Three sets of documents were collected for the purpose of the study. The first set describes the context in which student teachers are assessed in a distance education context in South Africa. These were obtained from the research site, the UNISA College of Education. A second set of documents laying out standards and criteria for assessing student teacher, beginner teacher and experienced teacher competence was selected from literature and collected from participants in the research as well as from the research site. The third set defines the standard of the two qualifications relevant to this study. This set included one document only, namely the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Level Descriptors (SAQA: 2012). A detailed description of every set is provided in Chapter 5, section 5.1 and in Annexure G.

The participants for hermeneutical phenomenological interviews (HPI) were selected by means of reputational case sampling primarily, combined with snowball sampling, where participants referred the researcher to other information rich individuals: these were deemed appropriate for the collection of more data. A list of criteria for selection of suitable participants was designed, informed by the research focus and the contextual, theoretical and conceptual frameworks derived from literature studies. Participants were selected in four categories, followed by the number of participants selected:

- (i) programme managers in areas related to ITE experienced in assessment related fields, some at the college and others from other universities in South Africa and abroad, as well as some from other relevant organisations, including lecturers who taught the assessment theory module at the UNISA College of Education (5);
- (ii) managers involved with the Teaching Practice Unit at the college as well as lecturers responsible for teaching subject methodologies (4)
- (iii) receiving teachers and teaching practice co-ordinators at schools where student teachers are placed; as well as (4)
- (iv) student teachers who recently completed the PGCE or the B Ed offered by the college (3)

Three participants were referred to the researcher by means of snowball sampling. More detailed accounts of the selection process, ethical clearance and permission to access participants are provided in Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis. (See Chapter 4, section 4.6.1 and Chapter 5, section 5.1.2 for a detailed account of the participants interviewed.) In applying both methods, an exploratory focus was maintained. The researcher remained open-minded when document analyses were undertaken on the one hand and open-ended questioning of participants took place, on the other.

1.8.2 Strategies and instruments for data collection

The researcher used the same approach in both qualitative document analyses (QDA) and hermeneutical phenomenological interviews (HPI) applied in the study. The researcher drafted a document analysis strategy for QDA and interview schedules for HPI, based on qualitative research theory. Interview schedules were drafted for every category of participants. Two of these were based on qualitative research theory and piloted with colleagues who were information rich individuals similar to those participants in the sample, and who were experienced in the field of assessing student teachers. (See Chapter 4, section 4.6.2 and Annexure E for an example of an interview schedule prepared and piloted). A detailed account of the data collected using the strategies and instruments referred to here is provided in Chapter 4, sections 4.3, 4.4, and 4.6, Annexures G, H and I, and in Chapter 5, sections 5.1 and 5.2.

1.8.3 Sequence of data collection phases

Although initially the intention was to conduct the qualitative document analysis first and then the hermeneutical phenomenological interviews, due to a variety of contextual circumstances, including the disruption of the planned research process due to the impact of COVID-19, a somewhat different sequence of phases and related processes was followed. Although a detailed account of the empirical work completed is presented in Chapter 4, Section 4.6.3, a brief overview is provided here. Broadly speaking, the empirical work was completed in four overlapping and at times concurrent phases:

- Phase 1 - A first round of HPI was conducted with participants and data related to the assessment context were collected
- Phase 2 - Documents related to context were collected and analysed
- Phase 3 - Documents related to standards and criteria were collected and analysed
- Phase 4 - A second round of interviews was conducted with selected participants

The overlapping and sometimes concurrent implementation of these phases allowed the researcher to focus the second round of interviews on issues related to what was shared in preceding phases. This allowed for triangulation of results and progressively deeper analysis of participant experiences and document content. (See Chapter 4, section 4.6.4 for a detailed account). Data collection in qualitative research is regarded by McMillan and Schumacher (2014) as interwoven with data analysis, occurring in overlapping cycles, explaining why data collection and data analysis strategies are preferred over procedures.

1.8.4 Data analysis

Miles and Huberman (1994) as well as Creswell and Poth (2018) regard qualitative data analysis as much more than mere approaches for analysing text and image data. With regard to qualitative research procedures, Creswell and Poth (2018:165) describe strategies for preparing and conducting interviews in qualitative research in terms of ten clearly defined procedures. Similar procedures were followed in conducting document analysis and analysis of transcribed interviews in this study. A detailed reflection on these procedures is provided in Chapter 4, section 4.6.4 of this study. The researcher considered the ethical implications of the research procedures and methods employed during all phases of the study.

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Soobrayan (2003) makes two interesting claims with regard to ethics, truth and politics in qualitative research. First, she believes that confronting such issues in research is in effect a confrontation with the self. In qualitative research, in particular, such an

assertion has to be made consciously and recognised as such. The research instrument in qualitative research is the person with his or her own fears, anxieties, needs and sensitivities. The self and the research are intimately linked. Dealing with ethics, truth and politics of research comprises a deliberate exercise in taking risks, making choices and taking responsibility.

The second related claim which Soobrayan (2003) makes is that there is no single set of rules or practices that governs the ethics, truth and politics of a research project. The researcher should, however, recognise that not all statements made in the field can simply be accepted as truths and that the 'truths' are constantly negotiated and renegotiated in terms of the politics of power in a given context. In effect, the ethics, truth and politics of a research project are contextually driven and simultaneously contextually bound. She argues that this does not imply that an 'anything goes' approach is defensible, but in fact, that the qualitative researcher is constantly and consistently called upon to engage consciously and deliberately with the ethical, truth and political implications of his or her research and writing. Confronting and making an ethical decision is a demanding process, not an event in the life of a researcher. These two claims provide the background against which ethics in qualitative research such as occurring in this study was understood and applied in practice.

Creswell and Poth (2018:55) provide an extensive list of ethical issues in qualitative research in general, categorised in terms of timing during the research process, and refer to particular issues to anticipate and address in data collection activities. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) propose a variety of considerations regarding ethics and ethical dilemmas in qualitative fieldwork. In this study, particular care was taken to bear these issues in mind.

The researcher relied upon, amongst others, as means to identify and address ethical issues that arose during the research process, informed consent as a dialogue, particularly during in-depth interviews with participants, confirming confidentiality and anonymity by means of consent forms and verbal confirmation during interviews, using negotiation and open discussions to promote fairness and displaying genuine care towards participants and the research inquiry.

The researcher obtained ethical clearance and permission to access UNISA personnel and documents, from the UNISA College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee. (See Annexures A and B.) References to ethical issues that emerged and how these were handled throughout this study, are provided in Chapters 4 - 6 of this study. These considerations are summarised in Table 4.1 in Chapter 4.

This chapter provides an overview of the entire study and orientates the reader in terms of the essential nature and scope of the undertaking, clarifying the concepts in the title where appropriate and necessary.

1.10 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

The key concepts in the title of the study are clarified in this section.

1.10.1 Standards and criteria

Both the terms 'standards' and 'criteria' in educational assessment contexts are clarified here, and more pertinently in Chapter 2. Although the two terms are often used interchangeably, in the context of assessment, there are significant differences in spite of overlaps in meaning. Gardner et al (2010) consider standards to be qualitative descriptions that reflect value judgements, what ought to be happening. The Oxford English Dictionary (n.d.) defines a criterion as a principle or standard by which something may be judged or decided. Sadler (2005:189) distinguishes standards from criteria, arguing that there is, despite large overlapping, a significant difference between standards and criteria, and he defines a standard as follows:

“Standard n. A definite level of excellence or attainment, or a definite degree of any quality viewed as a prescribed object of endeavour or as the recognized measure of what is adequate for some purpose, so established by authority, custom, or consensus. (Etymology: from Roman *estendere*, to extend)”.

Sadler (2005:178) defines a criterion in typical dictionary format as follows:

“**Criterion** n. A distinguishing property or characteristic of anything, by which its quality can be judged or estimated, or by which a decision or classification may be made. (Etymology: from Greek *kriterion*: a means for judging.)”

Sadler (2005:189) contends that this definition emphasises the twin ideas of a qualifying threshold for each standard, and of agreed-upon standards that are shared across a relevant community.

Standards for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in this study are regarded as descriptions of the definite level of attainment, and as the recognized measure of what is adequate to be an assessor for the purpose of recognising the ability at a required level. Several standards describe the competence of student teachers in the context of this study. Criteria are regarded in this study as distinguishing characteristics and properties describing the standards related to the standards of competence of student teachers as assessors. This means that for every standard there are several criteria, that is, characteristics and properties. The standards at which these characteristics have to be demonstrated to indicate that an assessment performance meets the threshold or minimum requirements for competence, are set out in the relevant teacher education qualifications (PGCE and B Ed.), in South African context, at NQF Level 7. Criteria as understood in this study are in fact assessment criteria used in an educational context in assessment instruments or tools designed for this purpose specifically. Benchmarking of instruments in this context occurs in terms of existing structures such as the Level Descriptors for the South African National Qualifications Framework (SAQA: 2012).

In summary, the term “standard” is used to describe a particular aspect, element, or singular part of a student teacher’s competence as an assessor, whereas the term “criteria” refers to the detailed descriptions of any one such particular standard, namely those descriptions that are used to assess the standard as a competence.

1.10.2 Assessment

The National Protocol for Assessment (Department of Basic Education, 2012) defines assessment in an educational context as a process of collecting, analysing and

interpreting information to assist teachers, parents and other stakeholders in making decisions about the progress of learners: classroom assessment should provide an indication of learner achievement in the most effective and efficient manner by ensuring that adequate evidence of achievement is collected using various forms of assessment. Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) (2013) in the InTASC standards document, regards assessment as a productive process of monitoring, measuring, evaluating, documenting, reflecting on, and adjusting teaching and learning to ensure students reach high levels of achievement, and refers to both formative and summative assessment as part of the processes, aligned with instructional and curricular goals and objectives.

In this study, assessment in an educational context is understood as a dual process of gathering and judging evidence of competence for a variety of purposes: awarding of qualifications and making of decisions about learners, learning and teaching. (See Chapter 2, section 2.3 for a detailed overview of literature on assessment resulting in a clear and comprehensive summary description of assessment in educational context in section 2.3.7.)

1.10.3 Student teachers

The Oxford English Dictionary (n.d.) defines a student teacher as a student who is training to be a teacher, typically one who spends a specified period teaching in a school as a part of a formal teaching qualification. In this study, student teachers are understood as under-graduate and graduated students registered for, and participating in learning programmes preparing them for the teaching profession at entry level, such as Bachelor in Education (B Ed) and Post-graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) offered by the UNISA College of Education. These qualifications meet the requirements set out in the Higher Education Act, (Act No. 101 of 1997), Department of Higher Education and Training (2007: 23), including the level on the NQF, namely NQF Level 7.

1.10.4 Competence

Analysis of the ability to assess as a key component of teacher competence reveals that several outcomes are incorporated in the assessor role and basic teacher competencies. When viewed as an integrated set of competencies, the ability to assess should be understood as an applied competence. The South African Qualification Authority (SAQA 2012:3) defines applied competence as an integrated set of skills or abilities comprising three constituent elements: (i) foundational competence embraces the intellectual/academic skills of knowledge together with analysis, synthesis and evaluation, including information processing and problem solving; (ii) practical competence includes the concept of operational context; and (iii) reflexive competence which incorporates learner autonomy. This understanding of competence correlates with views held by several other authors. (See Delamare Le Deist and Winterton (2005), Struyven and De Meyst (2010), Koenen et al. (2015) and Van Schalkwyk and Wydeman (2015).

This understanding of competence as assessors is expanded upon and illustrated in Chapter 2, Section 2.3. These views of competence imply that, ideally, all of the competencies indicated above should be assessed during teacher education programmes as minimum requirements of competence as assessors. Standards and criteria used to assess these competences should be related directly to the qualification to be awarded to successful student teachers.

1.10.5 Assessor

The Department of Higher Education and Training (2015: 61) describes an educator's role as an assessor in The Revised Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ), as follows:

Assessor

The educator will understand that assessment is an essential feature of the teaching and learning process and know how to integrate it into this process. The educator will have an understanding of the purposes, methods and effects of assessment and be able to provide helpful feedback to learners. The educator will design and manage both formative and summative assessments in ways that are appropriate to the level and purpose of the learning and meet the requirements of accrediting bodies. The

educator will keep detailed and diagnostic records of assessment results. The educator will understand how to interpret and use assessment results to feed into processes for the improvement of learning programmes.

(Department of Higher Education and Training 2015: 61)

Transcribed as a set of outcomes, this description by MRTEQ, in line with the outcomes-based approach embraced in the South African qualification framework context, states that educators as assessors are required to:

- understand that **assessment is an essential feature** of the teaching and learning process and know how to integrate assessment into this process
- understand the **purposes, methods and effects** of assessment
- provide helpful **feedback** to learners
- design and manage both **formative and summative assessments**
- keep detailed and diagnostic **records of assessment results**
- interpret and use **assessment results** to feed into processes for the improvement of learning programmes

Educators develop their ability (competence) to assess effectively throughout their careers, starting as student teachers, then as beginner teachers and later as experienced teachers.

In this study the phrase “competence as assessors” is used to refer to assessment competence or the ability to assess learners effectively in an educational context in any of the three levels referred to above, namely at student teacher, beginner teacher and experienced teacher levels.

1.10.6 A distance education context

In scholarly literature, the terms ‘distance education’ and ‘distance learning’ are often used interchangeably. According to the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE, n.d.) distance education is understood and used commonly as a synonym for distance learning, online learning, e-learning and open distance education. Several authors focus their definition of a distance education context on the fact that the main

participants, teachers and students, are physically separated and that various technologies are used during instruction to facilitate student – teacher and teacher-student communication. (Midgley, n.d.; Lewis, 1995; Simonson and Berg in Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2016; Papadopoulou, 2020; and Jacobs, 2020).

This study concentrates upon initial teacher education (ITE) qualifications in a distance education context rather than traditional contact or face-to-face education and communication approaches and contexts. In effect, this study prioritises one such institution, in particular, the UNISA College of Education. (Refer to Chapter 3 for a more detailed overview of literature related to a distance education context).

The way this thesis is structured provides the reader with an overview of the entire study.

1.11 CHAPTER DIVISION

CHAPTER 1

Orientation including background and problem statement

The need for research into standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context in South Africa was indicated. The research design was described, namely as exploratory research in an interpretivist paradigm, using a qualitative approach which applied qualitative document analysis and hermeneutical phenomenological interviews as research methods.

CHAPTER 2

Literature overview – theoretical frameworks underpinning the study

This section considers literature germane to the topic which contributes to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon: assessment of the competence of student teachers as assessors by means of appropriate and effective standards and criteria. It searched for the essential meaning of two central concepts, namely *competence* and *assessment*. The results of the overview of literature were used to provide a conceptual framework underpinning the rationale for this study.

CHAPTER 3

Literature overview – Contextual issues related to the study

Although the context indicated in the title of this study is distance education, this chapter presents a backdrop because the assessment of student teachers is embedded in teacher education in a broad context. It begins with a historical-cultural context, considers global influences on ITE and concluded with perspectives on distance education in broader terms and the context at the UNISA College of Education in particular. These overviews in a contextual framework underpin the study.

CHAPTER 4

Research design and implementation

In this chapter, a detailed account is given of how the research design provided in the first chapter as a plan, was executed. It includes an account of how the two research methods, qualitative data analysis (QDA) and hermeneutical phenomenological interviews (HPI) were used to obtain and interpret data related to describing standards and criteria for assessing student teachers, as indicated in the title of this study.

CHAPTER 5

Research findings

The findings of the study are presented in this chapter. The voices of the authors of the documents analysed in QDA, and those of the participants in the HPI as interpreted by the researcher, are presented. It contains four sets of findings. The first set describes findings related to the context in which student teachers are assessed at the UNISA College of Education; the second presents the standards and criteria for assessing student teachers' foundational competence as assessors. The third set illustrates standards and criteria for assessing their applied competence while the fourth and final set describes standards related to reflexive competence of student teachers, including indicators of such competence. These findings present the voices of the authors of documents and participants interviewed in data collection, with limited interpretation and synthesis by the researcher.

CHAPTER 6

Research conclusions and recommendations

A cursory overview of the study is presented in the first part of this chapter. The second part of the chapter presents conclusions drawn, recommendations, limitations of the study and suggestions for further research related to the assessment of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context, including standards and criteria used in this regard.

1.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this first chapter the central problem is identified and formulated. The problem under scrutiny is defined as a lack of clearly described standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context. The research design, including the main aim and related research objectives to be used to answer the formulated research questions, were set out. The research design selected as most appropriate to the problem identified, was an interpretivist paradigm because hermeneutical phenomenological research makes use of a qualitative research approach employing two methods, namely qualitative document analysis and hermeneutical phenomenological interviews. A summary was provided of the data collection and data analysis strategies used. Strategies used for enhancing the trustworthiness of data as well as ethical considerations were explained. Concepts in the title are clarified. Chapters in this thesis are summarised. Chapter 2 contains an overview of literature related to conceptual frameworks underpinning the study.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS UNDERPINNING THE STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out the conceptual frameworks underpinning the study by means of a review of literature germane to the topic. A variety of views on related concepts are reviewed in terms of standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance context. Creswell and Poth (2018) contend that an overview of relevant literature allows a researcher to provide a rationale for the problem and to position a study within the frame of current literature about the topic selected. They argue that an overview of current literature may be used: (i) to point out deficiencies in evidence related to the problem, and (ii) indicate gaps in the understanding of the problem. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) cite two major reasons for overviewing literature in educational research: (i) to establish important links between existing knowledge and a research problem being investigated, and (ii) to provide helpful information about methodology that can be incorporated into a new study. These more general reasons for overviewing literature apply to this study. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) and Du Plessis and Kamper (2017) identify several additional purposes for conducting an overview of literature: refining the research problem, establishing a conceptual or theoretical framework, developing significance, identifying methodological limitations and contradictory findings, and developing research hypotheses, focusing the research and defining relevant policy issues, and serving as an evaluation or appraisal tool for the research. This study relies upon an overview of literature with all these purposes in mind.

The central focus of the overview was to consider literature that contributes to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study: assessment of the competence of student teachers as assessors by means of appropriate and effective standards and criteria. This overview of literature is used to search for the essential meaning of the concepts contained in the title by applying hermeneutical phenomenological research. All concepts in the title were clarified in Chapter 1, section 1.11 to provide an overview of the meaning of each concept. This preparation allows the focus to return to the two

key concepts: competence and assessment which constitute the fundamental conceptual frameworks underpinning this study.

2.2 LITERATURE OVERVIEW RELATED TO COMPETENCE

Following a deductive approach, of starting from general views and narrowing the focus later, the following views on competence are referred to: definitions of competence; a holistic model of competence by Delamare Le Deist and Winterton (2005); applied competence as defined by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA, 2012); Korthagen's (2015) perspective of competence in context, and various views regarding competence as a stage in proficiency or professional development.

2.2.1 Competence in general terms

In earlier work authors such as Kane, (1992); Parry (1996), Mirabile (1997) as well as Cheetham and Chivers (1996) treat competence or competency as demonstrations of knowledge, skill, ability or characteristics associated with performance on a job, such as problem solving, analytical thinking, or leadership and includes motives, beliefs and values. Keen (1992) and Herling (2000) approach competence as behaviour demonstrating the ability to handle a situation even when such a situation is unforeseen. Both scholars link human competence to demonstrated actions of an individual that are both minimally efficient in their execution and effective in their results. More recently, Delamare Le Deist and Winterton (2005), Deakin-Crick (2008), SAQA (2012), Van Schalkwyk and Wydeman (2015), and Schneider and Bodensohn (2017) consider competence to be a complex combination of knowledge, skills, understanding, values, attitudes and desire. Khorrooshi et al. (2016) link competence with performance in an educational context and indicate: (i) that there is an immediate connection in the field of instruction between a teacher's professional competence and student performance, and (ii) that competence is usually assessed by means of a criterion-referenced approach.

Although the earlier and more recent work as reflected in the work of the authors referred to above does not result in a single common understanding of the concept of competence, there does seem to be a common thread in all these views, that

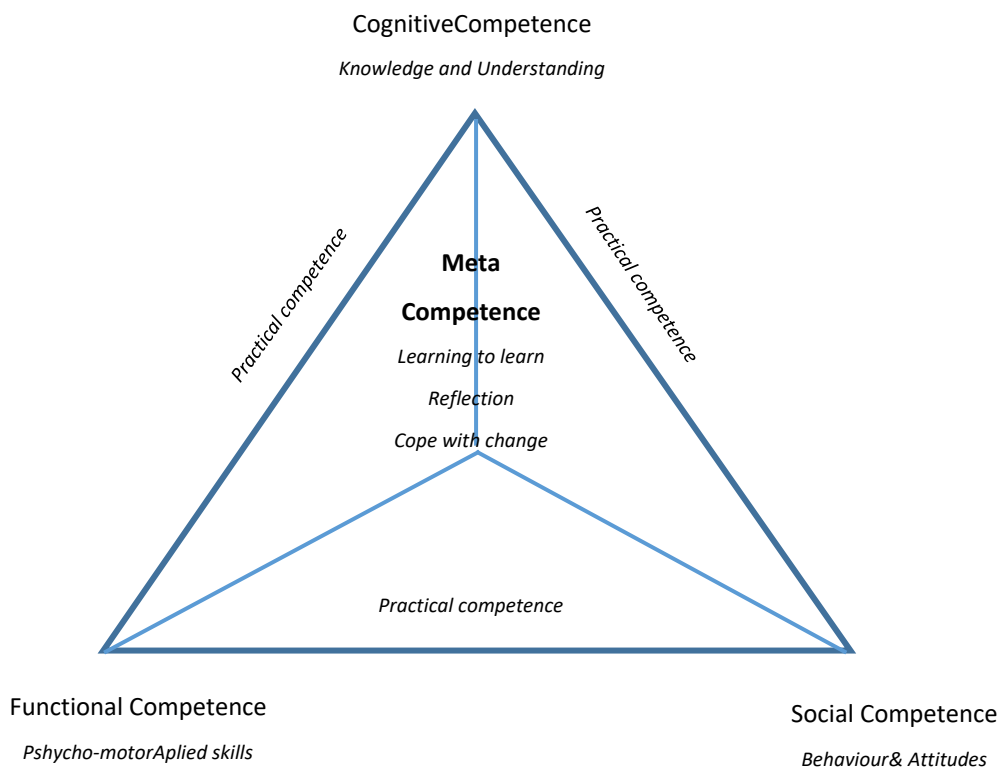
competence is a personality trait, complex, integrated and including knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes. Several of the notions overviewed above include an understanding of competence as the ability to perform well and/or effectively in a particular domain or field. There seems to be disagreement, however, as to competence in relation to the quality of performance. Some authors (SAQA, 2012, Van Schalkwyk and Wydeman, 2015, Edwards, 2017, Adie et al., 2020) believe competence refers to effective and minimally efficient performance only, whereas others associate competence with superior performance (Delamare Le Deist and Winterton, 2005, Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2016, Looney et al, 2017, and Korthagen in Zwart, 2015). All notions of competence either state outright or clearly imply that competence is bound to a particular field of expertise.

In a more comprehensive view, Delamare Le Deist and Winterton (2005) describe professional competence as comprising five sets of inter-connected dimensions: cognitive competence, functional competencies, ethical competencies, and meta-competencies, concerned with the ability to cope with uncertainty, as well as with learning and reflection. The authors purport that, while the distinction between these dimensions can be made analytically, in practice, a person needs an underlying knowledge, functional skills and appropriate social behaviour in order to be effective at work, and to attain the competences required of an occupation described in multi-dimensional terms. They illustrate the holistic competence model as a tetrahedron, as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Such an understanding of competence as a holistic and multi-dimensional ability has particular relevance to this study.

As indicated in Chapter 1, The South African Qualification Authority (SAQA 2012:3) views competence essentially and significantly as an applied competence. SAQA defines applied competence as an integrated set of skills or abilities comprising three constituent elements:

- foundational competence which embraces the intellectual/academic skills of knowledge together with analysis, synthesis and evaluation, including information processing and problem solving;



Source: Delamare Le Deist and Winterton (2005:40)

Figure 1: Holistic Model of Competence

- practical competence which includes the concept of operational context; and
- reflexive competence which incorporates learner autonomy.

The three constituent competencies are applied when competence is demonstrated in learning and in real-life contexts in a particular field. Van Schalkwyk and Wydeman (2015) draw upon SAQA's understanding of applied competence to illustrate the interrelatedness of the constituent elements of competence. They focus upon an understanding of competence as essentially referring to a problem-solving ability. The authors (2015) illustrate such an interpretation of competence, as illustrated in Figure 2.

A notion of competence that is not clearly articulated in most of the views considered thus far, is that competence may be achieved at increasing levels of difficulty and complexity. In the context of the South African qualifications framework, competence is viewed as an ability that may be awarded certification or qualifications at ten distinct levels of competence. Someone may be competent in a particular field or domain, at

a particular level at a particular time, and may progress to a higher level or levels of competence. These levels of competence are described in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). SAQA (2012) contextualises the level descriptors for the NQF by describing the purpose as twofold: (i) to provide coherence among qualifications on the NQF and to facilitate assessment of national and international comparability of qualifications, (ii) to advance the objectives of the NQF in agreement with the three Quality Councils, the Council on Higher Education (CHE), Umalusi and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO). The philosophical underpinning is grounded in the construct of Applied Competence, implying that application of competence may be achieved at various levels.

With regard to the wide and varied knowledge base constituting, and contributing to, competence in educational or training contexts, Schneider and Bodensohn (2017) caution that all knowledge types, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, management knowledge, knowledge of learning psychology, fall short of constituting competence. Though all knowledge is a prerequisite to competence and influences competence, competence itself requires practical training in application and become part of the student teacher's identity as teacher and assessor (Looney et al, 2017). This warning is pertinent to the present study. Actual applied competence of student teachers has to be assessed before they enter the profession, not only their knowledge and understanding of teaching, including assessment.

However competence is defined or understood, it should be comprehended within a personal and environmental context. Korthagen (2013), and in Zwart et al. (2015) use The Onion: A Model of Levels of Change to illustrate the qualities of a "good teacher". (See Figure 3).

In this study of standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context, this model provides perspective regarding the relation between other qualities of the person, competence and behaviour. Competence is integrated with other inner qualities as indicated in the model, however clearly distinguished from behaviour. When competence is assessed, behaviour has to be observed.

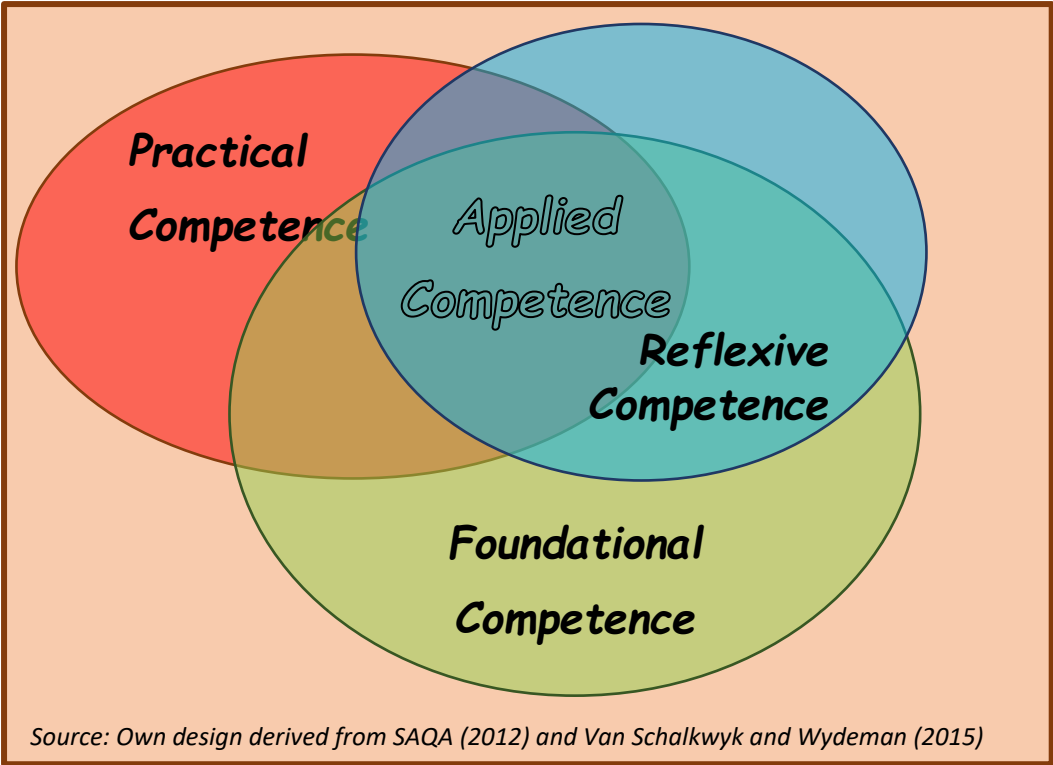


Figure 2: Applied Competence as Integrated Competencies

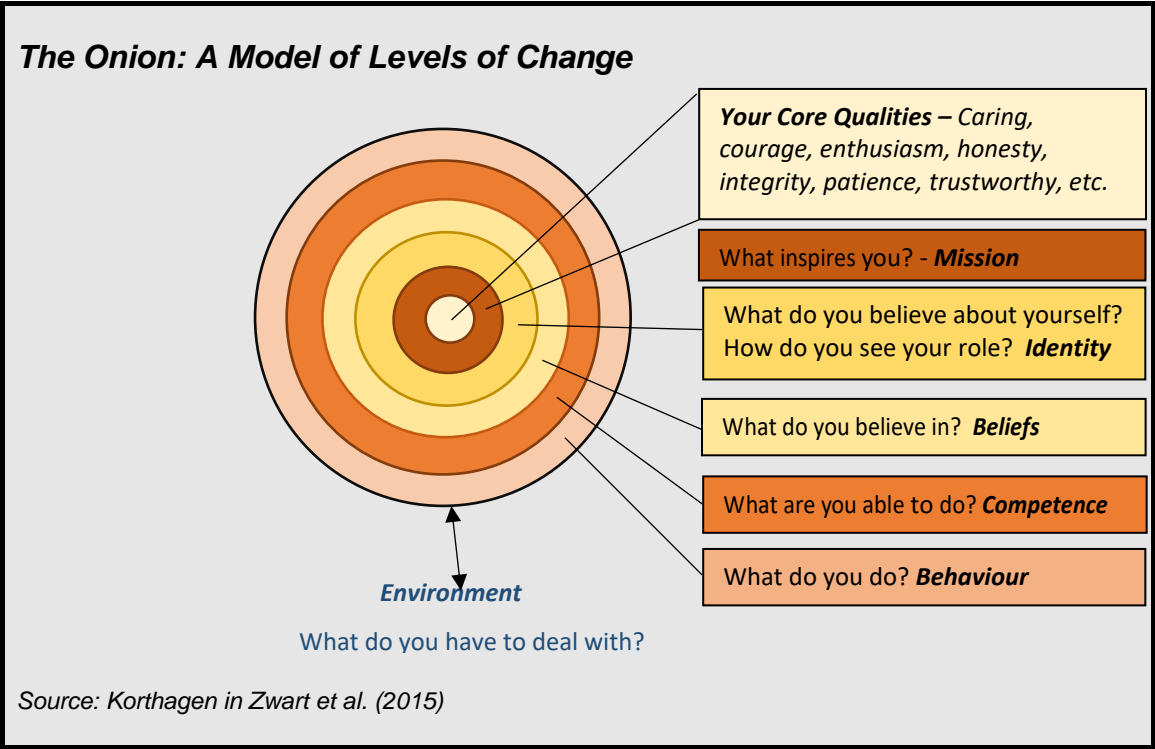


Figure 3: The Onion: A Model of Levels of Change

The implication for this study is that standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors should designate observable and assessable behaviour so that student teachers can display or demonstrate their competence and assessors can judge their performance in assessing their competence.

Competence is regarded as a stage in progression towards expertise. Grainger and Adie (2014) as well as Adie et al. (2020) include competence in models designed to map the development of professionals from naïve individuals, through several levels of proficiency, to become masters in a particular domain. Such models are relevant to this study since they provide frameworks for contemplating the difference between student teachers, beginner teachers and proficient teachers as assessors.

A Proficiency Progression Framework

(Adapted from Adie et al. 2020).

Adie et al. (2020) adapted this framework and incorporated work by Grainger and Adie (2014) in a model of proficiency progression, where proficiency is understood as “A high degree of skill; expertise” (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d).

Naive	One who is totally ignorant of a particular domain.
(1) Novice	New to the domain with minimal knowledge; Sticks to taught rules or plans; Responsible only for following the rules to complete a task.
(2) Advanced beginner	Still rule following but able to apply across similar contexts; Rules become guidelines; Will try new things but has difficulty troubleshooting; Focus still on completing tasks.
(3) Competent	Excessive rules sorted into perspectives, generating conceptual models; Uses deliberate planning and past experience in problem solving; Makes decisions and accepts responsibility for outcomes – more emotionally involved; Journeyman who can be trusted to do unsupervised work.
(4) Proficient	Develops conceptual frameworks of a whole skill – holistic view of situation; Develops maxims for guidance and prioritising, adapted to situation; Problems identified more intuitively; Decision-making is largely deliberate and conscious.

- | | |
|------------|--|
| (5) Expert | Intuitive identification of situations and problem solving – deep, tacit understanding; Transcends reliance on rules, guidelines and maxims; More analytical approaches in unfamiliar problem situations |
| (6) Master | Often merged with Expert; Experiences intense absorption; Unconscious performance; Elite performance – sets standards or ideals; Recognised as ‘the’ expert |

Source: Adapted from Adie et al. (2020:441)

Edwards (2017) invokes a similar framework for determining the assessment literacy (competence as assessors) of secondary school educators. This framework describes the levels of literacy/competence as follows in a Summative Assessment Literacy Rubric (SALRubric):

Levels of competence used in SALRubric. (Edwards 2017:212)

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Novice | Limited competence in dimensions of assessment literacy, where a teacher either does not consider the relevance of the dimension, or shows limited understanding, and follows basic assessment tasks provided by others |
| Advanced beginner | A general understanding of most of the dimensions at a basic level taking notice of the context but still detached from the learning situation |
| Competent | An overall understanding or competency in the dimension, becoming more emotionally invested in the context, but yet able to demonstrate the nuanced detail inherent in the dimension |
| Proficient | A clear understanding of the complexities of the dimension within the contextual framework, approaching decision-making from the perspective of deciding between options, applying analytic reasoning |
| Expert | A thorough understanding of the detail of the dimension within its context, applying intuitive decision-making, and having the capability to contribute understandings to the wider teaching community |

Source: Edwards (2017:212)

The two frameworks rely upon proficiency as the measure to describe levels of competence as understood in this study, suggesting that student teachers as

assessors operate at novice level, beginner teachers at advanced beginner level and experienced teachers at competent level of proficiency. The researcher depended upon the views and perspectives of various authors related to the notion of competence in general terms, and overviewed above to describe and illustrate a conceptual framework for understanding competence in the context of this study. As such, the framework underpins this study.

The notions overviewed form a background against which competence in education and competence as an assessor are understood in this study. Standards and criteria for assessing student teachers are, amongst other purposes, meant for awarding relevant qualifications to competent student teachers. Such standards and criteria describe competence at a particular point in the development of student teachers as teachers and assessors. Describing such standards and criteria for student teacher performance as assessors, has to take into account the notions identified thus far to ensure that competence is assessed, when student teachers are examined as assessors in a distance education context, in order to award relevant qualifications to competent student teachers. Adie et al. (2020) argue in this regard that, if teacher performance is based upon statements of standards, that is standards and criteria in this study, then it is imperative that the standards represent the complexity and multi-dimensionality of classroom assessment practices. The competence of the teacher, and by implication the student teacher, is part and parcel of such complex and multi-dimensional assessment practices.

The researcher designed Figure 4 to illustrate the constructs and views held in literature and overviewed thus far, related to competence in general terms. The essence of competence lies in the applied nature of the concept, when applied in real-life contexts competence can be observed and assessed directly. Three constituent competencies, knowledge and understanding, practical ability and reflexive ability in terms of values and attitudes, underpin applied competence. Applied competence does not exist in isolation but within a dynamic environment. At a personal level, competence is one of a set of abilities including identity, core qualities, mission, beliefs, and is demonstrated in behaviour. Competence includes meta-competences such as the ability to learn, to cope with change, and to reflect. Finally, competence is

understood as one stage in the development of a person's proficiency in a particular field.

For the purposes of this study, using such an understanding of competence as presented in the constructs and views overviewed in literature, the term competence is understood by this researcher as follows:

Competence is the multi-dimensional ability of an individual to meet real-life challenges and solve real-life problems in a particular context or domain by applying three discernible, yet inter-related and inextricably intertwined constituent abilities, namely, relevant knowledge and understanding, practical skills and relevant attitudes and values. Application of these abilities demonstrates competence as applied competence in observable behaviour. The competence of an individual is integrated with several other personal qualities such as core values, identity, beliefs, and mission, and illustrated in behaviour within a changing and dynamic environment. Competence can be demonstrated at distinct levels of proficiency or standards. Competence is therefore examinable by means of relevant assessment criteria describing the three constituent components, as well as applied competence in terms of observable and assessable behaviours at a particular level.

The focus now narrows to consider constructs and views in literature more directly related to teacher competence specifically. Since teacher competence should be understood in the context of teacher development through various phases of development that teachers experience in their careers, the notion of a teacher education continuum needs to be clarified and contextualised.

When the views of Edwards (2017) and Adie et al (2020) are considered, that competence develops through several stages of proficiency, and Sadler's (2005) notions of standards and criteria are considered, the relevance of the teacher education continuum becomes clear.

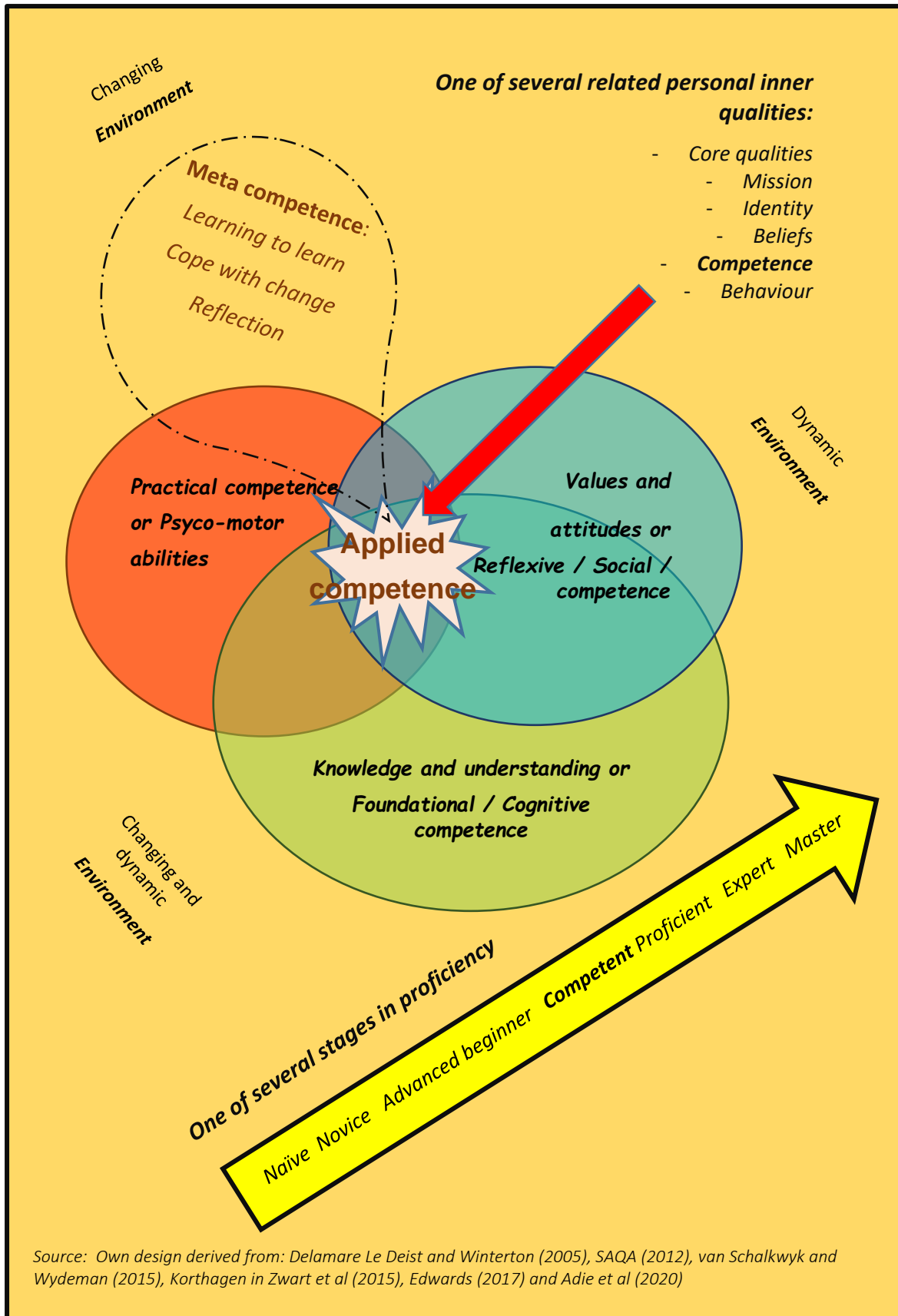


Figure 4: Constructs and Views for Understanding Competence

2.2.2 Competence and the teacher education continuum

Competence is developed over time. Teacher competence grows from the early stages in a teacher's career through the entire span of the career. According to the Irish National Teacher Organisation (INTO, 2006), the teacher education continuum spans three areas, stages or definitions in the career of a teacher: initial pre-entry/pre-service education, induction or probation, and continuous professional development (CPD) in-school, out of school and formal/informal. Assessment of student teachers as part of the focus of this study, is embedded in the pre-entry or pre-service phase of teacher education. INTO (2006) identifies the following key principles underpinning the continuum: (i) outcomes for each of the stages should be stated. These outcomes should relate to the knowledge, skills and competency required from teachers at every stage and should include essential characteristics such as teachers being adaptive, team orientated, pedagogically versatile, expert in core competencies, reflective and committed to ongoing learning and development. (ii) Teachers should be masters of content and involved in ongoing development of pedagogical and content knowledge throughout their career. (iii) Teacher education and development should be delivered in an efficient and effective manner. (iv) Teacher education should be linked to school improvement and school development. (v) Teacher education has to be reliant on close partnerships between education departments and schools.

Caena (2014) and McMahon et al. (2015) commend a continuum approach to teacher education and career development which integrates initial teacher education, induction and continuous professional development by means of teacher competence frameworks, evaluation/assessment and quality assurance mechanisms. McMahon et al (2015) regard teacher education as a career-long process, meaning that teacher learning can be developed throughout all phases in the continuum. In this way the continuum is seen as a development tool for professional learning and progression and not just a conceptual framework for structuring and describing career progression. The views of INTO (2006), Caena (2014) and McMahon et al. (2015) regarding a teacher education continuum are illustrated in Figure 5.

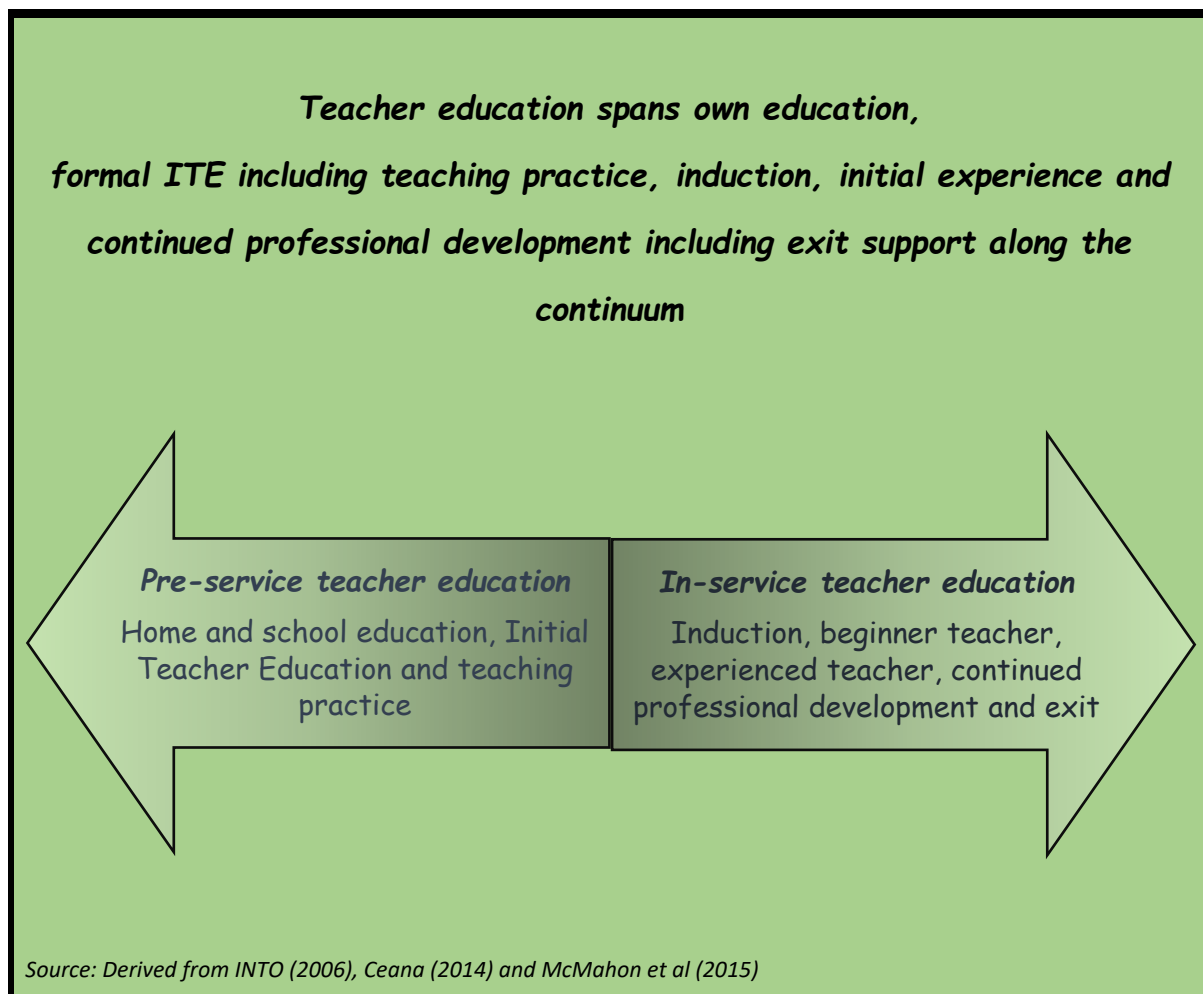


Figure 5: Teacher Education Continuum

McMahon et al (2015) emphasise that the central focus should remain on student (learner) learning but at the same time keep educational concerns at the heart of the practice of education, as argued by Fullan et al (2006), for certain non-negotiable beliefs, that all students can achieve high standards, given sufficient time and support. All teachers can teach to high standards, given the right conditions and assistance. High expectations and early intervention are essential; and teachers need time to learn, they need time to be able to articulate both what they do and why they do it. According to McMahon et al (2015) such an understanding of the professional continuum is underpinned by two premises, namely that all teachers are potential leaders; as leaders of learning, some as leaders of teachers and others as strategic leaders, and that all teachers are teacher educators. The authors suggest that in bringing about change to, and within, the teaching profession, capable of sustained impact and outcomes for pupil learning, a re-conceptualisation of professional learning

is needed. They argue that this capability distributes the concentrated focus and often pressurized demands on the initial phase through an extended induction phase; and that it would be developed further through ongoing career-long professional learning. Collaborative practice enables practitioners to access and engage with wider ideas and issues in order to generate their own solutions, sustaining Darling-Hammond's (2013) idea of teachers as "adaptive experts". This notion underpins the use of frameworks for proficiency progression as understood by Adie et al. (2020) indicating that progress is depicted as moving from naïve to novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, expert and master. The authors warn, however, that skill development should be understood as a continuum with overlaps and uncertain boundaries.

The notion of a teacher education continuum has particular relevance to this study. Two implications relate to this study. First, the continuum implies that assessor competence, like other teacher competencies, develops throughout teachers' careers and clearly distinguishes levels of competence at student teacher, beginner teacher and experienced teacher levels. The continuum illustrates Sadler's (2005) distinction between standards and criteria. Standards of competence as assessor remain essentially the same for teachers at all levels of competence, yet every standard related to assessor competence should be described by means of criteria that indicate what is required of student teachers, what is required of beginner teachers, and what is required of experienced teachers to demonstrate such competence. The standards remain the same yet the criteria differ for every level of competence.

The second implication, closely related to the first, is that a lower level of competence should be sufficient to ensure continued development of competence at the next and higher level of competence. In this understanding of the continuum as related to this study, it is possible that competence at a lower level may be insufficient for teachers to effectively develop competence at the next level. Criteria describing competence at the lower level should therefore describe all aspects required to ensure continued development to, and through, the next level. Every criterion among those describing competence at a particular level, and all criteria collectively, should 'scaffold' growth towards the next level. Criteria related to standards ensure continued development of competence.

Given this brief overview of the teacher education continuum and the relevance of the continuum to this study, particularly with regard to understanding of competence in general terms, literature related more directly to the notion of teacher competence is considered.

2.2.3 Teacher competence

Literature reveals that teacher competence is a competence displayed in the particular field or domain under examination, that is, in this case, the teaching profession. The competence of student teachers should be understood within a broader understanding of teacher competence. According to Darling-Hammond (2006), teacher competence is demonstrated through five quite specific professional attributes: demonstration of thorough preparation, a sound knowledge base, effective classroom management, professional communication with a range of stakeholders, and an accurate sense of self-awareness. Other earlier views held by Whitty and Willmott (1991), Westera (2001), Darling-Hammond (2006), and Deakin Crick (2008) reveal views of teacher competence similar to those held about competence in general, as an ability to perform a task satisfactorily according to predetermined criteria that encompass intellectual, cognitive and attitudinal dimensions. These views, however, amount to a vague idea of teacher competence.

More recently, Al-Malki and Weir (2014) identify a distinguishing feature of the competency approach to measuring teacher effectiveness that the demonstration of competence occurs through a 'performance' *in situ*. According to the authors, what constitutes teacher competence, however, remains unclear and seems dependent on whether the observed behaviour is viewed as attributable to the teacher, to the performance or to both. (Refer to the distinction between competence and behaviour in Korthagen's views in Chapter 2 in section 2.2.1, in this regard.) This study clarifies descriptions of teacher competence, specifically focused on the competence as assessors in more detailed descriptions of standards and criteria to assess such teacher competence.

In terms of the relation between competences and standards, Caena (2014) argues that a professional standard describes what teachers are expected to know, understand and be able to do as specialist practitioners in their fields, indicating that as measures of professional competence, standards should define what to measure, how to collect evidence, and what counts as performance, with a focus on pupil learning as a result of teaching (European Commission, 2011). Caena's views do not, however, shed light on any relation between standards and criteria as Sadler's do.

The views expressed above regarding teacher competence tend to confirm the view expressed by Stoof et al. (2002), that there is no single universally acceptable definition of teacher competence in scholarly literature. There is an overlap with similar concepts such as assessment literacy, assessor identity, and assessment capability, as seen earlier. There are, however, much more indirect detailed descriptions of teacher competence when policies are considered containing lists of expectations, competencies, standards and criteria required of teachers in policies internationally. Although such lists may not contain carefully formulated definitions of teacher competence, they do provide a clearer indication of teacher competence in various contexts in education systems internationally.

An overview of a few examples of how teacher competence is understood in terms of expectations in policies in a country and is summarised in Table 2.1. Examples of lists of teacher competencies, described in literature as functional components, objectives, domains, standards and basic competencies from the following countries are included in the table below:

- European Union (Flanders)
- USA
- Australia
- South Africa and
- Ghana

The table of examples provides a cursory indication or snapshot of recent and current practices in a few developed countries internationally and two developing countries in

Africa. The standards related to teacher competence are indicated in the table and standards related to assessment are indicated by means of bold emphasis. The essence of every country's list of competencies or standards is indicated and some views from literature indicating the significance of assessment among teacher standards internationally are referred to.

Teacher competence in Europe

According to Caena (2014), the complexity of teaching shapes the basic definition of teacher competence as context-bound, embedded in a system with multiple actors and layers of activity. According to the European Commission, in Caena (2014), common ground across education cultures and traditions can be expressed by the following core competence requirements for teachers:

- structured, well-organised knowledge frameworks (about curricula, education theories, and assessment), supported by effective knowledge management strategies;
- sound knowledge of how to teach specific subjects, linked to digital competences and an understanding of student learning;
- classroom teaching/management skills and strategies;
- interpersonal, collaborative, reflective and research skills for work in professional school communities;
- critical attitudes towards professional practice and innovation, based on different sources - student outcomes, theory and professional dialogue;
- positive attitudes and commitment to ongoing professional development, collaboration, diversity and inclusion;
- adaptive expertise - the ability to adapt plans and practices to the needs of contexts and students.

Caena (2014) argues that these key requirements reflect six broad paradigms of the teaching profession: integrated, complementary aspects, the teacher as a reflective agent, a knowledgeable expert, a skilful expert, a classroom actor, a social agent and as a lifelong learner. One example of lists of competencies required of student teachers to live up to these roles in a European context is provided here, as provided

by Struyven and de Meyst (2010) who regard teacher competence as an integration of ten functional components for beginning teachers in Flanders (Belgium). (See Table 2.1.)

Teacher competence in the United States of America

In the USA, standards from both the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) (CCSSO: 2013 and 2017), give a detailed account of expected attributes which teachers should bring to the classroom. The set of standards describes competence at three progressive yet unlabelled levels. Only the competencies or standards for the most advanced level are reflected Table 2.1.

Teacher competence in Australia

According to Al-Malki and Weir (2014); AITSL (2011, 2018) and Call (2018) the Australian standards provide a framework that makes clear the knowledge, practice and professional engagement required across teachers' careers. These standards present a common understanding and language for discourse between teachers, teacher educators, teacher organisations, professional associations and the public. The standards are described at student teacher, beginner teacher and experienced teacher levels. Only standards at experienced teachers are included for sake of comparison with lists in other countries. (See Table 2.1).

Teacher competence in South Africa

In South Africa, as indicated in Chapter 1, Section 1.2 the Department of Higher Education and Training (2015) specifies the qualities required of teachers in The Revised Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ), in terms of eleven basic competencies which newly qualified teachers should be able to apply. These are the basic competences required of newly qualified teachers. (See the list in Table 2.1). The standards related to Competence 9 focussing on assessment are also provided in The Professional Teacher Standards published by the South African Council for Educators (SACE) (2018). Only the standard related

to assessment (Principle 5) is given in detail, including the standards related to it. The other standards are listed only. The standards provided by SACE include standards at three levels: student teachers, beginner teachers and experienced teachers. The last of these reflected in Table 2.1.

Teacher competence in Ghana

In Ghana, according to the Ministry of Education (2017) the National Teachers' Standards for Ghana define the minimum levels of practice expected of student teachers and teachers in order to be licensed, and add that during the training and the period of induction, the standards continue to define the level of practice at which all qualified teachers are expected to perform. (See the list in Table 2.1).

Analysis of the table reveals that the following teacher competencies are common in all examples reflected in the table, in spite of being described somewhat differently. This phenomenological study searches for the essential meaning of the phenomena under scrutiny only. Three categories of themes may be discerned from the examples included in Table 2.1, common themes in all example descriptions of teacher competence, important aspects of competence, yet not shared in all examples, and themes particular to specific contexts. When the example lists are analysed, the following abilities are mentioned in all lists:

(Assessor competence as reflected in the table is emphasised in italics)

- being a subject matter expert in the field/subject taught at school
- being expert in ways of teaching and learning of the subject taught at school
- being knowledgeable about learners, their development and their diverse needs
- creating and maintaining safe and learning enhancing classroom environments
- planning and implementing effective teaching and learning activities
- *assessing learners both formatively and summatively*
- being involved in professional development
- meeting special needs of learners

Table 2.1 – Examples of lists of teacher competencies

Flanders <i>Functional components</i>	USA <i>Standards</i>	Australia <i>Standards</i>	South Africa (MRTEQ) <i>Basic competencies</i>	South Africa (SACE) Standards	Ghana <i>Standards</i>
<p>The teacher as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>a guide to learning and development processes, being able to:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - select learning goals, design powerful learning environments - conduct assessment for learning and assess of learning 2. meeting cultural diversity and special needs educator 3. subject expert 4. organiser 5. innovator and researcher 6. partner of parents / carers 7. member of a teaching team 8. partner of external parties 9. member of the educational community 10. culture participant 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Learner Development 2: Learning Differences 3: Learning Environments 4: Content Knowledge 5: Application of Content 6: Assessment - teachers understand and use multiple methods of assessment 7: Planning for Instruction 8: Instructional Strategies 9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice 10: Leadership and Collaboration 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Know students and how they learn 2 Know the content and how to teach it 3 Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning 4 Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments 5 Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning 6 Engage in professional learning 7 Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community 	<p>Teachers must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. have sound subject knowledge. 2. know how to teach their subject(s) 3. know who their learners are and how they learn; 4. know how to communicate effectively to mediate learning. 5. have highly developed literacy, numeracy and (IT) skills. 6. be knowledgeable about the school curriculum 7. understand diversity in the South African context and include all learners. 8. be able to manage classrooms effectively 9. be able to assess learners in reliable and varied ways 10. have a positive work ethic. 11. be able to reflect critically on their own practice, 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teaching is guided by an ethical commitment to learning and learners. 2. Teachers understand the subject/s they teach. 3. Teachers interpret the national curriculum 4. Teachers understand how their subjects are best taught and learnt. 5. Teaching involves organising, managing, monitoring and assessing learning. 6. Teaching involves thinking before, during and after classroom action. 7. Teachers understand the complex role played by language. 8. Teaching creates and maintains safe and disciplined learning environments 9. Teachers belong to communities 10. Teachers promote social justice and the redress of inequalities 	<p>The standards are related to Professional Practice, namely, managing the learning environment [a) to d)]; teaching and learning [e) to j)], and assessment. [k) to p)]. As assessor the teacher:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>Integrates a variety of assessment modes.</i> b) <i>Listens to learners and gives constructive feedback.</i> c) <i>Identifies and remediates learners' errors</i> d) <i>Keeps meaningful records</i> e) <i>Demonstrates awareness of national and school learning outcomes of learners.</i> f) <i>Uses objective criterion-referencing to assess learners</i>
<p>Source: Summarised from OECD (2009), Struyven and De Meyst (2010), INTASC (2017), University of Adelaide (2015), DHET (2015), SACE (2018), and Ghana Ministry of Education (2017)</p>					

The following abilities are shared in some, but not all lists:

- Language and communication skills and challenges
- Membership, leadership and collaboration with other teachers
- Interaction with internal and external stakeholders in school education
- Professional and ethical behaviour

The following themes are unique to examples given in particular contexts

- Meeting culturally diverse needs of learners (South Africa)
- Redress and social justice issues (South Africa)

Importantly, not all sets of standards, objectives, domains, components, and the like, are differentiated between levels of proficiency, for example from student teacher to beginner teacher, experienced teacher, to leader teacher. As indicated in Chapter 1 (Section 1.2), there is a lack of standards and criteria specifically focused on what is expected of student teachers with regard to most competencies, and most obvious assessor competence in particular. This study addresses this need in the student teacher assessment context specifically. Some of the sets of standards that do differentiate in this regard were ear-marked for more detailed document analysis, as indicated in Chapter 4, Section 4.3.

In summary, the literature reviewed to develop an understanding of how teacher competence is understood and described in literature and policy related to the teacher education continuum. There is considerable congruence with regard to the detailed description of what is required from teachers internationally. These descriptions help to formulate a theoretical construct for understanding teacher competence in this study.

This researcher derived the following summary description of teacher competence:

Teacher competence is an applied competence including at least eight abilities ranging from creating and maintaining safe learning environments and implementing effective teaching, learning and assessment activities, to meeting needs of learners, and interacting with stakeholders. The foundational competence of teachers includes a wide and deep understanding of the subjects

they teach and concepts, theories and approaches related to teaching, learning and assessment. The practical competence they demonstrate includes planning, communication and administration, while reflexively they adhere to professional codes of ethics and are, in a South African context in particular, committed to redress and social justice, amongst others. Most relevant to this study, teacher competence is dynamic and develops within the teacher education continuum including student teacher, beginner teacher and experienced teacher levels, and beyond.

Figure 6 illustrates this summary description of teacher competence as an integrated theoretical construct.

It is clear from literature that the teachers' competence is an integration of several competencies which teachers apply to deliver effective teaching, learning and assessment in their classrooms. Given this understanding of teacher competence, the focus turns to teacher competence as assessors.

2.2.4 Teacher competence as assessors

Since different terms are used in literature to describe the ability to assess, such varied terminologies are contextualised with regard to this study towards clarifying teacher competence as assessors. Concepts and terminology considered in this regard, include assessment as ability, assessment as capability, assessment as literacy, and assessment as competence.

The ability to assess

From a hermeneutical phenomenological perspective, the essential phenomenon under scrutiny in this study is the student teacher's ability *to assess*. This ability enables the student teacher to become an effective teacher in reality, as was indicated in the literature related to competence in general terms, and presented above, in section 2.2.1.

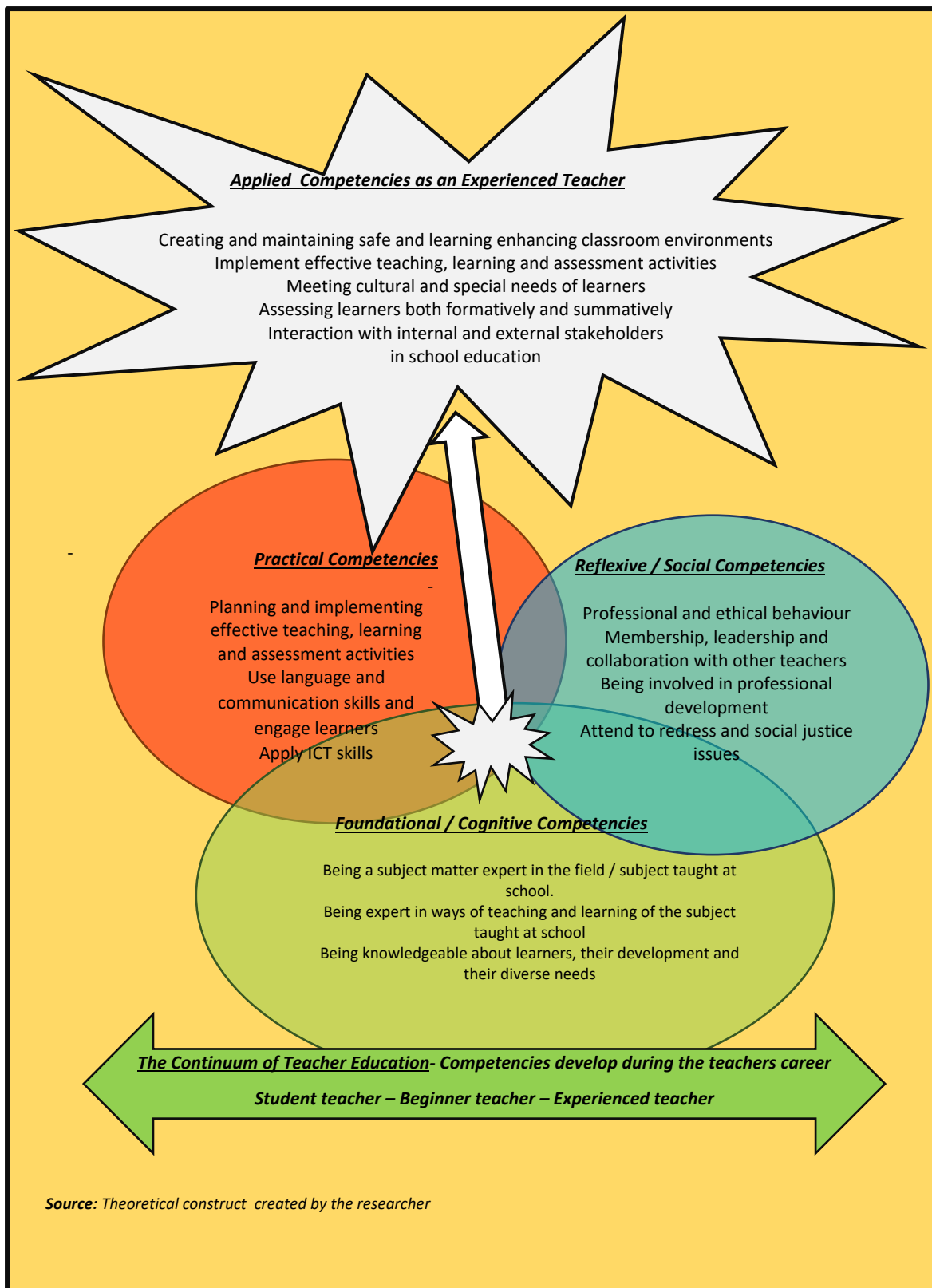


Figure 6: A Theoretical Construct for Understanding Teacher Competence

This ability is integrated with several other abilities such as having subject matter and pedagogical expertise, the ability to teach others, organisational ability, the ability to lead learners, the ability to give pastoral support, to be an example to the younger generation, among others. Initial teacher education programmes are designed to educate student teachers in this regard. From a phenomenological perspective, the abilities referred to above reveal themselves in the lives of successful and effective teachers in schools. An overview of literature reveals that three constructs are used to describe the ability to assess in an educational context: assessment capability, assessment literacy and assessment competence.

The ability to assess is described as capability. Brookhart (2016) and Coombs (2017) argue that a primary influence on the assessment capabilities of teacher candidates involves approaches to assessment adopted by teacher educators. A student teacher's repertoire of effective teaching and assessment practices depends upon the beliefs about learning and the approach to assessment espoused by the respective teacher using higher order thinking skills. Authors such as Koenen et al (2015) and Struyven and De Meyst (2010) use the term 'capability' to describe the ability to assess. In this sense, assessment capability is relevant to student teachers, school teachers as well as teacher educators.

Several authors such as Webb (2002), White (2009), DeLuca et al. (2013), The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) (2013), Ogan-Bekiroglu and Suzuk (2014), Gareis and Grant (2015), Xu and Brown (2016), Popham (2018) and Joachim et al. (2020) regard the ability to assess learners effectively in school context as assessment literacy where such literacy is regarded as the essential assessment-related knowledge, skills, and competencies that all teachers should be prepared to apply in classrooms throughout all grades of schooling. They argue that teacher education programs should equip candidates with such literacy, or ability to assess their learners effectively. CAEP (2013) contends that, to be effective, teachers must apply assessment literacy and continuously build their capacity in this area. Assessment literacy is clarified using the concept "competencies".

The ability to assess is understood as competence by several authors such as Department of Basic Education (2012), Government Gazette 20844 (2000), SAQA

(2012), Sakai (2014), Caena (2015), Van Schalkwyk and Wydeman (2015), Michigan Assessment Consortium (2015), and AITSL (2011). In similar vein to the definition provided by SAQA (2012) and as applied to educators by Van Schalkwyk and Wydeman (2015), the ability to assess is understood as an applied competence.

In this study, assessment capability, assessment competence and assessment literacy are regarded as synonymous phrases because all three phrases describe the ability to assess learners effectively and all three include four domains of competence, namely knowledge, skills, values and attitudes and application as integrated and inter-related components of assessment capability/assessment competence/assessment literacy. Critically, in the view of this researcher, all three phrases place emphasis on the ability to *apply* relevant knowledge, skills and values and attitudes in classroom (operational) contexts. However, as this study is focused on assessing student teachers in a distance education context in South Africa, the qualification framework relevant to teacher education in this context is underpinned by an outcomes-based and competency model for qualifying students. This researcher prefers the construct “competence” when the ability to assess is considered.

A wide variety of documents and policies containing descriptions of student teachers’ and or teachers’ competence as assessors are consulted. Assessment as competence, however, was described in terms of other terminology such as assessment capability and assessment literacy, as indicated above. A summary of the lists of teacher competences presented here reveals how teachers’ competence as assessors is understood internationally. Table 2.2 provides such a summary. These views describe assessor competence in general terms as related to other competencies which teachers should have and student teachers should develop, during ITE. These views provide a background for understanding more detailed views regarding specific competencies required from teachers as assessors and was used to create a conceptual framework for understanding teacher competence as assessors to be used in this study.

Analysis of the descriptions of teacher competence as assessors reveals that some descriptions are brief, and give an alternative term for assessment only. From such a vague description, it is apparent that teacher competence as assessors refers to

assessment as evaluation of student learning. Some descriptions are relatively short statements describing the competence in general terms and refer to assessment as an integral component of a wider construct of teacher competence.

For example, structured, well-organised knowledge frameworks about curricula, educational theories, and assessment are supported by effective knowledge management strategies, and the teacher as guide of learning and development processes of assessment for learning and of learning. Other descriptions regard competence as assessor as processes with purposes; to assess, provide feedback and report on student learning, and the teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the decision-making of both teachers and learners.

One description seems to focus on the essence of assessment, to be able to assess learners in reliable and varied ways, as well as being able to use the results of assessment to improve teaching and learning. Another describes the competence as assessor in terms of a detailed list of related abilities and processes or teacher activities, the ability to integrate a variety of assessment modes, listen to learners and give feedback, identify and remediate learners' difficulties, keep records and communicate progress, demonstrate an awareness of national and school learning outcomes of learners, and use objective criterion-referencing to assess learners.

There seems to be no universal understanding of what teacher competence as assessor means when considering policy documents only. At the same time, several common themes or notions emerge. These are: categories of competencies foundational/cognitive, practical, reflexive/social competencies, as well as the ability to apply these to educational assessment contexts; understanding and applying assessment theory; planning assessments; using assessment methods; applying formative and summative assessment approaches; providing feedback on assessments; and administering and recording assessment results.

Table 2.2 Competence as assessors as key component for providing adequately qualified teachers Examples from several regions or countries internationally			
Country	Authority and / or Policy	Assessment as competence	Description of the assessment component
Europe	According to Caena (2014) common ground across education cultures in Europe	Regarded as one of 15 core competence requirements for teachers	Structured, well-organised knowledge frameworks (about curricula, education theories, assessment), supported by effective knowledge management strategies
Europe Example 1: Belgium (Flanders)	Flanders' teacher education (Decree of 1998)	Regarded as one of 10 functional components for beginning teachers	01. The teacher as guide of learning and development processes: Assessment for learning and of learning
Europe Example 2: Portugal	Santiago et al (2009), Scientific Council for Teacher Evaluation (2016)	Regarded as one of 12 domains for assessing teachers	Domain 5: Evaluation of student learning
USA	National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) (2013)	Regarded as one of 10 standards describing in detail expected attributes teachers (should) bring to the classroom.	Standard #6: Assessment - The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision making.
Australia	Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) (2017)	Regarded as one of 7 standards collectively providing a framework that makes clear the knowledge, practice and professional engagement required across teachers' careers.	Standard 5 – Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning
Japan	J-POSTL Japan Portfolio of Student Teacher of Languages (2013)	Regarded as descriptors for reflecting on competence as teachers	Assessment of Learning Eight (93 – 100) assessment related statements: "I can ... select procedures..., use activities..., present performances..., assess abilities..., analyse errors ..." etc.
Ghana	National Teachers' Standards for Ghana (2017)	Regarded as one of 7 clusters of standards as minimum levels of practice expected of student teachers and teachers in order to be licensed, and which all qualified teachers are expected to perform.	Assessment - The teacher: - Integrates a variety of assessment modes - Listens to learners and gives feedback. - Identifies and remediates learners' difficulties - Keeps records and communicates progress. - Demonstrates awareness of national and school learning outcomes of learners. - Uses objective criterion-referencing to assess learners.
South Africa	(MRTEQ) (2015)	Regarded as one of 11 basic competencies newly qualified teachers should be able to apply	Basic competence 9: Be able to assess learners in reliable and varied ways, as well as being able to use the results of assessment to improve teaching and learning.
South Africa	Professional Standards for Teachers (SACE) (2020)	Regarded as one of 10 standards as minimum levels of practice expected of teachers	Standard 10. Teaching involves monitoring and assessing learning.

In particular, an analysis of the descriptions of the assessment component in the documents compared in Table 2.2, reveals the following list of abilities that are understood as applied competence as assessor. These are abilities, also understood as standards in some of the documents, illustrated as applied competencies in Figure 2.7. This list was used in the qualitative document analysis done in the empirical work (refer to Annexure I, Table 6.2) to describe eight elements or standards for assessor competence.

2.2.5 A conceptual framework for understanding teacher competence as assessor

This researcher formulated a summary description of teacher competence as assessor using the theoretical constructs emanating from literature overviewed in sections 2.2.1 to 2.2.4.

Teacher competence as assessor is essentially applied competence demonstrated in a range of abilities. These include to select procedures, implement activities, monitor performances, assess learner abilities, analyse errors, use assessment tasks that give learners opportunities to show what they have learnt, and what they can do with that knowledge. They also have to guide own and learners' decision-making using assessment data, listen to learners and give feedback and feed-out, identify and remediate the difficulties faced by learners and improve teaching and learning based on areas of concern identified during assessment. These abilities are underpinned by sound subject knowledge and deep understanding of assessment theory, methods, principles, approaches and practices, and integrate a variety of assessment modes with teaching and learning. The practical competencies they demonstrate include planning and preparation for assessment, assessing learner responses, providing written and verbal feedback to learners, keeping records and communicating progress. Reflexively, they demonstrate awareness of national and school learning outcomes/intensions of learners. They display professional and ethical conduct in assessing learners, making credible and substantiated judgements, and reflecting on improving teaching and learning, and using assessment data. Most relevant to this study, teacher competence is dynamic

and develops within the teacher education continuum including student teacher, beginner teacher and experienced teacher levels, and beyond.

This framework is illustrated in Figure 7. It is clear from the conceptual framework for understanding teacher competence as assessor presented here that it is closely related to ascertaining the essence of assessment in educational context.

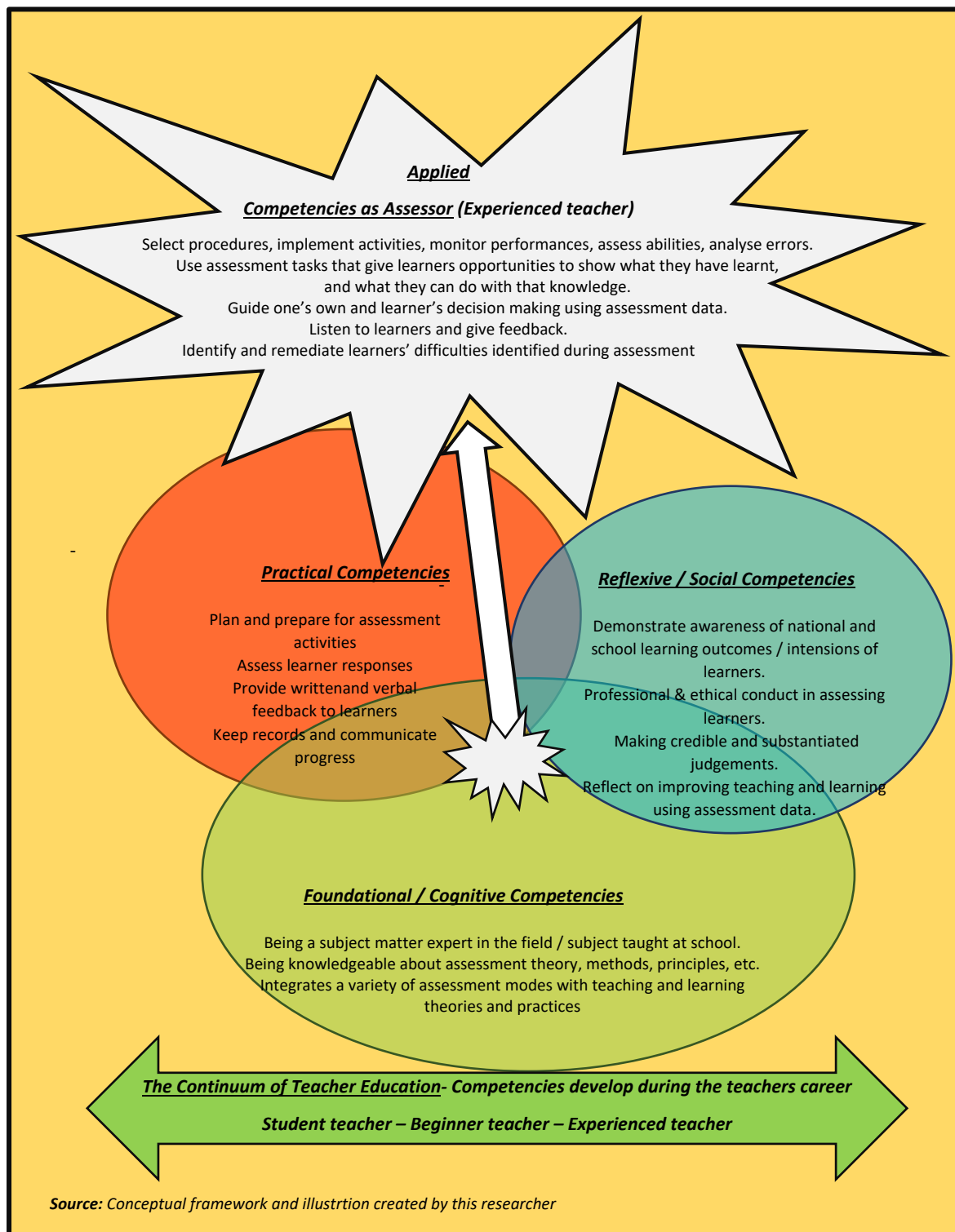


Figure 7: A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Teacher Competence as Assessors

2.3 LITERATURE OVERVIEW ON ASSESSMENT IN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

This overview starts with four prominent views regarding assessment in an educational context. There is an urgent need to focus on assessment in an educational context, the notion that assessment, teaching and learning are integrated in reality, the notion that assessment should be understood as a continuum, and that teachers and learners assess learning in effective educational contexts. These factors contextualise assessment in educational context, indicate shifts in thinking about assessment and punctuate the importance of assessment in preparing student teachers as reliable and self-confident teachers and assessors. As such, these views provide relevant and current information for deriving a conceptual framework used to underpin this study.

2.3.1 An urgent need to focus on assessment in educational context

The need to focus on assessment in an educational context is not a new idea. According to Stiggins (2008) the need to focus on assessment in an educational context justifies the publication of what he referred to as an Assessment Manifesto, in response to two reasons. First, society has changed the mission of its schools, requiring that assessment serves in important new ways, fundamentally different from the past. Second, policymakers at all levels, school leaders, the measurement community, and school communities have been guided by a set of beliefs about what role assessment ought to play in schools. These beliefs have become so dominant that teachers have been unable to recognise and understand, let alone implement, new breakthroughs about how to use assessment to promote learner success. Stiggins (2008) argues that schools must no longer be places where some succeed at learning while others tumble into inevitable failure. Rather, they must become places where all learners meet pre-specified academic achievement standards. This change is driven by the accelerating technical and ethical evolution of our society and the concomitant need for all students to master foundational life-long learning proficiencies. As a result of this change in mission, assessment practices developed to separate the successful from the unsuccessful have become defunct. The mission of assessment has turned into practices that support the learning of all learners, helping them master required standards.

Accurate, reliable and consistent classroom assessment is vital to teaching and learning, yet it remains a neglected area among many teachers. In addition, beginning teachers continue to feel unprepared to assess student learning, despite assessment education efforts during ITE. (See DeLuca and Bellara 2013; 3; Gareis and Grant, 2015; and Elturki, 2020.) This study has been undertaken in response to these needs for research in the field of educational assessment in general and the focus on competence of student teachers as assessors in particular. The notion that assessment, teaching and learning exist as an integrated reality is most relevant in understanding assessment in educational context.

2.3.2 Assessment, teaching and learning as an integrated reality

Assessment, learning and teaching exist as an integrated reality in which assessment plays a pivotal role (Elturki, 2020). Socrates used questioning (assessment) almost exclusively as a stimulating method of teaching and learning by engaging others in critical thinking through a dialogue of questions about ultimately unknowable truths (Kost and Chen: 2015). According to Gareis and Grant (2015), in modern parlance, the Socratic method is found in the use of assessment for learning. The teacher poses a question to determine the present understanding of her student, and then engages the student in a series of questions and answers with the intent of leading the student to a new understanding of the topic at hand. According to the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation in JCSEE, (2000) sound student assessment is an essential ingredient in strong educational programs. They regard it as probably the most common and pervasive aspect of student instruction. In their view, it is the primary tool for guiding student development, crossing all academic disciplines. Assessments of learners occur in all classrooms and regularly confront them and educators in a wide variety of decisive situations that affect their educational development and inform a variety of decisions in educational context. These include decisions related to, amongst others, matriculation, admissions, grading, tracking, instructional decisions for individual students, discipline, and merit awards. Other decisions served by assessments include needs such as employment decisions, evaluations of teachers, progress, school programs, school policies, and public accountability (JCSEE: 2000).

Darling-Hammond and Falk (2013) argue that engagement with performance assessment has the potential to change discussions about what teaching and learning should be among educators and indicate that this results in moving from a culture of testing to a culture of teaching. Dreyer (2014) and Dreyer & Mawela (2019) refer to assessment as the vehicle that drives teaching and learning towards the destination, namely learning success as envisaged in learning intentions. Umalusi (2018) refers to two salient purposes for assessment from a quality assurance perspective, such as: (i) to assist learners' development and improve the process of learning and teaching and (ii) to evaluate and certify competence in order to ensure qualification credibility. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) (2015) envisages ideal teachers in the South African context as playing seven distinct yet interrelated *Collective Roles of Teachers in Schools*, as everyday functions teachers will develop appropriate to their practice. The Department regards assessment as indicated earlier, as an essential feature of the teaching and learning process and competent teachers know how to integrate it into this process (DHET 2015). Both learning and teaching are unthinkable without assessment and depend on a continuous assessment approach. The intertwined nature of assessment, in learning and teaching, was sustained in this study, in spite of the focus on assessment specifically.

2.3.3 Assessment as a continuous continuum providing for various purposes

Dreyer (2014) regards continuous assessment (CASS) as a constant process of assessment that spans the entire learning process that starts when learning commences. It is ongoing throughout the process, and includes base-line, diagnostic, formative, dynamic, and summative assessment. Barnes and Gilles (2015) and Muskin (2017) affirm that continuous assessment represents an integral component of the teaching-learning process, and characterises continuous assessment along a continuum of which the two operational extremes are fully structured, planned mechanisms conducted at regular intervals over the course of a term for primarily summative purposes, generating grades to combine with the score or scores from a system's official end-of-year examinations; and unstructured and even spontaneous methods to identify learners' comprehension of a concept, content, or technique during instruction in order to make immediate adjustments to instruction and to provide

prompt precise feedback to strengthen the learning of students, both individually and in groups. The Michigan Assessment Consortium (MAC) (2015) lists several purposes or uses for assessment, including routine achievement assessment, as well as diagnostic, placement, selection, progress, aptitude and screening assessment. MAC (2015) argues that these purposes of assessment may be served along the continuum of continuous assessment. Several other authors hold similar views. These views regarding continuous assessment are illustrated in Figure 8.

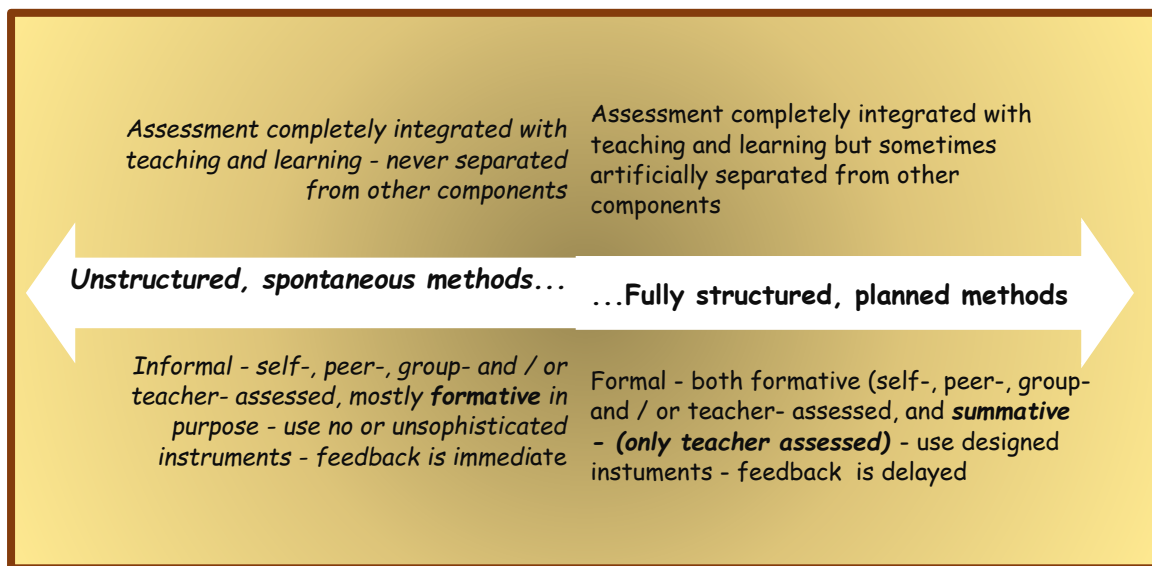


Figure 8: Continuous Assessment Continuum

Source: Own design derived from Barnes & Gilles (2015), Michigan Assessment Consortium (2015), Muskin (2017) and Dreyer & Mawela (2019)

Continuous assessment includes informal and formal baseline, diagnostic, formative, dynamic, authentic and summative assessment purposes along the continuum. The notion of assessment as a continuous process underscores the dynamic, fluid and integrated nature of assessment. The notion implies that teachers should not be regarded as the only assessors in the educational context, as was the case traditionally.

2.3.4 Teachers and learners as assessors

Boud et al. (2010), and Dreyer (2014) hold that assessment judgements, traditionally reserved for teachers, are increasingly undertaken by students (learners), and that

assessment is best done *with* learners rather than just *to* them or *by* them. According to Dreyer and Mawela (2019) learners should be allowed to assess their own performances and achievements, that of their peers, and that of themselves and their peers in group performances and achievements. Dreyer and Mawela (2019) add that teachers should not assume that learners automatically know how to do self-, peer- and group assessments and that the teacher should guide them in assessing progressively more and more accurately, objectively and fairly. In the context of this study, this notion is relevant to student teachers as assessors.

2.3.5 Assessment as process

Several views in literature on assessment focus on assessment as a process of collecting and judging or evaluating information on student/learner learning. Brown and Knight (2002) regard assessment as a systematic basis for making inferences about the learning and development of students, the processes of defining, selecting, designing, collecting, analysing, interpreting and using information to increase the learning and development of students. Sadler (2010) regards assessment in higher education contexts to be the process of forming a judgment about the quality and extent of student achievement or performance, and therefore by inference a judgment about the learning that has taken place. Walvoord (2013) regards assessment as a three-step process: articulate goals for student learning in a format that indicate what students will be able to do at the end of the program; gather information about how well students are achieving the goals; and use that information to inform decisions and actions. SAQA Unit standards describe a similar sequence, namely plan and prepare, conduct assessment, provide feedback, and review assessments (SAQA, 2015). The National Protocol for Assessment (Department of Basic Education, 2012) and SAQA (2012) regard assessment in school educational context as a process of collecting, analysing and interpreting information to assist teachers, parents and other stakeholders in making decisions or judgments about the progress of learners. Classroom assessment should provide an indication of learner achievement in the most effective and efficient manner by ensuring that adequate evidence of achievement is collected using various forms of assessment.

The references to judgements of competence in the views above are of particular relevance to this study. This study concentrates upon assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors, namely, within a competency-based approach and understanding of assessment. This does, however, not mean that other trends as found in literature are ignored in this study. References to assessment literacy rather than assessor competence and to standards rather than competence or assessment criteria, are contextualised within the primary focus of this study. The focus remains on standards and criteria for assessing student teachers' competence as assessors in a distance education context.

Dreyer and Mawela (2019: 5 and 6) regard assessment as gathering and discussing information to develop an understanding of what learner abilities are and use such understanding to improve subsequent learning and teaching. This implies that teachers establish clear, measurable expectations or outcomes of student learning, ensure that they have sufficient opportunities to achieve those outcomes, systematically gather, analyse, and interpret evidence to determine how well learning matches expectations, and revise those expectations or outcomes based on the results of their assessment.

The definitions and perspectives above focus on assessment as process, gathering and using information or evidence related to student learning, whereas other authors concentrate upon the relation among assessment, teaching and learning and the ultimate purpose or purposes of assessment. The views held by Edwards (2017) bridge these ways of understanding assessment, arguing that in the broadest sense, assessment, as a process of gathering evidence from which to make judgements and base decisions, is a part of the everyday world of all people and that it occurs naturally as part of life. Every day people make judgements and decisions based upon the weighing up of information they see as relevant for the purposes of their decisions. The use of a range of forms of assessment within education is an extension of this natural and spontaneous process and is integral to teaching and learning. Edwards (2017) argues that without assessment, teachers and students have no way of knowing whether or what learning is taking place. It is one of a teacher's most complex yet important tasks. It requires specialist knowledge and understanding.

Assessment of the competence of student teachers as assessors in this study is embedded in a fundamental understanding of assessment inextricably intertwined with learning and teaching as an extension of everyday interactions among learners and teachers in educational contexts (Velasco et al, 2014). Assessment is not an add-on to learning and teaching that has to be done to comply with policy. Glaser (1963) makes the case that assessment must be used in support of learning rather than to indicate current or past achievement. Competence in a domain grows, as evidence is displayed of a knowledge base that is increasingly coherent, principled, useful and goal-oriented.

Boud (2010 and 2020) identifies three principles of assessment in higher education in this regard, namely first, that assessment powerfully frames how students learn and what they achieve, second, that assessment essentially is the making of judgements about students' work meeting appropriate standards. Boud (2020) critically argues that while assessment responsibility was traditionally reserved for markers, examiners, and teachers, students themselves should develop the capacity to make such judgements about their own work to become effective continuing (life-long) learners and practitioners. Third, Boud (2020) indicates that assessment plays a key role in both fostering learning and the certification of students.

According to the CCSSO (2017) assessment is the productive process of monitoring, measuring, evaluating, documenting, reflecting on, and adjusting teaching and learning to ensure students reach high levels of achievement. Alexander et al (2020) argue that assessment systems need to include both formative and summative assessment processes, aligned with instructional and curricular goals and objectives. According to Popham (2006) formative assessment findings should be used as a continuous feedback loop to improve teaching and learning. Summative assessment results should be used to make final decisions about gains in knowledge and skills.

In relation to teachers' understanding of assessment purposes and practices, DeLuca et al. (2013) discern four conceptions of assessment as presented in literature and assert that teachers maintain multiple conceptions of classroom assessment. These four conceptions increase in complexity, representing a progression from a singular

emphasis on assessment as testing, to a fully integrated understanding of assessment in teaching and learning processes. These conceptions are: assessment as testing, assessment as format, assessment as purpose, and finally assessment as process. The relevance of these conceptions to this study lies in the progressive growth suggested by the authors, illustrating the complexity of assessment in an educational context.

Standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors should reflect a deep understanding of the simplicities of assessment as a natural extension of everyday decision-making using a dual process of gathering and judging evidence. Standards and criteria as understood in this study should reflect the complexities illustrated in the views presented here. Such a deep understanding enhances student teacher foundational competence and ability to reflect on practice in terms of appropriate theory, and prepares them for the complex realities of assessment in educational context. The complexities of understanding assessment include making sense of two primary approaches used in classrooms universally: formative and summative assessments.

2.3.6 Primary purposes of assessment

The complexities and multi-faceted nature of assessment are set out clearly in the views of Glaser in Gipps (1994), Glaser (1963), Boud et al. (2010), DeLuca et al. (2013), Dreyer (2014), InTASC (2017), and Dreyer and Mawela (2019) presented above. These views emphasize the challenge presented when standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context are researched and described. Such complexities are magnified when international trends with relation to assessment in educational context are considered. Most of the contributions referred to thus far in this overview of literature, emphasise two fundamental purposes of assessment: to foster, advance, assist or facilitate learning and teaching in formative assessment, and to certify or accredit learning as summative assessment.

The discourse regarding summative and formative assessment in literature should be comprehended against the backdrop of continuous assessment as an integral

component of the teaching and learning process. According to Wiliam (2014) and Lau (2016) the terminology of summative and formative assessment traces back to the work of Scriven (in Tyler et al, 1967) in educational program evaluation. He distinguished and linked formative and summative evaluation as processes leading to judgements about opportunities for improvement in ongoing activities and about the worth of a completed activity, respectively.

According to Houston and Thompson (2017) the language and practices of formative and summative/traditional assessment became the key focus of contestation between two contrasting paradigms of learning: the pushback in support of formative assessment and the “new” learning and assessment paradigm created a false dichotomy in the literature. They argue that such an apparent dichotomy continues to impede some contemporary assessment thinking and much practice.

Black and Wiliam (2009) and Barnes and Gillis (2015) propose that an assessment activity in a classroom is formative to the extent that evidence about student achievement is elicited, interpreted, and used by teachers, learners, or their peers to make decisions about the next steps in instruction that are likely to be better, or better founded, than the decisions they would have taken in the absence of the evidence that was elicited, concurring with Boud et al. (2010) and Edwards (2017) in this regard.

According to CCSSO (2013) assessment systems need to include both formative and summative assessment processes, aligned with instructional and curricular goals and objectives, where formative assessment findings should be used as a continuous feedback loop to improve teaching and learning, and summative assessment results to make final decisions about gains in knowledge and skills. Barnes and Gillis (2015) differentiate formative assessment from summative assessment claiming that the former serves the purpose of assessing learning in real-time, while the latter is intended to measure learning after instruction is complete. According to Popham (2018) and Barnes and Gillis (2015), the timing of the assessment could be used to identify assessment as formative, and adopt a conceptualisation based on its purpose, noting that formative assessment is a devised plan by which teachers and students use assessment-based evidence to continuously alter instruction and learning.

According to Tzurriel et al (1988) as well as Cho and Josol (2021) the application of formative assessment as expanded into dynamic assessment is used as a central evaluation method that not only results in simply supporting the development of a particular skill practised during such programmes. It involves teaching learners how to benefit from mediation, in teaching and facilitation of learning, in a different setting and consequently improve their cognitive performance across other domains. Dreyer (2014) emphasises that summative assessment, integral to continuous assessment, takes place at the end of a learning cycle, programme or phase, and therefore after the learning process rather than during the process, and that it determines the overall achievement and learning success of learners.

Literature suggests that the communication about assessment judgements and information or results, and the way such are used subsequent to the actual assessment event determine the formative or summative nature of assessment (Lau, 2016; Houston and Thompson, 2017; Black, 2013; Dreyer, 2014; and Edwards, 2017). The assessment event itself is therefore neither formative nor summative. The information emanating from the event may be used for formative and/or summative purposes and communicated as what Houston and Thompson (2017) refer to as feedback (formatively) and/or as feed-out (summatively). According to Muskin (2017) assessment should be fit for purpose. Clearly, in spite of being aimed at somewhat different more immediate purposes, formative or assessment for learning and summative or assessment of learning both, and indeed other kinds of assessment such as base-line, diagnostic and dynamic assessment, should be focused on the same ultimate goal - assessment must measure what matters.

The view proffered here is that an assessment event is essentially a dual process of gathering evidence of competence and judging such evidence for a variety of purposes including the award of qualifications (summative purpose) and the making of decisions about learners, learning and teaching (formative purposes). Other purposes may include determining current levels of competence (base-line purpose) or identifying barriers to learning (diagnostic purpose). In turn, this means that teachers should communicate the intended purpose to learners before, during and after the assessment event. This research project endorses the notion held by Knight (2002), Lau (2016) and Houston and Thompson (2017) that assessment events are positioned

as components of complex communication processes about learning, and that these should be focused on considerations of the qualities and utility of the judgements and information that those events produce, and of the communication that flows from them. These views seem to shift attention away from the tools or instruments of assessment, however. The methods and instruments to be used in any assessment event have to be designed or selected to serve the intended purpose/s and have to indicate clearly the relevant standards and assessment criteria relevant to the assessment task or event. Assessment standards and criteria are essential in this regard. The efficacy of the work as assessors is directly related to the appropriateness and quality of the instruments used. If the purpose of an assessment event is both formative and summative, the instruments used would provide judgements and information that may be communicated effectively as feedback to students and teachers to be used as assessment for learning, and at the same time be communicated effectively to other stakeholders and interested parties as feed-out.

Standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student-teachers as assessors in a distance education context should reflect this understanding of the relation between formative and summative assessment. Criteria designed for summative assessment apply for formative assessments. Formative assessments have to assist teaching and learning towards the same standards of learning. When assessment purposes are formative, then the criteria would indicate gaps in learners' competence and show what adjustments in teaching and learning assist in filling such gaps. When the purpose is summative, whether learners have learnt to the required standards, then criteria are used to confirm that the required level of competence (standard) was achieved, or not. The overview of literature and summary descriptions provided in sections 2.2.1 to 2.2.6 are used in this study as theoretical constructs contributing to a conceptual framework for understanding assessment underpinning this study.

2.3.7 A conceptual framework for understanding assessment in the educational context

The overview of literature presented here reveals several essential and fundamental notions related to assessment in educational context as a theoretical construct. These are integrated into one summary description of assessment in an educational context:

Assessment in educational context, understood as testing, as format, as purpose and as process, is complex, inextricably intertwined with learning and teaching, ranging from natural, unstructured, spontaneous, incidental and informal contexts to structured, planned or formal contexts as a continuous and practised as assessment as learning, assessment for learning and assessment of learning, using an essentially dual process of gathering evidence and of judging evidence of competence, usually described by means of assessment criteria, for a variety of purposes including the award of qualifications and making other decisions about learners, learning and teaching, applying, amongst others, both formative and summative assessments as complementary approaches using the same standards of learning as implied or described in the learning outcomes, learning intentions or learning objectives relevant to the learning assessed, and is most effectively done by teachers, and by learners as partners, making credible judgements and sound decisions on learners' work, performances and achievements, as well as on future teaching, learning and assessment. Such assessment judgements and decisions are communicated to learners as feedback and to other internal and external stakeholders as feed-out, using appropriate media and a variety of means including information communication technology.

This understanding of assessment in educational context is illustrated in Figure 9.

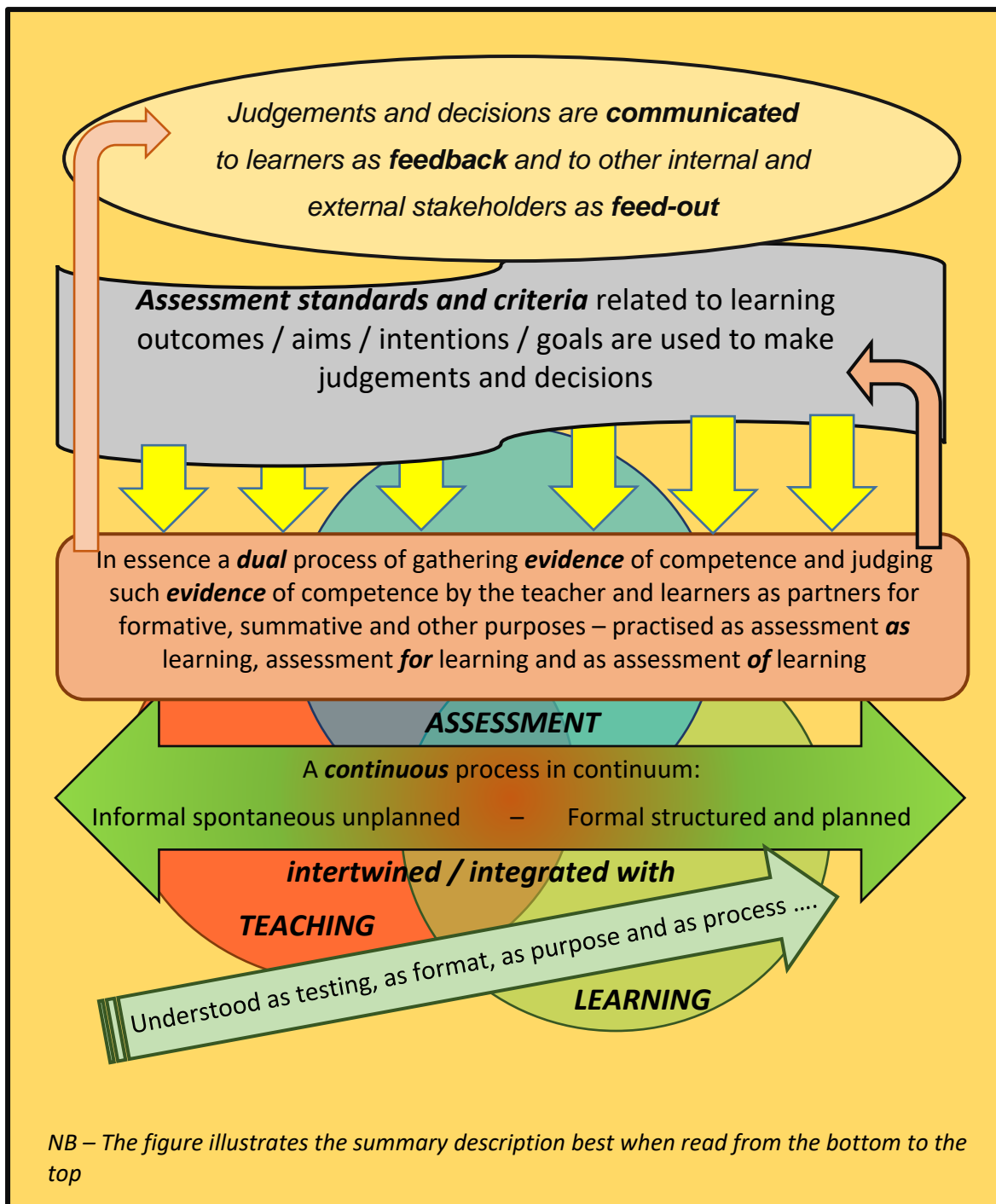


Figure 9: A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Assessment

The summary description of assessment in educational context presented and illustrated above is applicable to assessment in educational contexts universally. Two such contexts are particularly relevant to this study:

- Teachers evaluate the work done by their learners daily in the classroom and student teachers have to become competent assessors during their pre-service education, preparing them for the profession.
- Institutions of higher education tasked with preparing student teachers for the profession evaluate the competence of student teachers as assessors of learners in school contexts.

Standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as reliable and consistent assessors concentrates upon assessment done by higher distance education institutions tasked with preparing teachers for the profession and indirectly focused on the assessment of students/learners at school and done by student teachers prior to entering the profession.

2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter offers an overview of relevant literature related to two broad areas: competence in teacher education context; and assessment in educational context. First, the overview of literature revealed teacher competence as assessor to be underpinned by the notion of competence as an individual's ability to conduct tasks in a particular field with growing proficiency. Teacher competence and the competence of student teachers as assessors were clarified. Second, literature related to assessment in an educational context revealed the notion as particularly complex and intertwined with teaching and learning, being used in different contexts for a variety of purposes. The overviews of literature were used to derive two particular conceptual frameworks used in, and underpinning, this study. These are teacher competence as assessor and assessment in educational context. In the next chapter an overview of literature contextual issues related to the study is presented.

CHAPTER 3

CONTEXTUAL ISSUES IN ASSESSING THE COMPETENCE OF STUDENT TEACHERS AS ASSESSORS IN A DISTANCE EDUCATION CONTEXT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Phenomena exist in contexts. In describing context in research, Du Plessis & Kamper (2017) suggest that any overview of scholarly material pertinent to a topic being investigated should deal with the wider context in which the phenomenon exists, including relevant policy matters, as well as the current status and significance of the particular phenomenon under examination. Such a penumbral overview should include international and national trends, and start with broader issues and move toward the specific issues of the research. Bearing these guidelines in mind, the overview of literature presented here provides a perspective of the context of the study in terms of five broad issues, namely:

- Teacher education in South Africa in historical context;
- The global context in which contemporary teacher education in South Africa operates;
- The assessment of student teachers in ITE and teaching practice in general context;
- The assessment of student teachers as assessors in distance education at the UNISA College of Education context, and finally
- The implications of literature overviewed in both Chapters 2 and 3 for this study

Although the context indicated in the title of this study is distance education, this chapter presents a somewhat wider overview because assessment of student teachers is embedded in teacher education in a broad context.

3.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF TEACHER EDUCATION AND ASSESSMENT

Placier et al. (2016) identify three distinct periods to describe the history of initial teacher education in South Africa since colonisation: *The Era of Missionary Education (1910 – 1948)*, *The Era of Apartheid Education (1948 – 1994)*, and *Post-Apartheid Education (1994 onwards)*. Since the history of education in Africa originated long before the colonial era, this overview starts with an overview of education through the lens of Africanisation, Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Ubuntu, before attending to three phases identified by Placier et al. (2016): the colonial, apartheid and democratisation eras in South Africa.

3.2.1 Africanisation

Africanisation of education is most relevant to this study because the study focuses upon teacher education in South Africa. Mawela and Van Schalkwyk (in Dreyer and Mawela, 2019) assert that education in South Africa should be understood against the background of philosophical perspectives influencing and informing current policy and practice. This holds true for ITE in South Africa. Calls for the Africanisation of education imply that education practitioners within the education system should apply a sound understanding of Africanisation to the teaching, learning and assessment of learners at all levels within the system. The focus here is on providing an exploratory perspective of Africanisation in education and assessment in particular because this study attends to the competence of student teachers as assessors, specifically. Both Africanisation of education and assessment have to be viewed against three perspectives: Africanisation as decolonisation, as Indigenous Knowledge System, and as Ubuntu philosophy.

Africanisation as decolonisation

According to Makgoba (1997), Seepe (2000) and Wydeman (2004), Africanisation is about affirming African culture and identity in a world community, and not about expelling Europeans and their culture, but rather placing the African worldview at the centre of the analysis. Africanisation implies the decolonising of our minds, our education, or curricula, and our institutions. Le Grange (2018) states that

Africanisation implies decolonising which in turn suggests Africanisation. According to Mbembe (2016) Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986) poses key questions that centre upon what Africanisation actually deals with. Several of these key questions are relevant to this study. The first question is: What should "new Africans" do with the inherited colonial education system that inculcated an inherited sense of inferiority in the African mind. Another question is: How should Africans view themselves and their universe. Africanisation means that education and assessment, including the assessment of student teachers, should break away from notions of occidental superiority. Africanisation should promote an African worldview and knowledge system that is in no way inferior or subservient to other knowledge systems. Wydeman (2004) argues that one way to Africanise the curriculum is to focus on indigenous knowledge systems (IKS).

Africanisation as Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)

Redmond and Lock (2015) argue that in many nations there is a mandate for teachers to embed indigenous perspectives in the teaching of all curriculum areas because indigenous populations have deep, rich and diverse traditional knowledge and ways of working linked to their identity and communities. They propose that, within teacher preparation programmes, pre-service teachers need to develop an understanding of world views and perspectives, and how they influence the ways that students learn and interact with their world. Redmond and Lock (2015) propose that how a teacher views the world may be different from the various learners in his/her classroom and that this difference is not to be feared, but rather embraced in how topics are taken up and appreciated by all learners in the classroom. Higgs (2008) refers to earlier work by Fafunwa (1974), Fajana (1986), Okeke (1982) and Boateng (1990) and contends that in the African context, a great deal of philosophical and educational material is embedded in the oral traditions and customs of the African people. An important aspect of indigenous African education discourse is, therefore, concerned with teaching children an oral tradition as well as helping them to learn to use language creatively and effectively. According to Higgs (2012) an educated person in an African context is an individual who is honest, respectable, and skilled and cooperative and conforming to the social order of the day. These views concur strongly with Ubuntu philosophy.

Ubuntu

According to Beets and Le Grange (2005) the concept of Ubuntu originates from the Xhosa proverbial expression: *umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye Bantu*, which conveys meaning related to more personal essences of Ubuntu. In the view of Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1999, 2004, and in Hailey, 2008:1), [in Ubuntu] “my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in what is yours”, [it is] “the essence of being human...”, and ...“I am human because I belong. It speaks about wholeness. It speaks about compassion.” The Ubuntu philosophy makes a difference in understanding education, including the assessment of learners and student teachers (Oviawe, 2016).

In an educational context, Mosana (2002) reflects on life in traditional, pre-colonial times and describes Ubuntu in such a traditional context as respect, fellowship, sharing and human dignity. According to Mosana (2002), in this context, children are regarded as an integral part of the society and are cared for with love and kindness: parents and other adults in the community take joint responsibility to look after and educate them. Bhengu (2013) argues that the point of departure of Ubuntu thinkers is that a person is a person through other persons, and that this qualifies human dignity in terms of which people are to be treated. According to Mosana (2002) the values referred to above are clearly illustrated and lived in the traditional practice of *majagano* or *letsema*, (Shona and Sepedi terms respectively) which refer to commitment of members of different clans or families in a traditional community to work in one another's fields voluntarily and freely whenever they are in need of such assistance, for whatever reasons. In true Ubuntu tradition, when harvest time comes, the yields are shared with those who helped. The question emerging from the views above is: what are the implications of Africanisation, IKS and Ubuntu philosophies for this study?

Implications of Africanisation, IKS and Ubuntu for teacher education in South Africa

From an educational point of view, according to Higgs (2016) the problem with humanism is that it specifies a norm of what it means to be human before the actual manifestation of instances of humanity. This indicates that at a fundamental level humanism, and by implication Ubuntu, treat education as socialization, as a process of the insertion of newcomers into a pre-existing order of humanity. As a result,

humanism is unable to grasp the uniqueness of each individual human being. It can only think of each newcomer as an instance of a human essence that has already been specified and is already known in advance. The question that needs to be asked is: does the African concept of Ubuntu transcend the problem of humanism, or is humanism the norm of the African experience of Ubuntu? This study does not attempt to answer this question in direct terms, but rather poses two more specific questions: First, how can standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context contribute to Africanisation, IKS and Ubuntu philosophy? Second, how can Africanisation, IKS and Ubuntu enhance standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context? Refer to practical considerations below, as well as Chapter 6, conclusions (iv) and (vi) in 6.4.4 in this regard.

Practical considerations related to assessment in education in an African context

Mawela and van Schalkwyk (in Dreyer and Mawela, 2019) reflect upon assessment in traditional African contexts, tentatively applying some Africanisation/IKS and Ubuntu principles to current assessment contexts in school education in South Africa. Beets and Le Grange (2005) observe that several values are seen from an African worldview as the characteristics of the ideal person and capture the spirit in which assessment might be conducted: humanness or warmth, tolerance, understanding, peace, humanity, and caring, or empathy, sympathy, helpfulness, and friendliness, sharing or giving unconditionally, redistribution, and compassion or love, cohesion, informality, forgiving, spontaneity, and respect or dignity and order. Some of these observations and arguments are presented here: assessment tasks should be inherently authentic; assessment should be focused on solving real-life problems; feedback on observed and assessed behaviour should be focused on the overall efficacy of the task performed; community value system referenced assessment needs to be considered; and standards are not negotiable.

Assessment tasks should be inherently authentic

Beets and Le Grange (2005) contend that Ubuntu adds value and ensures greater authenticity and humaneness in assessment practices and in so doing contributes to the Africanising of assessment practices. According to Mawela and Van Schalkwyk

(in Dreyer and Mawela, 2019), assessment tasks were inherently authentic because teaching and learning were almost without exception authentic. All tasks were meaningful, worthwhile, real-world tasks which were performed in the everyday contexts of community life to solve everyday challenges and problems. Beets and Le Grange (2005) indicate that 'assessment' is derived from the Latin verb 'assidere' which means 'to sit beside'. This historic sense reveals deeper involvement of a teacher in the development and progress of learners; including guidance, recognition of the learner's context, reflection on own practice and continued support as s/he walks beside the learner on the road to achieving expected outcomes. Teachers need 'to sit beside' the learner and in that way they 'sit beside' the community/society. Sincerity and level of commitment express the individual teacher's/lecturer's humanity in relation to all those s/he serves. The implication for teacher education is clear. According to Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000) teachers, and by implication student teachers, should have an in-depth understanding of, and the ability to design, authentic assessment tasks and ways to implement such tasks in school contexts. (See Chapter 2, Figure 2.7.) Assessment should be focused on relevant knowledge skills and values to solve or alleviate real-life problems and challenges.

According to Mawela and Van Schalkwyk (in Dreyer and Mawela, 2019) this notion is in direct opposition to knowledge generation for its own sake, as practised in some western educational contexts. In the Ubuntu context, knowledge, skills, values and attitudes as well as the ability to apply these, were acquired over a long period of time. The notion of an external assessment agency did not exist. The implication is that student teachers should be well versed in the value systems, customs, rituals and taboos of the South African communities they intend to serve as educators (Cf. Beets and Le Grange, 2005) underscoring the values that underpin Ubuntu education and assessment. In the face of the challenges posed in this regard in the current and future era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Refer to par 3.2 below), student teachers and teachers should be living examples of how to remain true to traditional community or Ubuntu) values and, at the same time be successful in a fast changing and value-shifting context. Beets and Le Grange (2005) point out that Ubuntu enhances relations between teachers and learners as well as among learners, in this regard.

Feedback on observed behaviour is focused on the overall efficacy of a performance. Ubuntu-informed assessment feedback is focused on more than comment on performance. Beets and Le Grange (2005) argue that in the process of assessment, sharing of information is crucial, with parents or other stakeholders, and more particularly with the learner. How sharing takes place is crucial. It has to occur in more supportive and humane ways so that the dignity of learners and their communities is edified and respected. To achieve this, teachers and lecturers are required to commit themselves to understanding the culture of the immediate environment of learners. According to Mawela and Van Schalkwyk (in Dreyer and Mawela, 2019), in contexts where learners learned practical skills, the ultimate assessment feedback is invariably more pertinent in terms of the applied competence being demonstrated effectively and observed as such, rather than the lack, presence or excess of any particular aspect. An example illustrating the views above is found in the expression: "*Molamo ge o tla bolaya o kwala marethong!*" used in sePedi culture. Literally translated this means: "This knobkierie will kill – I feel in my hand!" The father would say this when a well-crafted knobkierie is handed to him by his son who crafted it. The father can feel, by merely holding the knobkierie in his hand and testing it by swinging it about lightly without throwing it, that it would be effective, even before actually using it, when hunting. The expression is used today, in a variety of contexts, for example, at the graduation ceremony of his granddaughter, a grandfather may use it in praise singing to communicate that since the graduate was born, the grandfather believed that she would be successful. The implication for teacher education is that criterion-referencing and norm-referencing are useful, yet the ultimate test lies in performing the task, that is the applied competence, effectively, competently, and to the standards established by the community.

Community value system-referenced assessment

Ewuoso and Hall (2019) contend that in the context of Ubuntu fellowship, interconnectedness, interdependence, reconciliation, relationality, community, friendliness, harmonious relationships and other-regarding actions have special significance in evaluating the morality of an action. Ubuntu invites one to develop the self by prizing other actions. These views underpin community value system-referenced assessment, beyond norm- and criterion-referenced assessments embedded in Western knowledge systems, proposed by Mawela and Van Schalkwyk

(in Dreyer and Mawela, 2019), The implication for teacher education is that student teachers should be critical and reflective in considering assessment points of reference and identify and use such values that truly reflect the ideals and aspirations of the community, many of which are already incorporated in the policy frameworks and curriculum in South Africa. Here the seven critical cross-field outcomes in Curriculum 2005 refer currently the list of general abilities of the ideal learner in the current CAPS curriculum.

Standards are not negotiable

As far as standards of education are concerned, Mawela and Van Schalkwyk (in Dreyer and Mawela, 2019) observe that there were no formal levels or grades in the traditional educational context. According to Beets and Le Grange (2005), in Africa where lived experiences are based on communalism, assessment of/for/as learning should be informed by the socio-cultural backgrounds of learners. Throughout their lives, everyone had to work to maintain and support communal life in the village. Children progressed to more advanced tasks along a natural course of development and not according to formal grades linked directly to age, as is the case today. Mawela and Van Schalkwyk (in Dreyer and Mawela, 2019) affirm that particular standards of performance did apply in traditional Ubuntu contexts in spite of the above. The appropriate standard for any task was demonstrated by completing the task successfully in a holistic and functional sense, according to the customs of the clan or family. Failure to maintain such standards was often severely punished in spite of the otherwise caring nature of traditional community life. There is a similar tendency referred to in teaching practice context, namely, to make a final decision on a student teacher's competence in terms of deep-rooted personal beliefs and values, rather than official criteria: compare views on the complexities of assessment in teaching practice (Aspden, 2017).

Dreyer and Mawela (2019) maintain that standards of education remain a contentious issue from which we should not shy away, specifically not when we contemplate Africanising education in general, and assessment in particular. We have to bear in mind that the Department of Basic Education (2011) states that in terms of credibility, quality and efficiency the current South African school curriculum (CAPS) provides an education that is comparable in quality, breadth and depth to those of other countries.

In spite of these intentions, several indicators of the poor state of affairs in reality, referred to by Placier (2016) and referred to in Chapter 1, section 1.1, include South African education performing poorly and lagging behind much poorer countries that spend less on education; ranking at the bottom on international assessments such as the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), World Economic Forum (WEF)'s Global Competitive Index, and a dismal average score of 10.8 % in South Africa's own Annual National Assessment (ANA), in Grade 9 mathematics, in 2014.

Such indicators of the poor state of education suggest that, although the South African education policy frameworks may have clearly set standards in policy documents, and in spite of pockets of excellence and exceptions, the system at large fails to translate such standards into reality in actual educational performances at international level. South African education has failed the well-founded principle of traditional African Ubuntu education: adherence to the standards set is not negotiable and that deviation from such standards is not tolerated.

Concluding remarks on Africanisation of teacher education in South Africa

This study has taken into account values and principles held in traditional African education, and in so doing contributed to efforts to Africanise education in South Africa. Teacher education in South Africa should be a flag bearer for Africanisation, IKS and Ubuntu in order to meet the challenges of the current technologically advanced and fast-changing era and global village in which we now live, educate, teach, learn and assess. At the same time, teacher education should heed concerns related to romanticising Africanisation, IKS and Ubuntu as a remedy for all ills in the South African teacher education system. In the context of this study, standards and criteria as understood in the study should integrate the values underpinning Africanisation. The practical implications discussed in this section are of particular value.

This overview of Africanisation, IKS and Ubuntu illustrated the deep roots of traditional African thinking and education. Contemporary education in Africa and in South Africa should, however, be understood against the backdrop of historical developments since

the traditional era before colonisation of Africa and many other parts of the world. Colonisation brought with it missionary education.

3.2.2 Missionary Education

According to Placier et al. (2016), in South Africa as in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, education was originally the business of missionary societies, until the Union of South Africa was established in 1910. According to Msila (2007) under British influence during the colonial era, mission schools were established throughout the Cape Colony to foster British culture. Colleges of education such as Lovedale and the University College of Fort Hare were established during this era under British influence. According to Christie (1988), Msila (2007), Lajewski (2010), Smith (2018) and Placier et al. (2016) the aim of missionaries was to spread the Christian Gospel to 'heathen' populations by setting up institutions where teachers were trained to inculcate Christian religion and the practical lessons and work ethics of cleanliness, industry and discipline. Many teachers were brought into schools and colleges in the Cape colony for these purposes.

In the British missionary system, teacher training was based on the perception of public education as the training of the 'lower orders' in the habits of good order, respect for property and authority. The British used education as a way of spreading their language and traditions in the colony and as a means of social control, according to Christie (1988) Msila, (2007), Placier et al. (2016), Abdi (2003), Msila (2007) and Lajewski (2010) who aver that the British government and the missionaries used education to attain their political goals, *ipso facto*, designed and implemented for the exploitation of black South Africans.

3.2.3 The Era of Apartheid (1948 –1994)

According to Placier et al. (2016) the National Party introduced the policy known as apartheid in 1948, which prescribed a rigid demarcation between Whites and Non-Whites and which set a ceiling to the development of the Non-White population. Apartheid education was a practice of maintaining the status quo and of preserving the master-servant relation between whites and Africans (Msila, 2007; Placier et al.,

2016). Government suppressed good teacher education for Africans and brought all teacher education under control of Department of Bantu Education and did not recognize for purposes of employment the qualifications of teachers trained elsewhere. Two policies that particularly affected teacher education during apartheid were the Bantu Education Act and the Christian National Education (CNE) policy. According to Lajewski (2010) and Placier et al. (2016) the Bantu Education Act mandated that teachers were to be trained in segregated institutions and that Bantu teachers should be prepared only to the level required to prepare so-called Bantu children for their place in society. The Act outlawed schools for Africans unless such schools were government registered.

According to Lajewski (2010), Placier et al. (2016) and Smith (2018) Christian National Education (CNE) policy was the Nationalist Party position that embodied principles of its ideology of no mixing of languages, cultures, religions and races. The policy ensured that education of 'the Bantu' was inferior, while white Calvinist Nationalists had a final say in all race matters as 'the superior partner' (See Placier et al., 2016, and Smith, 2018). The CNE overtly privileged the religious beliefs of Afrikaner churches together with Afrikaner nationalism as the basis of the apartheid education system, insisting on racial separation and mother-tongue schooling. Msila (2007) argues that apartheid schools were doing exactly what John Holt, a deschooler, claims: schools sort and indoctrinate students instead of liberating them. Apartheid education separated white children from black children, and divided white children into separate camps such as Afrikaner and English-speaking whites. Black learners felt the damaging effects of the CNE, as it was destructive to the white learner as well. Abdi (2003) indicates that when the indigenous peoples were conquered during the colonial era and dominated during the Apartheid era, they lost their political independence and were divorced from their independent and self-sustaining economic base: they were culturally dominated by education that served as an agent of colonisation.

According to Lajewski (2010) the Apartheid government made an attempt to improve teacher qualification standards among black teachers during the latter years of Apartheid by providing salary incentives for upgrading teacher qualifications. According to Pendlebury (1998) teacher education was dispersed over a large number of education authorities, differentiated along racial and ethnic lines, resulting in huge

disparities across institutions and sectors, evident in almost every aspect of teacher education, including institutional funding, modes of governance, administrative capacity, professional staff appointments and career paths, and curricula and resources such as libraries and laboratories. Pendlebury (1998) indicates that while a few institutions built and maintained a reputation for excellence, the system as a whole paid little heed to concerns of quality, efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

In summary, teacher education during the Apartheid era was fragmented, segregated, unequal and dysfunctional and served Apartheid policy and ideology; resulting in gross disparities across institutions and sectors, and providing teacher education programmes. The result was, for the majority black population, school education of dismally poor quality, and a legacy of inferior education that was almost impossible to remedy. The same applied to teacher education for blacks. The poor quality of teacher education prior to democratisation in South Africa and beyond as indicated by Pendlebury (1998) and Chisholm (2012), cannot be ignored in this study. It is aimed at making some contribution to improving the quality of teacher education in the post-Apartheid era by focusing on uniform standards for all student teachers in distance education on entry into the profession. The development of teacher education since democratisation needs to be considered when a study of this nature is undertaken.

3.2.4 The Era of Post-Apartheid Teacher Education (1994 onwards)

This study was conducted more than 25 years after 1994, in the post-Apartheid era of the history of teacher education in South Africa. Smith (2018) holds that the period before and immediately after democracy in 1994 saw numerous changes within the education core in South Africa in terms of policy development. Placier et al. (2016) indicate that the transition from apartheid to democracy in 1994 may well have been momentous but the harms of Apartheid continue to distort education and manifest several indicators of the poor state of affairs, as indicated earlier.

Teacher education during the post-Apartheid era faced serious challenges. Deacon (2010) and Maserow (2015) note that 23 universities were tasked to train teachers in the post-apartheid era, however their capacities were questionable, because so few

offered a full suite of educational programmes. Soudien (in Lajewski, 2010) notes that the democratic government's decision to regulate the teacher education programme throughout the country contributed to the loss in the prestige formerly attached to the teacher profession and to a reduction in the number of youths interested to become teachers. With regard to the dismantling of the former colleges of education and incorporating these into Higher Education (Jansen, 2004 and Maserow, 2015) the drastic structural changes in teacher education resulted in a decline of student teacher enrolments, the loss of teacher educator staff and the lowering of morale in institutions offering teacher education. Lajewski (in Maserow, 2015) indicates that major structural adjustments in teacher education have been made to heal the country's deeply segregated education system but that the changes were so wide-ranging and sudden that they overwhelmed the institutions and individuals involved. HEIs were unable to cope with the sudden incorporation of teacher education colleges and received little implementation support. The haste of such changes led to poorly planned education initiatives that failed to increase the quality or equality of the education system.

In spite of these challenges, the democratic government succeeded in establishing a uniform framework. Instead, however, of being trained according to an assigned race, all educators are required to attain a Bachelor of Education (B Ed) or a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) regarded as necessary for entry into the profession. Two specific policies are currently used for addressing the problems emanating from the legacy of Apartheid in teacher education (Placier et al., 2016), and in overhauling a highly segregated, dysfunctional and costly education system by building a foundation of quality and equality in South African schools (Lajewski 2010):

- The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (ISPFTED or SPF) 2011–2025 and
- The Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications 2011 (MRTEQ).

According to Placier et al. (2016), the SPF is the DHET's master plan for teacher education, addressing the critical issues of teacher demand, supply and utilisation and the preparation and development of teachers. As indicated in Chapter 1, MRTEQ

(Department of Basic Education, 2015) spells out what is required of newly qualified teachers. (See the analysis of these policies in Section 3.3 later in this chapter.)

In concluding this section on historical context, the relevance of the historical context of this study is apparent. As indicated in Chapter, section 1.1, teacher education in South Africa is in need of improving, maintaining and expanding quality education in the 21st century. There is an urgent need for competent teachers in a growing school system, in spite of the legacy of the past, simply because the challenges of the future are immense, and more pertinent than the legacies of the past. Describing standards and criteria as understood in this study contributes to such an ambitious task. This description is concentrated upon assessment of student teachers during initial teacher education in distance education, specifically. The global context within which teacher education in South Africa is situated, needs to be considered.

3.3 TEACHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

The wide world is shrinking into an ever smaller and electronically more close-knit community or global village. UNESCO (2002) as well as Ell et al. (2017) indicate that complex system-wide influences impact on teacher learning during initial teacher education. Globalisation affects ITE assessment of student teachers as much as all other areas. The South African Department of Basic Education (2017a) suggests that initial teacher education (ITE) should be understood within an international or global context. The impact of major global influences on ITE in South Africa includes the Sustainable Development Goals, Clean Energy State Alliance, the United Nations Development Programme, the 4th Industrial Revolution, and the need for Skills for the 21st century, are significant. These global influences have a particular impact on, and implications for, initial teacher education in South Africa.

The Department of Basic Education (2017b) indicates that the ITE system in South Africa comprises four entities: the teaching profession, SACE and the Teacher Unions, the Departments of Education, the Universities and the Schools. In response to such global contexts, these constituents have to create and sustain an ITE system in terms of size, shape and substance. According to the Department of Basic Education (2017) at the heart of the system lies the need to focus on the quality of ITE. Three strategies

are identified by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) (2011) given the global context. As indicated in Chapter 1, these are: Growing ITE to an appropriate size in order to provide sufficient numbers of new teachers for the SA education system; developing and directing resources and capacity to ensure that teachers with appropriate specialisations graduate in appropriate numbers; and strengthening, supporting and monitoring teacher education to ensure newly qualified teachers meet realistic expectations. This study contributes towards the latter of the strategies indicated. Clearly described standards and criteria for assessing student teachers as assessors strengthens, supports and monitors teacher education.

The DBE and DHET (2011) identify four global challenges affecting ITE in South Africa. A fifth factor, the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic, needs to be considered. ITE and these contemporary global challenges are discussed next.

Although considerable research has been conducted into the global context in which South African education, including ITE exists, a brief account of some of the contemporary global challenges is provided to clarify the global context, as illustrated in Figure 3.1 above. These challenges include the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the Clean Energy State Alliance (CESA) formulated by the United Nations (n.d.), United Nations Development Programme (UNPD) (n.d.); the 4th Industrial Revolution and the so-called 21st century skills.

Global context: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

According to the United Nations Development Programme (n.d.), the Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. The goals interconnect and in order to leave no-one behind, it is important that each goal and target is achieved by 2030. Seventeen such goals have been formulated by the programme, and in spite of these being interconnected, the following aspects emerge clearly:

GOAL 4: QUALITY EDUCATION. Obtaining a quality education is the foundation to improving people's lives and sustainable development.

GOAL 8: DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH. Sustainable economic growth will require societies to create the conditions that allow people to have quality jobs.

GOAL 10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES. To reduce inequalities, policies should be universal in principle, paying attention to the needs of disadvantaged and marginalised populations.

Goal 4 is directly related to this study, whereas, in the view of the researcher, Goal 8 is dependent on quality education. In the context of South African teacher education, the importance of Goal 10 aiming at reduced inequalities will remain relevant until the playing field is levelled for all by means of transformation. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) prepare teachers for their profession, not being focused on the SDGs specifically. This study is in a position to make a contribution to some of these factors by incorporating related issues in ITE programmes, as the teaching profession is, after all, the mother of all professions. In the global context, issues around clean energy affect ITE in South Africa, albeit in an indirect manner.

Global context: Clean Energy State Alliance (CESA)

According to the Clean Energy Group (CEG), (n.d.) the organisation manages and staffs the Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA), a national non-profit consortium of public funders and agencies working together to accelerate clean energy deployment. Although CESA is active in the USA mostly, in the global village, the urgency regarding clean energy is a priority in South African education and ITE contexts. Although this challenge may seem far removed from ITE in general and the standards and criteria for assessing student teachers, in particular, not taking account of this alliance leaves student teachers ill-informed and under-educated. They lose the benefits of clean energy over traditional and harmful ways of providing energy, irrespective of the subjects, or school phases they are preparing to teach. This is particularly urgent as the South African energy supply is predominantly provided by means of coal-burning technologies with a proven negative impact on the natural and human environments. The United Nations Development Programme has, according to the Department of Basic Education (2017) more direct impact on ITE in South Africa.

Global Context: United Nations Development Programme (UNPD)

According to the UNPD (n.d.) the mission of the programme states that, on the ground in about 170 countries and territories, the UNDP works to eradicate poverty while protecting the planet. The organisation helps countries develop strong policies, skills, partnerships and institutions so they can sustain their progress. Initial Teacher Education in South Africa contributes to such policies, skills, partnerships and institutions, given the high levels of unemployment and poverty existing in the country, provided the significance of the UNDP is incorporated in such ITE programmes. Where the CESA and UNDP may seem removed from ITE, issues relating to the 4th Industrial Revolution and the 21st Century Skills are clearly and directly relevant to this study.

Global context: The 4th Industrial Revolution

In answering the question: “What is the Fourth Industrial Revolution?”, Marr (2018) indicates that it describes the exponential changes to the way we live, work and relate to one another due to the adoption of cyber-physical systems, the Internet of Things and the Internet of Systems. It is expected to affect all disciplines, industries, and economies, as smart technologies in factories and workplaces are established. Connected machines will interact, visualise the entire production chain and make decisions autonomously; in some ways it is an extension of the computerisation of the 3rd Industrial Revolution (Digital Revolution). Due to the velocity, scope and systems impact of the changes of the fourth revolution, it is being considered a distinct era. It is disrupting almost every industry in every country and creating massive change in a non-linear way at unprecedented speed (Marr, 2018 and Elbeck, 2018).

On how to prepare for, and respond to, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, Schwab (2016), founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum in *The Fourth Industrial Revolution* states what it means and how to respond to it. Schwab provides perspective by concluding that the Fourth Industrial Revolution may indeed have the potential to “robotize” humanity. Fundamental human traits, however, such as creativity, empathy, and stewardship can lift humanity into a new collective and moral consciousness based on a shared sense of destiny. It is obvious that ITE has a major role to play in creating and sustaining creativity, empathy and stewardship in teachers and in learners.

The effects of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the need for contributing towards sustainability are applicable to higher education, particularly in distance education (DE) institutions, which might be more dependent on emerging technologies. Bell et al. (2017) indicate in this regard that in Europe, Higher Education (HE) is experiencing disruption from technologies, demographics, the globalising world and longer life expectancy. They argue that ...”as students become ‘everyone’ and learning becomes ‘all the time’, DE institutions have an opportunity to contribute to some of the SDGs”. Those related to sustainable development and lifestyles are particularly achievable, in spite of many disruptions and barriers to overcome in this regard. Bell et al. (2017) conclude that the struggle of the major distance education universities in Europe to master the challenges of technology and the need to meet the aspirations of the student body in a rapidly changing world suggest that issues of global sustainability will move up in the distance education agenda.

In the South African context, ITE cannot escape the realities of the 4th Industrial Revolution, preparing learners at school for professions and jobs that do not yet exist and for using tools and technologies that are changing quickly and that make their future promising yet fraught with peril at the same time. ITE is different from what teacher educators provided traditionally. The implications for assessment of learners in this context, and the assessment of the competence of student teachers as assessors in these contexts are particularly relevant to this study. (See the assessment of 21st Century Skills discussed below, in this regard).

Global context: 21st Century Skills

There is a universal concern that in the global village children need improved twenty-first century skills (21st century skills). According to Kivunjal (2014), Bialik & Fadel (2015), Yorganci (2016), and Swanson (2018), the next generation will not be able to participate in the global economy, or be successful in further learning, career and life without these new skills. The question is: “What exactly, are these 21st century skills?”. Hanover Research in Envision Blog (n.d.), Bland and Gareis (2018), and Kivunjal (2014) identify four critical areas for development, also referred to as the Four C’s: Collaboration and teamwork; Communication, Creativity and innovation; and Critical thinking and problem solving, as well as other related critical skills for success,

namely, flexibility and adaptability, global and cultural awareness, information literacy, leadership, civic literacy and citizenship, oral and written communication skills, social responsibility and ethics, technology literacy, and initiative. Kivunjal (2014) concludes that these skills represent a new approach to teaching, learning and assessment, a new pedagogical paradigm, suited to the Digital Age of today rather than the Industrial Age of yesterday. Lock et al (2018) argue that current assessment trends in higher education include assessment for learning, assessment for progress monitoring, and assessment of students' 21st century competencies (e.g., critical thinking, creativity and innovation, and problem-solving), which have become increasingly important in the globalised workplaces (Valtonen et al 2021). There are competing goals related to the assessment movement. On one hand, it is important to assess student learning and mastery of 21st century competencies that is assessment for learning, while teacher education institutions have an obligation to ensure and prove that graduates are competent professionals, able to apply assessment for accountability, i.e., assessment of learning. Educators who teach in a Faculty of Education, are tasked to set exemplary standards for assessment practice both for learning and accountability. These two obligations are relevant to this study.

21st century skills are incorporated in the South African curriculum context. The Critical Cross-field Outcomes (CCFO's) in Curriculum 2005 and what are now presented in CAPS (Department of Basic Education, 2012) among the general aims of the curriculum, describing the kind of learner envisaged by the curriculum, clearly indicate that these seven outcomes, aims or abilities, were informed by, and resemble the set of 21st Century Skills listed earlier. According to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (2012) the national curriculum (Grade R-12) aims to produce learners who are able to display and apply seven abilities, skills or values, that are congruent with the 21st Century Skills:

1. Identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking;
2. Work effectively as individuals and with others as members of a team;
3. Organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively;
4. Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information;

5. Communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in various modes;
6. Use science and technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others; and
7. Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

Source: Department of Basic Education (2012).

These abilities were originally regarded as the seven Critical Cross-field Outcomes. SAQA (2012) contextualise these by identifying several principles underpinning the application of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), including the sub-framework for Higher Education and Training. One of these principles dictates that the seven Critical Cross-field Outcomes, as features of the ideal learner or citizen, are embedded in the level descriptors for qualifications on the framework. Programmes designed for qualifications at all levels of the NQF including teacher education qualifications in Higher Education and Training, should incorporate these seven outcomes or abilities as integral values and skills to be taught and assessed. Whether or not these values and skills are taught and assessed adequately in South African schools and universities is an area of concern in the context of this study. (See Conclusion (iii) in 6.4.4 and recommendation 6.6.3.)

21st Century Skills in assessment context

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2016) emphasizes the well-documented dictum: “What gets measured gets taught”, in the light of which three overarching points are made: first, standardised tests, summative assessments such as national exit level examinations must measure both core subject skills and 21st century skills. Teacher educators and teachers must measure what is valued or it will not be taught. Second, these assessments must be balanced with effective classroom assessments to measure the full range of students’ skills in a timely way. Classroom assessments must be strengthened and integrated with the instructional process to reinforce learning, provide immediate feedback and help learners learn core subjects and 21st century skills, in South African curriculum contexts the seven general aims indicated above. Third, the fact that the 4Cs, reflected in a South African context as some of the

seven general aims of the curriculum, are not directly and formally assessed in terms of the National Protocol for Assessment (NPA) (2012) and Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), (2012), has arguably led to a lack of focus on these values and skills in many South African schools and classrooms. Barrie (2013) argues in this regard that assessment is often a challenge when it comes to curriculum renewal and that issues that are really important, such as critical thinking, and any of the abilities referred to above, are hard to measure or assess. Barrie (2013) argues that often many educators do not attempt to, and consequently, even more concerning, fail to teach these skills and abilities, rendering both teachers and learners ill prepared for the future, given the global context we live in today. This view represents the inverse of “What gets measured, gets taught”, “What is not measured is often not taught” (See Conclusion (v) in 6.4.4 and Recommendation 6.6.) In addition to the concerns already indicated, the global context of today changed in a relatively short time span when the COVID-19 Pandemic spread over the world. The impact of the pandemic needs to be considered when the context in which teachers are educated is considered.

The impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic rendered campus education unmanageable, leading to blended delivery approaches in both school and higher education. According to the International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC) (2020) as well as Fraser-Moleketi (2021), research revealed the magnitude of the impact on universities’ operations resulting from government lockdowns across the world. The resulting guarantee of continuity of teaching activities through distance education, bibliographic and technological resources as well as socio-emotional support to the university community, provided platforms as an obvious way to cope and highlights a digital divide that demonstrates pervasive access inequalities owing to the mass closure of institutions and the subsequent phased-in return of students and staff. All indications are that in spite of world-wide vaccination programmes, the new normal had not yet crystallised in many spheres, including education and higher education. ITE in South Africa needs to adapt to the anticipated new normal.

Having considered broad global challenges facing ITE in South Africa, the focus is narrowed to consider the constituents of the South African ITE systems, as understood by the Department of Basic Education (2017b), within the context of this study.

Constituents of the South African Initial Teacher Education System

In the description provided by the DBE and the DBHET (2011) universities, schools, departments of education and the profession (SACE and the Teacher Unions), are the four major constituents of the ITE system in South Africa, contributing to the size, shape and substance of the system, focused on the heart of the system, namely to provide quality ITE in the South African context, incorporating the opportunities and challenges implied in the global context. All constituents have a part to play if the three strategies formulated by the Department of Basic Education (2017a), are to grow to an appropriate size, developing and directing resources and capacity appropriately, and ensuring newly qualified teachers to meet realistic expectations. Of these four constituents, the universities, including UNISA in particular, are most relevant to this study. The focus of this overview of literature shifts to considering the context in which assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors during ITE, including Teaching Practice (TP), is conducted.

3.4 ASSESSING STUDENT TEACHERS DURING ITE AND TEACHING PRACTICE

Assessment of student teachers during ITE universally includes assessment of student teachers during coursework on theoretical/foundational aspects, including formal assessments such as written assignments, research work, tests and examinations, and the assessment of practical and applied competence during teaching practice (TP). Teaching practice, referred to as practicum in literature, is universally regarded as one of the most critical components of effective teacher education programmes, and constitutes what is referred to in literature also, as Work Integrated Learning (WIL) (Scholtz, 2020, and Nel & Marais, 2021). Teaching practice refers to the component of initial teacher education programmes in which a student teacher spends time in an educational setting for the purpose of developing skills as a teacher, applying the knowledge gained in their course work to the everyday context of teaching and learning at school. Haigh & Ell (2014) and Aspden (2017) indicate that

the practicum socialises the student teacher into the teaching profession. Boud (2010, 2020), Aspden (2017), Dreyer and Mawela (2019), Higgs (2014) and Scholtz (2020) agree that assessment of WIL or TP is inherently and fundamentally a core component of teaching practice utilised to determine the progress of the student teacher, the need for support and guidance, and ultimately the readiness to enter the teaching profession upon graduation. This overview of literature related to the assessment of student teachers during teaching practice includes views related to:

- Assessing the practice immeasurables
- The essential nature of teaching practice
- The triad relation - student teacher, mentor teacher and university assessor.
- Assessment methods used during teaching practice, and
- Complexities related to the assessment during teaching practice

3.4.1 Assessing the teaching practice immeasurables

Higgs (2014) asserts that students and educators in work-integrated learning (WIL), by implication also teaching practice in the context of this study, face challenges related to learning and assessment of what she terms 'practice immeasurables'. Higgs argues that student assessment focuses on the overt aspects of practice that are readily observable and measurable: educators need to look at those aspects of practice which are less observable and less measurable, particularly by typical assessment tools, because the immeasurables of practice are deep, fundamental, and critical aspects of successful, professional and person-centered practice. The immeasurables of practice are defined by Higgs (2014: 257) as " ... those typically deep aspects of practice that are impossible or difficult to measure and, at times, to articulate. They are often deliberately or inherently hidden and undisclosed, they are often marginalised, they are essentially invisible, unobserved or unspoken, they can be complex and hard to articulate and they are difficult to name."

Assessment of student teachers during TP is challenged in this way as well and therefore the assessment of such immeasurables is most relevant to this study. With

regard to assessing such immeasurable practices, Higgs (2014) proposes several considerations:

- (i) to bear in mind that many professional capabilities and attributes are difficult to measure. (See Barrie, 2013 on the tendency not to assess such abilities, referred to earlier); to reduce a complex capability to one or some parts of the capability, but not on all, being vastly inadequate (e.g., in the context of this study, a student teacher's appearance as a measure of professionalism);
- (ii) that the assessor's judgement inherently contributes a greater dimension in such assessments than empirically precise measurements (Refer to Aspden's (2017) views that every assessor of student teachers during TP has his/her own personal beliefs of what constitutes a 'good teacher', in spite of standards and criteria and guidelines provided by the institution, in this regard); and these capabilities not being readily separable in practice nor in the assessment of practice.

Higgs (2014) argues that objective and criterion measures of largely immeasurable abilities and performances are problematic to perform and indeed, undesirable. To assess the immeasurable, demands re-interpreting assessment and developing approaches that redefine best assessment practice and 'measure up' to the rich reality of professional practice itself rather than just trying to measure it. This researcher finds problematic and somewhat illogical, Higgs's (2014) assertion that the immeasurables of practice are deep, fundamental, and critical aspects of successful, professional and person-centered practice, and that the more easily assessable aspects by implication not being equally deep, fundamental and critical aspects of practice. The very nature and purpose of WIL (or TP in the context of this study) is to develop and assess the applied competence of student teachers as assessors which is obviously more challenging than assessing the student teachers' knowledge and understanding of assessment theory (foundational competence), or ability to plan an assessment (practical and reflexive competencies). This study is aimed at both the measurable and immeasurable in spite of a criterion approach not being ideal for the assessment of the immeasurables.

Higgs (2014) indicates that in the midst of learning and being assessed on core learning outcomes, the invisibles or immeasurables of practice are typically put aside as being: 'too difficult (to learn and assess)', 'too early' (and thus left to post-graduation learning) and 'up to the student – or graduate' (rather than being the educator's or institution's responsibility). Higgs adds that to avoid these essential and difficult aspects of learning and practice, is to leave them 'up to chance' or 'hope they work out'. The author regards this as not good enough and not the practice of professionalism.

This study took into account the notion of immeasurables in teaching practice specifically, as well as the need to re-interpret assessment approaches in this regard. This researcher is of the opinion, however, that the arguments of Higgs do not sufficiently take into account professional development as a career-long practice as espoused in educational context as the teacher education continuum. The tendency to put aside such immeasurables as being 'too early' (Higgs, 2014) and left to post-graduation learning, has little merit in the context of teacher education. What is immeasurable during ITE becomes measurable once the student teacher is appointed, simply because the real situation allows for real-life practice while teaching practice, can never be as real. The context in which TP is conducted often contributes to immeasurability, over and above immeasurability as defined by Higgs. If an associate teacher (receiving teacher) does not allow the student teacher to assess learners formally, as is often the case, the ability to assess is immeasurable because of the context, and not because the ability to assess *per se*, is immeasurable. This study emphasises describing two sets of standards and criteria: one for student teachers and one for beginner teachers. This ensures that there is congruence and articulation in the development of competence. It seems that the costs to students, the institution and other stakeholders, of doing WIL, as well as the lack of resources in most professional preparation systems, are not sufficiently accounted for in the arguments presented by Higgs (2014).

The second argument regarding the unsuitability of criterion-based assessment approaches such as supported in this study has some merit. One of the outcomes of this study is to distinguish between the measurable and the immeasurable and describe standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as

assessors, particularly focused on the measurable competencies of student teachers, including those that are difficult to assess. This study addresses the issue of assessing the immeasurable but not as its main focus. Standards and criteria as envisaged in this study are understood as standards-and-criteria-in-context, including a “measureable-immeasurable practice” context. The need to consider the nature of assessment of teaching practice grew clearer when the immeasurables were considered.

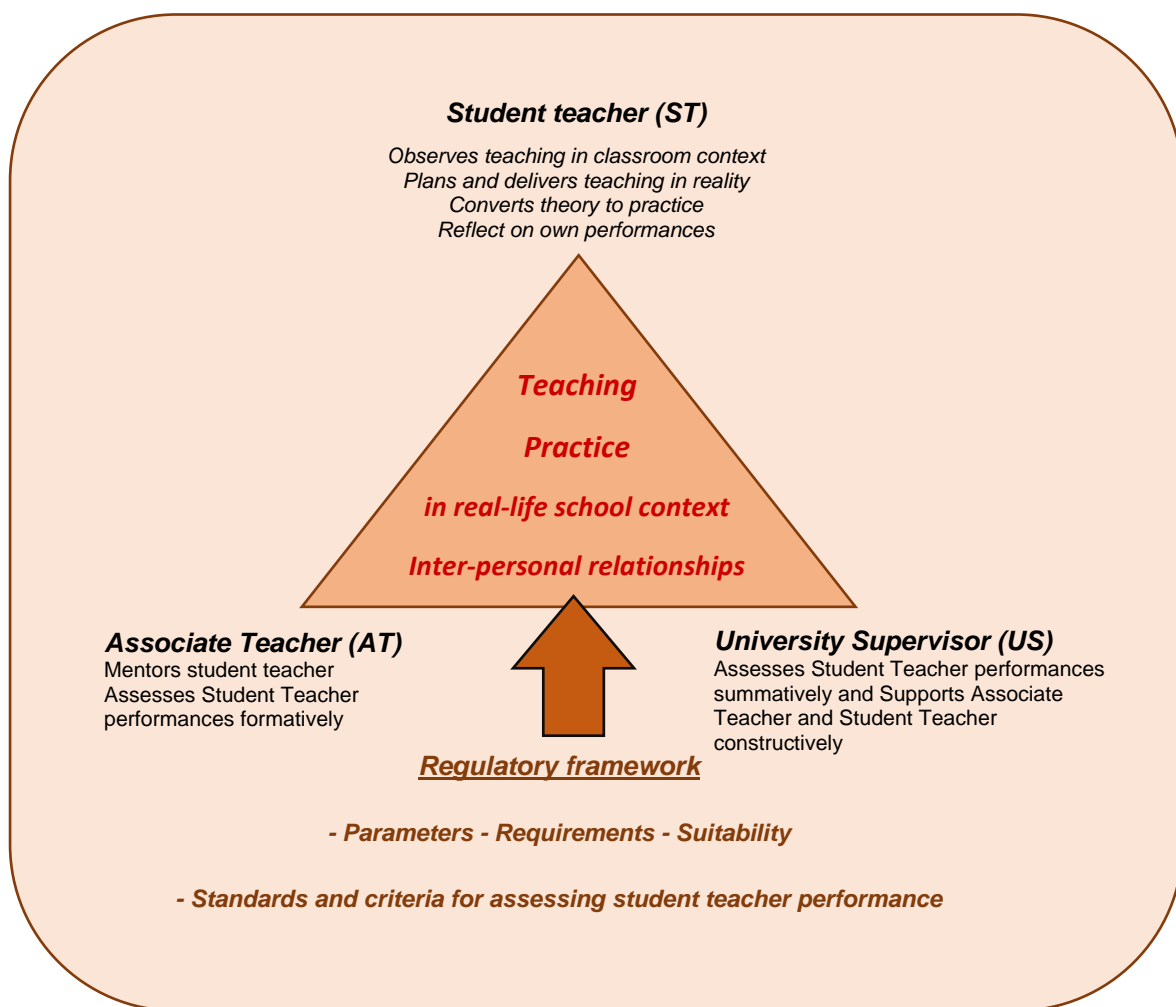
3.4.2 The nature of assessment of teaching practice

According to Aspden (2017) and Sern et al (2017) assessment in ITE during practice teaching plays a dual role with both formative and summative purposes. ITE is high stakes assessment because the outcomes of assessment have significant implications for the student teacher’s subsequent career given extensive time, commitment and finances invested, both by the student teacher and the accrediting institution. Aspden (2017) indicates that for ITE institutions, a higher education political climate of increased accountability and greater demand for outcomes-based evidence of programme efficacy means that continued public funding may depend on assessment outcomes. Critically, she adds that assessment of teaching practice is problematic and not always fair and appropriate for the student teacher. Issues include bias, reliability and consistency, issues that need to be addressed and resolved if the integrity of the assessment system and the qualifications awarded are to be protected, as well as the role of gatekeeper are to be regarded as credible by the public. (See the arguments regarding the immeasurable practice referred to above.) This study of standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors enhances reliability, fairness and consequently credibility of assessment, addressing these concerns in part. The use of standards and criteria for assessing student teachers during ITE occurs within a particular interpersonal context, particularly during student practice that is in the teaching practice triad. The complex nature of assessing teaching practice is essentially bound up in the triad relation among student teacher, associate teacher and the university supervisor.

3.4.3 Teaching practice in triad context

Several authors such as Aglazor (2017), Aspden (2017), and Abdullah & Mirza (2020) refer to the key role-players in teaching practice: the student teacher, the receiving/cooperating teacher/associate teacher-mentor and the university supervisor/lecturer or assessor as a triad (See Figure 10 below).

The figure illustrates interpersonal relations among the three members in the triad. Aspden (2017) argues that a teaching practice or practicum triad exists within the HEI's regulatory framework for the ITE programme delivered



Source: Adapted from: Aglazor, (2017), Aspden, (2017), and Abdullah & Mirza, (2020)

Figure 10: Teaching Practice Triad

These regulations determine the parameters for length, location and number of teaching practice sessions required, specifying that students be supported by a qualified and registered associate teacher within the same subject area as the student teacher, and visited by a suitable representative of the teacher education institution. The framework in most cases includes assessment guidelines and assessment standards and criteria based on the relevant teacher standards applicable in the particular education system. Within this regulatory framework, the triad acts and interacts, each member contributing to the assessment of the student teacher in different ways.

Abdullah and Mirza, (2020) and Aspden (2017) regard the roles of the members as follows: a student teacher is the student enrolled in the ITE and teaching practice programme who is doing classroom teaching in the school where s/he is placed. The associate teacher is the teacher in the school whose subject/s are taught by the student teacher during teaching practice, mentoring the student teacher, facilitating the student teacher's teaching practice work. The associate teacher signs off on all assignments before the student teacher submits these to the ITE institution. The third member of the triad is the university representative or supervisor who supervises and formally assesses the student teacher's competence as a teacher in line with institution standards, criteria, and requirements. Aspden (2017) argues that the interactions and relations among members in the triad manifest in the assessment of the student teacher, and that teaching practice assessment is essentially a social and relational act (Haigh & Ell, 2014) that is influenced by the interpersonal relations of the triad members as principal participants in assessment. Aspden (2017) describes the "rules of engagement" within the triad relation as manifested in assessment and refers to these as a regulatory framework designed and used by university supervisors to regulate interactions among triad members. Such a framework usually provides for a variety of assessment methods to be applied.

3.4.4 Assessment methods for assessing student teachers during TP

Yahya et al. (2017) categorise assessment methods used for assessing student teachers during teaching practice as indicated in Table 3.1.

The table provides an overview of methods used in teaching practice assessment internationally. Traditional methods, according to Yahya et al. (2017), lack, to a varying extent, credibility and objectivity, and over time alternative and more authentic methods have been suggested to enhance the credibility of assessment of teaching practice. In applying any of the methods listed, the use of assessment standards and criteria is a common thread, and most relevant to this study. Whether criteria currently used in this regard are formulated in such a way that these solicit the actual evidence required for sound judgements remains a concern.

Table 3.1 Assessment methods used in teaching practice	
<i>Traditional Assessment Methods</i>	<i>Authentic Assessment Methods</i>
Classroom Observation	Portfolio and e-Portfolio Assessment
Peer-assessment	Exhibitions of performance
Self-assessment	Problem-based enquiries
Log books	Self-reflection Journals
	Case studies
<i>Source: Higgs (2014), Yahya et al (2017), van Wyk (2017) and Scholtz (2020)</i>	

This study alleviates this concern by describing clear standards and criteria. When teaching practice is assessed using any of the above methods, irrespective of the strengths and weaknesses of any one or any combination of methods used, the reality remains that the task is indeed complex and challenging to all parties involved. Such complexities are considered next.

3.4.5 Complexities of assessing student teachers during teaching practice

Literature reveals assessment of student teachers during ITE and specifically during teaching practice, as a complex, multifaceted and challenging reality. Two main concerns are highlighted: the multiple purposes or responsibilities required of assessment of student teachers creating several challenges, as well as the complexities of the actual process of assessing student teachers during teaching practice. Brunker et al. (2019) refer to assessment serving multiple, competing responsibilities: measurement, accountability, learning and curriculum. They argue that many approaches have been utilised in assessment to focus on the most important goal, namely improved learning, including criterion referenced assessment

(CRA), as well as what the authors term 'learning focused assessment' to encompass both formative assessment as well as assessment for learning, conceptually. At the same time, they argue that the rise of accountability driven reforms has renewed emphasis on assessment for measurement giving rise to standardisation. The demand in Initial Teacher Education (ITE), as curriculum, that student teachers learn through assessment how to utilise assessment processes in their own practice, is in danger of being derailed when learning is not the focus of assessment. Meeting the needs of the roles of assessment for learning, accountability, measurement, as pedagogy and as curriculum problematised the assessment in ITE as an inherently challenging and complex reality. Prioritising these needs seems challenging.

This study has to take into account the challenges of multiple competing responsibilities assigned to ITE and contributes to the field by focusing the assessment of student teachers on the essence of their competence, irrespective of the purpose of assessment. In such a perspective, standards and criteria for assessing student teachers remain relevant and contribute to more effective ITE including teaching practice, irrespective of the purpose for assessment, conceptually or otherwise.

Like Brunker et al, Aspden (2017:128) argues that assessment of teaching practice must "weave together elements of supportive guidance for the student, alongside judgements as to the achievement of expected competencies and ultimately, gate-keeping into the profession of teaching." In illuminating these challenges, Aspden (2017) studied the way in which the assessment of teaching practice was enacted by triad members, namely student teacher, associate teacher and teacher educator, highlighting the complexity of the actual assessment act, the influencing variables that shaped the assessment experience, and the way in which such experiences were both institutionalised and individualised. Some of her findings, including interpretations, are presented here to overview some of the complexities of assessing student teachers during teaching practice, the role of assessment criteria in this regard remaining the issue of concern, in the context of this study. Aspden (2017) indicates that the social and relational nature of teaching practice assessment adds to the complexity of the assessment process and decision-making, even when institutional guidelines and standards and criteria are used. Aspden (2017) identifies several notions in this regard: that assessment is essentially a relational act; that in student teacher assessment,

there is a need to perform and to please; that in such assessment there is the silencing of voices; and that there is a hierarchy of power in assessment. Aspden (2017) emphasises the notion of answering an essential and central question when student teachers are assessed during teaching practice. Although all these notions describe the context in which standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers are used, the latter of these notions is most relevant to this study. The notion is directly related to the practical application of standards and criteria in assessing student teachers' competence as assessors, as indicated in section 3.4.6 below. Appropriate use of assessment criteria is crucial when designed by ITE institutions to guide the assessment processes of student teachers during teaching practice. If such criteria are designed as a set of clear statements indicating exactly what is expected of student teachers during ITE, including teaching practice, and are communicated to members of the triad in advance to enhance transparency and credibility, more credible judgements may be expected, especially when all three parties 'buy in' to such standards and criteria. Aspden (2017) found the use of such criteria had less effect than expected, especially when the essential central question in assessing student teachers during teaching practice, is considered.

3.4.6 The central assessment question

Aspden (2017) argues that although institutional standards and criteria do play a role in the assessment process, the individual expectations of the assessors are equally, if not more significant, than standards and criteria provided by the institution in determining assessment decision-making. Personal expectations and qualities are much less transparent and visible to the student teacher. (See Higgs, 2014 regarding assessor judgements being made on a greater dimension than that described in a set of criteria, in this regard.) Aspden (2017) indicates that despite a clear set of criteria provided by the institution, every assessor carries an internal measure of what they considered to be a 'good teacher', and their own checklist of qualities that they looked for in the student teacher. Such qualities are usually not necessarily explicitly articulated to student teachers: they represent the personally-held system of beliefs, values and principles that forms the assessor's implicit understanding of teaching, and, in the context of this study, of assessment of learners. Associate teachers and teacher educators are able to articulate a range of qualities that they wish to see

evident in the student teacher, and these may or may not be congruent with the institution guidelines, standards and criteria. Yet, the sentinel, essential and central question that underpins their assessment decision is: 'Would I want this person teaching children, or ... my children, or ... my grand-children?'; or 'Would I be happy when this person teaches alongside me? or; 'Would I employ this person as a teacher at our school?' Aspden (2017) concludes that an institution provides standards, criteria and indicators which are helpful in explaining the rationale for their choice, especially if there are concerns about the student's competence but the question remains: 'Would I want this person teaching children?'. The notion of assessing the immeasurable (Higgs, 2014) needs to be borne in mind here. Assessors have their own reference points for making assessment judgements that may or may not reflect the assessment criteria presented by the institution, and student teachers at times find it difficult to understand the judgements made. Assessment practices, as described and observed, rely extensively on the professional judgements of both associate teacher and teacher educator, albeit enacted within the context of supportive, professional growth-oriented relations. A reliance on professional judgement has persistent issues related to the shared understanding of assessment guidelines and transparency around the grounds that assessors use in their judgements.

The implications of this notion are twofold. First, standards and criteria for assessing student competence should holistically describe what associate teachers and teacher educators regard as a 'good teacher' and a 'good assessor'. Second, both associate and student teachers in the triad should 'buy in' to such a description, not by means of conformity, but preferably by means of conviction. Standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors may provide a platform for discussing and establishing commitment towards congruent notions of a 'good assessor' in this regard, as well as making the immeasurable more measurable.

According to Higgs (2014) and Maclellan (in Aspden, 2017), there is a need for greater transparency in the assessment of teaching practice in order to attenuate the challenges that result both from individual assessor influences and institutional constraints. Institutional guidelines, standards and criteria create an image of assessment that is more objective than it is in practice. According to Aspden (2017), discussion that acknowledges how subjective the assessment process is, and of what

supports greater understanding of, and attention to, both interpersonal and intrapersonal influences on assessment, would appear to be of value. Engaging with sensitive, unattractive and often silenced issues in an authentic and human manner has merit (Higgs, 2014). If standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors can contribute to such an acknowledgement and better understanding of the interpersonal and intrapersonal relations related to the assessment of student teachers, progress toward more credible assessment of student teachers will be made.

This study bears in mind the complexities of the interpersonal relations in the teaching practice triad. It is complicated by the notion of assessing the immeasurable practice. In order to contribute to more effective, more transparent and more credible assessment of student teachers in general, and as assessors in particular, care is needed. It seems that the use of standards and criteria for assessing student teacher competence would be most effective if these, as a set of standards and criteria, corresponds well with the personal beliefs of associate and student teachers within the triad. When these describe student competence, they must not be a set of related and listed abilities or competencies, but rather a holistic description of the so-called 'good teacher', or as in the case of this study the 'good assessor'. These thoughts conclude the overview of some of the complexities of assessing student competence during teaching practice. A clear view of assessing teacher competence within the contemporary context of teacher education in South Africa is demanded. An indication of the universities offering ITE in South Africa is given next.

3.5 SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES OFFERING ITE

According to the Department of Basic Education (2017a) all universities in South Africa, including The University of South Africa (UNISA) provide initial teacher education. According to Prinsloo (2009) UNISA is one of the mega-universities in the world and the largest in Africa. Ngubane-Mokiwa, (2017) as well as the UNISA website (2021) indicate current student headcount beyond 400 000. Prinsloo (2009), Gerber (2019) and UNISA's website (2021) indicate that it is the only dedicated comprehensive distance education provider in South Africa. The College of Education of UNISA is of particular relevance as it is the only HEI that provides ITE in distance

education as single mode of delivery in particular. The College of Education provides its students, staff, and communities with a range of learning opportunities and knowledge through a variety of formal and non-formal Open and Distance Learning programmes. According to UNISA's College of Education website (2021) it is responsible for the initial professional education and training of close to 50% of all teachers in South Africa. This study is focused on the College of Education at the University of South Africa (UNISA) as the largest provider of teachers in the country. The policy context in which the college functions, is presented next.

Four policies related to teacher education are relevant to this study and are overviewed. These are the Strategic Planning Map for the Teacher Education and Development Strategic Planning Framework (2011/12 – 2025/26) developed by the Departments of Basic Education and the Department of Higher Education and Training (2011); the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (DHET, 2011); the Level Descriptions for the National Qualifications Framework (SAQA, 2012), and the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) (DHET: 2014).

3.5.1 Strategic Planning Map for the Teacher Education and Development Strategic Planning Framework (2011/12 – 2025/26)

According to the Strategic Planning Map for the Teacher Education and Development Strategic Planning Framework (2011/12– 2025/26) (Departments of Basic Education & Higher Education and Training, 2011), abbreviated to SPM, the intended outcome of the plan, and the broad groups of associated outputs, as well as the institutions responsible for leading such outputs, are laid out. Four outputs are envisaged in the policy, namely to improve the quality of teacher education and development in order to improve the quality of teachers and teaching; identifying and addressing teacher development needs and attracting high-achieving school-leavers; enhancing teacher support at local level; and enhancing an expanded and accessible formal teacher education system is established.

Departments of Basic Education & Higher Education and Training (2011) regard teacher quality as an area that needs attention, and indicate that The Policy on the

Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ) defines standards at a generic level for all teacher education qualifications, in line with the requirements of the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF): more specific standards need to be developed that relate to the areas of expertise in which teachers need to specialise. This study contributes to meeting these ambitious goals by describing standards and criteria that make assessment of student teachers more accessible, specifically with regards to their competence as assessors.

3.5.2 Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ) (DHET, 2015)

According to MRTEQ (DHET, 2015) the primary purpose of all Initial Teacher Education (ITE) qualifications is to certify that the holder has specialised as a beginner teacher in a specific phase and/or subject. The MRTEQ position is that by explicitly placing knowledge, reflection, connection, synthesis and research in the foreground, integrated and applied knowledge give renewed emphasis to what is to be learned, and how it is to be learned. Six dimensions of teacher education for a globalised world, the first two being specifically prioritised are indicated: disciplinary, pedagogical, practical, work-integrated, fundamental and, situational learning (Department of Higher Education and Training (2015:7). This takes into account all six of these dimensions of teacher education as competence as assessors integrates these dimensions in assessment practice prior to entering the profession. Standards and criteria related to the foundational competence of student teachers as assessors need to reflect all aspects in these six dimensions directly related to assessment in a school context.

In Appendix C of the MRTEQ, (DHET: 2015:53) the Basic Competences of a Beginner Teacher are indicated. Competencies 1 to 8 as well as 10 and 11 are given here in abbreviated form, while competence 9 is emphasised in italics and bold and given *verbatim*, as the ability to assess is the focus of this study. Newly qualified (beginner teachers) must:

1. have a sound subject knowledge;

2. know how to teach their subject(s) including how to select, determine the sequence and pace content in accordance with both subject and learner needs;
3. know who their learners are and how they learn;
4. communicate effectively in order to mediate learning;
5. have highly developed literacy, numeracy and Information Technology (IT) skills;
6. be knowledgeable about the school curriculum and be able to plan and design suitable learning programmes;
7. understand diversity in the South African context and include all learners;
8. be able to manage classrooms effectively across diverse contexts in order to ensure a conducive learning environment;
9. ***be able to assess learners in reliable and varied ways, as well as being able to use the results of assessment to improve teaching and learning***
10. have a positive work ethic, display appropriate values and conduct themselves in a manner that befits, enhances and develops the teaching profession;
11. be able to reflect critically, in theoretically informed ways, on their own practice in order to constantly improve it and adapt it to evolving circumstances.

The ability to assess is the core concern of this study. Yet it is important not to view any of the abilities in isolation. This is clearly illustrated in the description of assessor ability, aptly indicating the integrated nature of assessment, teaching and learning. The basic competencies for beginner teachers are the focus of two qualifications offered by UNISA College of Education within a higher education context.

3.5.3 Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) (DHET: 2014).

In terms of the qualification framework, this study focuses on two ITE programmes provided to student teachers by the College of Education of UNISA, namely the Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) and the B Ed. Both these qualifications are registered in terms of the regulations pertaining to the NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS ACT, 2008 (ACT NO. 67 OF 2008) HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS SUB-FRAMEWORK (HEQSF) of the Council on Higher Education as published in Government Gazette No. 819 17 October 2014 (DHET: 2014). According to the DHET

(2014:6), the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is a single integrated system for the "classification, registration, publication and articulation of quality-assured national qualifications", as indicated in Section 4 of the NQF Act, 2008 (Act No 67 of 2008). It comprises, as specified in Section 7 of the NQF Act, three co-ordinated qualifications sub-frameworks:

- General and Further Education and Training, contemplated in the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, 2001 (Act 58 of 2001) overseen by *Umalusi*. (Own emphasis).
- Higher Education, contemplated in the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act 101 of 1997) overseen by the *Council on Higher Education (CHE)*. (Own emphasis).
- Trades and Occupations, contemplated in the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act 97 of 1998) overseen by the *Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO)*.

(DHET, 2014:6)

The purposes for the qualifications relevant to this study, namely the Bachelor in Education (B Ed) degree and the Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) are indicated below. Refer to DHET (2011, 2014) and UNISA Website (2021).

Table 3.2 Purposes of the B Ed and PGCE Qualifications	
B Ed – at NQF Level 7	PGCE – at NQF Level 7
<p>Purpose</p> <p>Provide a well-rounded education that equips graduates with the required subject content knowledge base; educational theory; and methodology that will enable them to demonstrate competence and responsibility as academically and professionally qualified beginner teachers. The learning programme must lead to the development of all beginner competencies described in Appendix C, as minimum requirement.</p>	<p>Purpose</p> <p>The PGCE qualification is a professional 'capping' qualification for educators in schools. Teachers are members of a profession whose definitive aim is to enable systematic learning. The learning programme must lead to the development of all beginner competencies described in Appendix C, as a minimum requirement.</p>
<p>Both qualifications seek to: develop and consolidate in an integrated way appropriate disciplinary, pedagogical, practical and situational knowledge; cultivate a practical understanding of teaching and learning in a diverse range of South African schools, about educational theory, phase and subject specialisation, practice and policy; foster self-reflexivity and self-understanding among prospective</p>	

teachers; nurture commitment to the ideals of the teaching profession and an understanding of teaching as a profession; develop the professional dispositions and self-identity of student teachers as teachers; develop student teachers as active citizens and enable them to develop the dispositions of citizenship in their learners; and promote and develop the dispositions and competencies to organise learning among a diverse range of learners in diverse contexts.

Sources: DHET (2011, 2014, 2015) and UNISA Website (2021)

Read in conjunction with the competencies required of beginner teachers indicated above, it is clear that the ability to assess is a key element of both qualifications and a regulatory requirement for qualifying teachers as assessors. It clearly requires a sound understanding of the SAQA level descriptors as a fundamental aspect of the context in which student teachers are assessed in the South African context.

3.5.4 SAQA Level Descriptions

In the context of South African qualifications and, according to the SAQA website, the mission of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) is to oversee the further development and implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and advance its objectives. These objectives include creating a single integrated national framework for learning achievements and enhancing the quality of education and training. The national qualifications framework (NQF) describes ten levels at which qualifications are awarded. (See Table 3.)

SAQA (2012) contextualises the level descriptors for the NQF by describing the purpose and philosophical underpinning of the descriptors in terms of two purposes, namely to provide coherence among qualifications on the NQF and facilitate assessment of national and international comparability of qualifications, and to advance the objectives of the NQF in agreement with the three Quality Councils, the Council on Higher Education, Umalusi and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations, on the other. Such a philosophical underpinning is grounded in the construct of *Applied Competence* (own emphasis) as described in Chapter 2, Section 2.1.

SAQA (2012) indicates that the level descriptors are provided in terms of ten categories, namely Scope of knowledge, Knowledge literacy, Methods and procedures, Problem solving, Ethics and professional practice, Accessing, processing and managing information, Contexts and systems, Management of learning, and Accountability. According to SAQA (2012) definitions, contextual application, variety of contexts cover vocational, occupational, academic and professional contexts.

Table 3.3: The National Qualifications Framework		
<i>NQF Level</i>	<i>Band</i>	<i>Qualification</i>
10	Higher Education & Training	Doctorates
9		Masters Degrees
		Professional Qualifications
8		Honours Degrees
7		First Degrees
6		National Diplomas
5	National Certificates	
<i>Further Education & Training Certificate (FETC)</i>		
4	Further Education & Training	Grade 12
3		Grade 11
2		Grade 10
<i>General Education and Training Certificate (GETC)</i>		
1	General Education & Training	Grade 9 ABET 4
<i>Source: DHET: (2014)</i>		

The level descriptors are: acting as a guide for designing learning outcomes and assessment criteria; pegging a qualification on a particular level; assisting learners to gain access via RPL; making comparisons across fields; and for use in quality management of programmes.

SAQA (2012) provides the detail of every one of the ten levels, including Level 7 by describing the learning achievements or outcomes that are appropriate to every particular level of the NQF. As this study of standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in distance education is limited to initial teacher qualifications at NQF Level 7, only the descriptions of this level are presented below:

NQF Level 7: 1. Provides intellectual enrichment. 2. Enhances flexibility in changing circumstances. 3. Intensive, focused and applied specialisation required for a specific niche in the market. 4. Provides for a deep and systematic understanding of current thinking, practice, theory and methodology in an area of specialisation. 5. Well-rounded broad education which provides a knowledge base, theory and methodology of a discipline. 6. Demonstrates initiative and responsibility in an academic and professional context. 7. Principles and theories are emphasized as a basis for entry into a labour market, professional training, post-graduate studies, or professional practice in a wide range of careers. 8. Prepares for change in career paths, and 9. Provides for continuing professional development.

Source (SAQA, 2012) <http://saqa.org.za/docs/pol/>

The implication for this study is that standards and criteria describing the competence of student teachers have to be congruent with the level descriptor for NQF Level 7 qualifications.

As was indicated in section 3.4 of this chapter, according to the Department of Basic Education (2017a) all universities in South Africa, including The University of South Africa (UNISA) provide initial teacher education. As the UNISA College of Education

is the only research site for this study, the context in which student teachers are assessed at the college is considered.

3.6 THE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT TEACHERS AT UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Background and introduction

The UNISA College of Education operates within a fast-changing distance education context. Gallagher & Garret (2013) refer to the explosion of interest in all forms of open, flexible and distance education opportunities and consider Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) the forcing function behind a rapidly evolving technology-enabled revolution in higher education experiencing a mushrooming of higher quality and more interactive online degrees, targeted at “time poor students” with the experience to maximize the convenience benefits of online delivery. They argue that traditional campus-based universities also integrate technology into everything they do. Gallagher & Garret (2013:4) conclude:

“The greatest value of the disruptive education revolution led by MOOCs is that it is forcing universities to focus on their core competence for which they have long been revered and cherished. That core competence, to paraphrase Plutarch, is to kindle the fire to learn in young minds.”

The core competence referred to above applies to both distance education and campus education institutions of higher learning. In this regard, Xiao (2018) asserts that campus-based education is not the only mainstream of higher education. Both distance education (DE) and campus-based education are in the mainstream of higher education, existing side by side yet intermixing and resulting in a synergy which enables higher education to better cope with its challenges in a changing world and society. DE is part of campus-based education: it is at the centre of higher education in its own right. The background provided here describes the broader context in which the UNISA College of Education provides ITE including assessment of student teachers as assessors.

Assessing student teachers as assessors at UNISA College of Education

This study (as indicated in Chapter 1, Section 1.3) is concerned with teacher education in a distance education context in South Africa, with particular reference to UNISA as the most prominent single mode distance education provider. Being a single mode distance education provider, UNISA applies a model using Tutorial Letters as the primary means of communicating with students regarding the learning programme or qualification they are registered for. As far as the assessment of student teachers are concerned, several approaches are used. Some modules use assignments as formative assessments and an examination as summative assessment, while others prefer to use portfolios as alternative summative assessment. Others apply a continuous assessment approach where all assessment tasks culminate in a summative assessment decision. The tutorial letters for the modules relevant to this study describe these approaches and subsequently those were analysed as part of the document analysis applied as research method in this study. (See Chapter 4 section 4.3 and 4.4).

Although it is recognised that the UNISA College of Education is currently changing and adapting the approach to distance education by moving towards the use of online platforms such as Moodle, rather than the traditional tutorial letter approach, this study is focused on describing the standards and criteria for assessing student teachers as assessors in a distance education context, standards and criteria which would be applicable irrespective of the actual distance education platform being used. In addition, at the time this study was undertaken, tutorial letters provided the most valid and appropriate data relevant to the study.

The overview of literature relevant to the context in which student teachers are assessed was described in sections 3.2 to 3.4, and resulted in a framework for understanding this context.

3.7 A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT OF ASSESSING STUDENT TEACHERS COMPETENCE AS ASSESSORS

The literature overviewed in this chapter comprises a framework for understanding the context of assessing student teachers as assessors in distance education, particularly at the UNISA College of Education. This researcher derived a summary description of this framework from the detailed views in literature in this regard.

The assessment of student teachers as assessors exists within a historical-cultural context characterised by influences such as an increasing recognition of, and an insistence on, Africanisation, the legacies of colonial missionary and Apartheid education, as well as challenges related to establishing an effective education system in the era since democratisation. The global influences on teacher education include the need for contributing to international initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations Development Program and Clean Energy production. Aspects having a more direct impact include the negative and positive impact of the 4th Industrial revolution and the attainment of 21st Century Skills by the youth. These global challenges were aggravated by the outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic. This study was limited to a distance education context in South Africa in particular. The South African teacher education context provides for the assessment of student teachers as embedded in an ITE context demanding an understanding of the role of universities as providers. The roles of other components of the ITE delivery system impact on the assessment of student teachers. These role players include relevant departments of education, professional organisations such as SACE, as well as the teacher unions. These entities all operate within a policy context that has to be taken into account. Policies such as those relevant to the SPM, HEQC, MRTEQ and SAQA's level descriptors are of particular relevance providing a legal and regulatory framework within which qualifications are awarded to successful student teachers. The most relevant context, namely an assessment context exists in the use of teaching practice for competence development and assessment of student teachers. This context places particular demands on the members of the teaching practice triad as effective assessment of student teachers is dependent, amongst others, on well-functioning schools and dedicated

mentoring. Within these school and teaching practice contexts inherent influences such as the complexities of the teaching practice triad and the existence of immeasurables of teaching practice complicate effective assessment of student teachers as assessors in particular. The study included only one distance education institution, namely the UNISA College of Education applying distance education approaches yet it assesses student teachers in ways very similar to what contact mode universities in South Africa and elsewhere do, as required in policy.

A framework for understanding the context in which student teachers are assessed in the context of this study described in the overview of literature undertaken in this Chapter and summarised above, is illustrated in Figure 11.

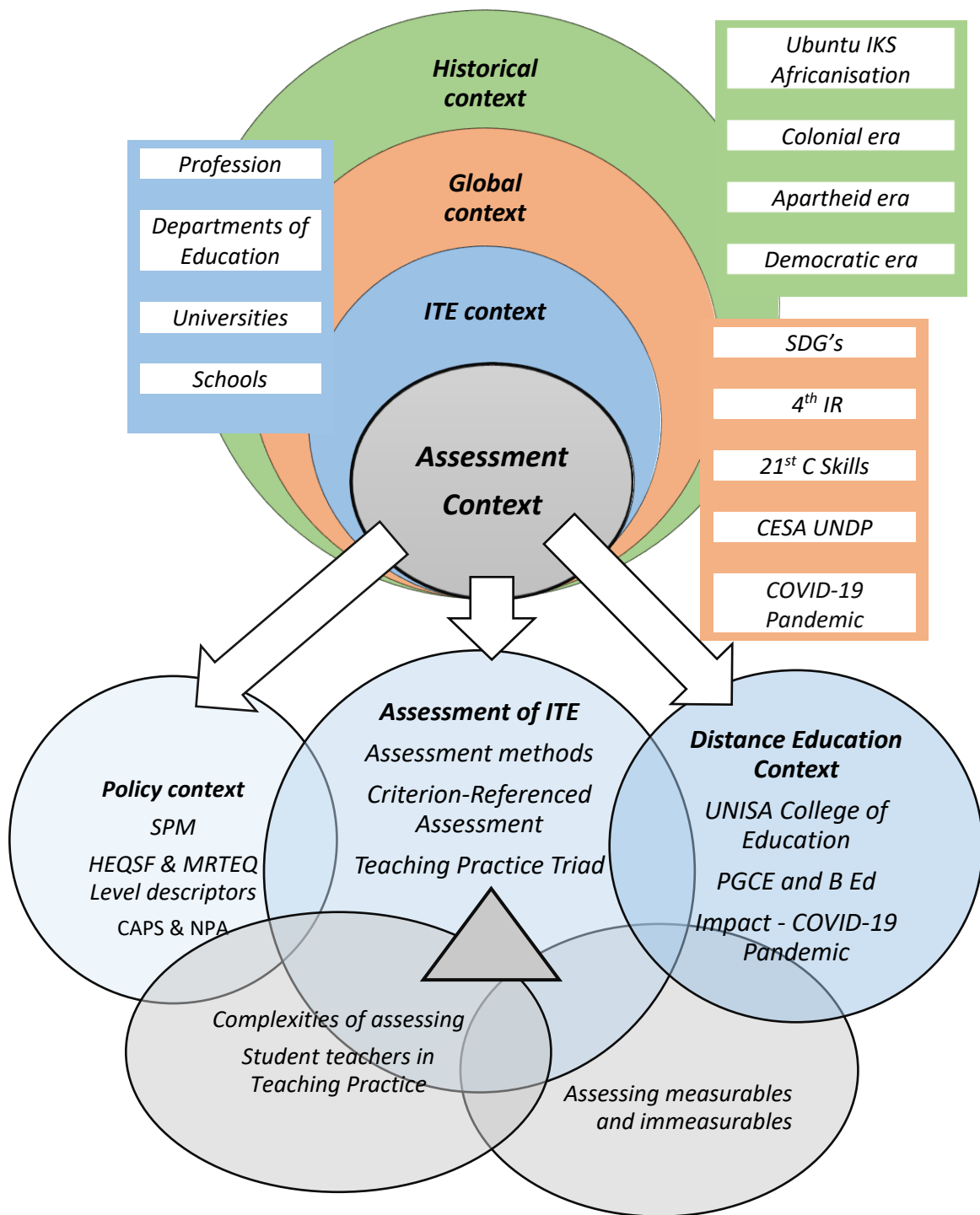


Figure 11: A framework for Understanding the Context of Assessing Student Teachers as Assessors in Distance Education

Source: Own design

3.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The overview presented in this chapter started by describing some of the roots of education and assessment in pre-colonial times with reference to Africanisation and education, including teacher education. A brief overview of the historical context was followed by global influences affecting ITE in South Africa. The context description applied a narrower focus on the assessment context which included brief overviews of relevant policy, the assessment of ITE, and a distance education context, that is the UNISA College of Education. Finally, essential elements of assessing student teachers as assessors, such as the teaching practice triad, complexities of assessing teaching practice as well as the notion of assessing the measureables and the immeasurables of teaching practice, granted more perspective. Within this context, two qualifications, the PGCE and the B Ed. are offered by the UNISA College of Education. In Chapter 5, section 5.1, modules relevant to the assessment of student teachers as assessors of these qualifications are analysed in more detail.

When the results of the overviews offered in this chapter are carefully considered, a clearer vision of what needs to be done in the field work envisaged in Chapter 1, section 1.4 of this study, emerges, complementing the insights from the conceptual frameworks derived in Chapter 2, and underpinned and informed the empirical work done in this study. A detailed account of the research methodologies used in this study in this regard, is presented next, in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents empirical research conducted for this study. The rationale for the empirical research is briefly indicated with reference to frameworks underpinning the research design. The way the two research methods are employed for collecting data is discussed. Analyses of data undertaken during the empirical work are described. The chapter concludes with accounts of the measures implemented to ensure ethical integrity as well as trustworthiness of the study.

4.2 RATIONALE FOR EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

This study identifies, defines and describes standards and criteria for assessing student teachers in a distance education context, specifically, at the UNISA College of Education. The methods employed in this regard determine minimum requirements for student teachers with regard to their competence as assessors, given the reality that more is expected of them as beginner practice teachers. Darling-Hammond's overview of teacher development provides a similar perspective on standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors, as was indicated in Chapter 1, section 1.2 with regard to the continuum of teacher education: stretching through all phases in a human resource management context (recruitment, preparation, induction, ongoing professional development and collective improvement of practice, Darling-Hammond: 2006 and 2013). These frameworks suggest that student teacher competence at student teacher level should be sufficient to feed into, and enhance, continued development of such competence when newly qualified teachers enter the profession as beginner teachers, explaining the need for two sets of standards and criteria. Assessing student teachers in a distance education context presents particular challenges that should be accounted for, in part at least, by identifying and defining standards and criteria as envisaged in this study.

The research methods relied upon in this study were selected specifically for gathering and analysing data related to two specific research objectives, as set out in Chapter

1, section 1.6. These are first, to hear the voices of authors of documents who explain the context in which student teachers are assessed in a distance education context in South Africa, as well as documents setting out standards and/or standards and criteria related to teacher competence as assessors at various levels of competence. Second, this investigation seeks to hear the voices of information-rich participants regarding the context in which student teachers are assessed as assessors, as well as their experiences and views related to standards and criteria.

Given the research problem and related research objectives, this study was designed as an exploratory study within an interpretivist research paradigm. It applied a qualitative approach and a phenomenological strategy. To collect data, document analysis and interviews were used.

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

4.3.1 Introduction

The design presented here clarifies and substantiates the researcher's thinking as contained in the brief overview of the design given in Chapter 1, sections 1.7 related to research design and section 1.8 on research methods. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) indicate that research design determines procedures for conducting a research study, including when, from whom, and under what conditions the data will be obtained. McMillan and Schumacher consider research design to be the general plan: how the research is set up, what happens to the subjects, and what methods of data collection are used.

Rather than referring to research design as a plan, Creswell and Poth (2018:17) adapt the views of Denzin and Lincoln (2011) discerning five phases within the research process. Creswell and Poth (2018) use a question on the essence of each phase, illustrating the flow of the research process. (Refer to the questions in 4.3.2 below). These questions characterise each phase. When this current investigation is understood within such a research design, the phases may be discerned as indicated below. These comprise the researcher's responses to these questions as an intuitive and general reflection.

4.3.2 The research design in intuitive and general terms

1. *What perspectives and experience did I bring to this study?*

The researcher's experience in assessing student teachers in assessment related modules in distance and contact education afforded an appreciation of the need for research related to student teachers' ability to assess learners effectively. This experience included a thorough understanding of an outcomes-based approach to education underpinned by notions of applied competence and social constructivist learning theory.

2. *How do my beliefs guide my actions as a researcher?*

The researcher subscribes to an interpretivist paradigm believing that meaning is derived by interpreting lived experiences. This belief includes notions that multiple realities exist, that knowledge and understanding are gained through interactions with participants because they understand reality subjectively. The researcher holds that his own understanding and related values should be lived in balance with the values and beliefs of others, particularly the authors referred to in literature and in document analyses as well as participants in interviews. These beliefs resulted in the researcher being careful not to make his own voice heard above those of the participants, both authors of documents analysed and individuals interviewed.

3. *How do philosophical and theoretical frameworks inform my choice of research approaches?*

The researcher sought to discern the essence of assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors as it manifests in standards and criteria. This search pointed the way toward a phenomenological study and a qualitative approach. Two conceptual frameworks related to competence and assessment respectively derived from literature. A framework for understanding the context informed the processes or strategies employed as well as the interview schedules used in the empirical work.

4. *In what ways does my research approach influence the methods used for data collection and analysis?*

A qualitative approach required selecting documents that yield relevant data related to standards and criteria as understood in this study, or to the context in which student

teachers are assessed as assessors. The qualitative document analysis as well as the hermeneutical phenomenological interviews employed, identified and defined the phenomena, namely, the standards and criteria, as lived experiences. By interpreting data from documents and interviews, the researcher focused on the essence of lived experiences to discern standards and criteria as envisaged in the study.

5. *What contributes to your decisions regarding rigor, inferences and use of findings?*

Inferences made in formulating findings were triangulated through use of more than one method and considering multiple perspectives such as a variety of authors and several categories of participants. Care was taken to indicate that findings were open to further interpretation, that conclusions and recommendations are context bound and that generalisation was not possible, nor aimed at.

The responses to these questions intimated the researcher's thinking regarding the study at an intuitive level in general terms. A more detailed and substantiated account of philosophical positions taken by the researcher in terms of research design is presented in terms of the paradigm, ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology used to provide deeper perspective and clarity regarding the design.

4.3.3 The research design in terms of the researcher's philosophical positions

i. An interpretivist paradigm

This researcher sees the world through an interpretivist lens. According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) a paradigm constitutes the abstract beliefs and principles that shape how a researcher sees the world, and how s/he interprets and acts within that world. It is a conceptual lens through which the researcher examines research, that guides research action, and as human constructions indicate where the researcher is coming from, so as to construct meaning embedded in data. They regard paradigms as important because they provide beliefs and dictate what should be studied, how it should be studied, and how the results of the study should be interpreted in a particular field of study. These paradigms define a researcher's philosophical orientation and have significant implications for every decision made in the research process, including choice of methodology and methods. Cohen *et al.* (2007) and Creswell and

Poth (2018) identify post-positivism, critical theory, feminism, postmodernism and interpretivism, regarded as social constructivism, as commonly used paradigms in social research.

This researcher holds philosophical beliefs about the world, knowledge, values and methods to be used in research that correspond closely to an interpretivist paradigm. This study was conducted within a paradigm that regards the world we live and work in as a subjectively constructed reality embedded in human experience (Guba & Lincoln, in Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The researcher sought to understand the subjective world of human experience of the assessment of student teachers as assessors. It was necessary to understand and interpret the thinking of informed others in the field who had experienced, or who were experienced in the assessment of student teachers as assessors, and the meaning they assign to the matter, rather than proposing or justifying his own thinking. At the same time, the outcomes of the research are socially constructed through interactions between the researcher and informed others participating in the research (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). Within this paradigm, the researcher assumed a relativist ontology, a subjectivist epistemology, a balanced axiology and a naturalist methodology.

ii. A relativist ontology

According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) and Creswell and Poth (2018), the assumption of a relativist ontology means that the researcher accepts the notion of multiple realities, that those realities can be explored and that meaning is made of them or reconstructed through human interactions between the researcher and the participants in the research, and among the research participants. This stance was applied in this study: by including a wide variety of documents analysed; by selecting and interviewing participants who experienced the assessment of student teachers as assessors differently, and by allowing their experiences and meaning to be derived, to be heard and contribute to the researcher's understanding of the assessment of student teachers as assessors.

iii. A subjectivist epistemology

With an epistemological assumption, according to Creswell and Poth (2018), knowledge is built through the subjective experiences of individuals. According to

Cohen et al (2007) and Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) the researcher makes meaning of data through own thinking and cognitive processing of data informed by his/her interactions with participants. The researcher constructs knowledge socially as a result of his or her personal experiences of the real life within the natural settings investigated; engaging in interactive processes in which the researcher and participants intermingle, dialogue, question, listen, read, write and record research data. In this study the data collected and analysed were understood to be the result of such engagements, indirectly in the case of document analysis and directly in interviewing participants.

iv. A balanced axiology

Creswell and Poth (2018) indicate that axiology refers to a researcher's beliefs regarding values. They argue that all researchers bring values to a study but qualitative researchers make their values known in a study. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) suggest that a balanced axiology assumes that the outcome of the research reflects the values of the researcher, trying to present a balanced report of the findings. In this study, particularly in the latter chapters, the researcher revealed his values regarding the assessment of student teachers.

v. A naturalist methodology

Creswell and Poth (2018) regard the methodology of a study as the procedures of qualitative research. They claim that these are characterised as predominantly inductive, emerging and shaped by the researcher's experience. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) argue that in an interpretivist paradigm, in assuming a naturalist methodology, the researcher utilises data as it exists in natural settings, gathered by such means as interviews, discourses, text messages and reflective sessions, with the researcher acting as a participant observer. Creswell and Poth (2018) assert that in such a methodology during data analysis, the researcher follows a path of analysis to develop an increasingly detailed knowledge of the topic being studied. By analysing documents and participant experiences and interpreting the data revealed, the researcher developed a detailed knowledge of assessing student teachers such as assessors, culminating in two sets of standards and criteria, one for assessing the competence of student teachers, and another for appraising beginner teachers.

As indicated in Chapter 1, Sections 1.7 and 1.8, and as was substantiated in the views regarding an interpretivist paradigm within which this study was conducted, a qualitative research approach was followed.

4.4 A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

Qualitative research is considered to be naturalistic, interpretive and sensitive to context, by nature. Snape and Spencer (2003), Cohen et al (2007), Denzin and Lincoln (2005, 2011) and Creswell and Poth (2018) regard qualitative research as naturalistic, interpretive and sensitive to context, by nature. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) discern the following characteristics of qualitative research: it studies behaviour as it occurs or occurred in natural setting; it is sensitive to contexts by considering situational factors influencing the research; it uses direct data collection, the researcher collects data directly from the source; it uses rich narrative descriptions providing in-depth understanding; it has a strong process orientation focusing on how and why behaviour occurs; it makes use of inductive data analysis by inducing generalisations from synthesising gathered information; it is concentrated on participant perspectives, valuing their understanding, descriptions, labels and meanings; it reflects emergent design, often evolves and changes as the study is implemented; and it uses complex and multiple perspectives to provide complex explanations.

In this study, the researcher used these characteristics as guidelines for action. A few examples illustrate this. Natural setting: interviews were conducted in settings preferred by participants. Direct data collection: data taken from documents and interviews were presented verbatim as provided by authors and participants. Rich narrative descriptions: Findings were presented in rich, thick and detailed descriptions including verbatim accounts. Emergent design: The researcher made use of second round interviews to accommodate the need for more data emerging from document analysis or first round interviews. In such a qualitative approach, the researcher employed a hermeneutical phenomenological research strategy.

4.5 A HERMENEUTICAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH STRATEGY

4.5.1 Introduction

Although the research strategy was introduced in Chapter 1, section 1.7.3, the strategy employed in this study is presented here in more detail with a pertinent focus on how the strategy unfolded in reality when employed in this study. This is done by referring to literature to clarify and underpin the strategy implemented in this study; and to describe the research methods; strategies and instruments used in data collection; sequencing of the data collection process; and providing an account of how data collected were analysed in more detail than what was indicated in Chapter 1, Section 1.8.

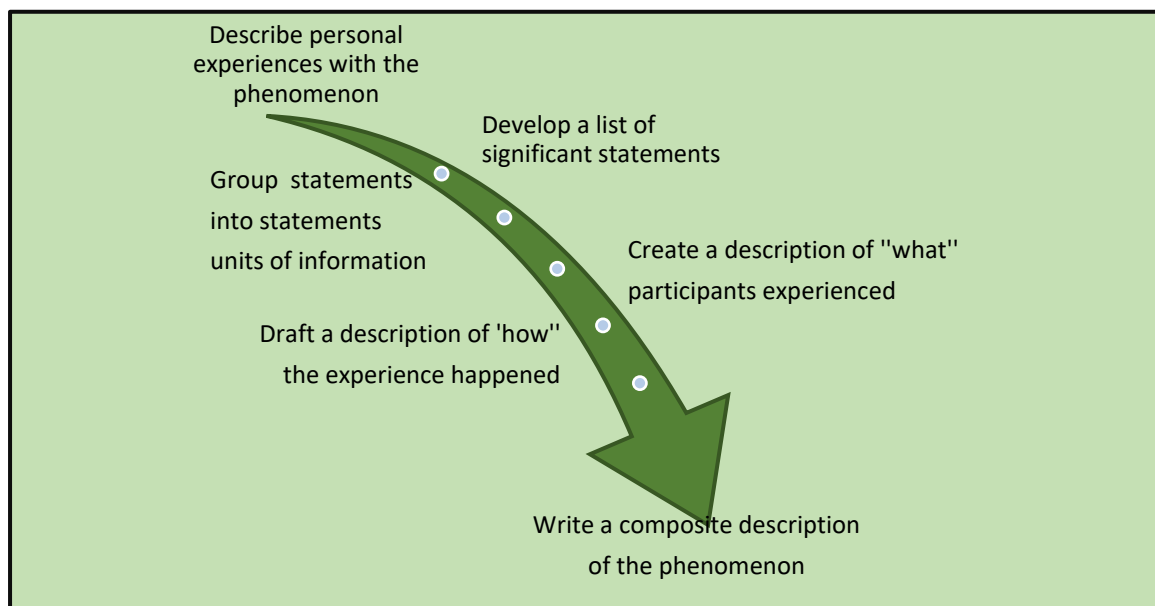
4.5.2 Research theory underpinning the phenomenological strategy

As was indicated in Chapter 1, section 1.8, McMillan and Schumacher (2014) treat phenomenological studies as essentially being research of participant perspectives of an event. Creswell and Poth (2018) consider phenomenological research as establishing a common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of the concept or phenomenon. The phenomenon or unit of analysis in this study is standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors.

According to Creswell and Poth (2018:201) the approach they advance for phenomenological analysis and representation is a simplification of the work of Moustakas (1994) and incorporates the Stevik-Colaizzi-Keen method. The researcher starts by describing personal experiences of the phenomenon, setting aside own experiences and taking note of participant views. The researcher then develops a list of non-repetitive, non-overlapping significant statements in data sources such as interviews and others about how the individual participants experience the phenomenon, termed horizontilation of data. Data are grouped into larger units of meaning or themes. These units are used to create a description of "what" participants experienced, including verbatim accounts. The researcher then drafts "how" descriptions according to the setting or context of the experiences. The researcher

finally writes a composite, textual and structural, description reflecting the “essence” of the phenomenon including “what” and “how” participants experienced the phenomenon.

In this study, the researcher used this approach as a template for implementing hermeneutical phenomenological research. This was done to apprehend and comprehend the lived experiences of participants in the research regarding standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context, and interpret the meanings. The aim was to capture the essence of such standards and criteria, within an understanding that the meanings assigned to the standards and criteria designed in this study are open to revision and reinterpretation. The researcher deployed two main ways of garnering data: qualitative document analysis (QDA) and hermeneutical phenomenological interviews (HPI). In both methods the researcher applied a qualitative approach for phenomenological analysis and representation as suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018) and illustrated below in Figure 12.



Source: Derived from Creswell and Poth (2018: 201)

Figure 12: An Approach for Phenomenological Analysis and Representation

This study sought meaning in terms of lived experiences to explore the meaning of such experiences in order to describe the essence of standards and criteria, rather than a search for trends among large populations of student teachers and/or

assessors in higher education that would have warranted a quantitative approach. As a qualitative approach was used, document analysis as well as analysis of interviews had to be qualitative. (Refer to section 4.6.3 and Figures 12 and 13). In both methods, the approach for phenomenological analysis and representation proposed by Creswell and Poth (2018) was applied.

4.6 RESEARCH METHODS

The two methods employed are described here with reference to selection of documents and participants; strategies and instruments used for data collection; the sequence of data collection phases; and the data analysis process.

4.6.1 Selection of documents for QDA and sampling of participants for HPI

Selection of documents.

The selection of documents analysed in this study started when this study commenced. The researcher perused a wide variety of documents during overviewing literature, and selected those that were relevant to study. For example, in Chapters 2, several documents suggesting teacher standards were identified and defined. (Refer to Table 2.1). In Chapter 3, documents outlining the context at the UNISA College of Education were identified and selected for analysis. The researcher searched for documents in data bases by means of specific searches on the internet. Some documents were made available to the researcher by participants in interviews, or were referred to specific documents by participants. The disadvantages and concerns referred to earlier were borne in mind in the selection of documents.

Three categories of documents were collected. Set A contained documents dealing with the distance education context of the research site. Set B comprised documents related to existing standards and/or standards and criteria used internationally in assessing student teachers and/or teachers. Only documents containing information related to the ability to assess were selected in this category. Some documents contained information relevant to both Sets A and B. Set C contained one document only, the Level Descriptors of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). This document was analysed to identify levels of competence relevant to the modules

analysed in Set A and to set the level of competence of the standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in this study.

Set A: Documents dealt with a distance education context for student teachers as assessors. The documents analysed were organised in three sub-sets and are indicated in Chapter 5, Table 5.1.1. Set B Documents relevant to standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers/teachers as assessors, are indicated in Chapter 5, Table 5.1.2. Although a myriad of documents could have been included, the researcher used three criteria to select appropriate items: descriptions of assessor competence as component of teacher competence; the inclusion of the notion of competence at different levels such as novice, advanced beginner, proficient, and excellent, and limiting the number of documents to a manageable set. As a result, the researcher selected 15 documents in total, professional teaching standards employed internationally (9), and other documents containing similar and useful information related to the student teacher or teacher as assessor and/or assessing student teachers as assessors (6). As indicated, in Set C Documents describing standards in terms of qualification levels relevant to this study, one document, the Level Descriptors of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was analysed. This document was analysed to assess the levels of competence relevant to the modules analysed in Set A and to affirm the level of competence of the standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in this study. NQF Levels 6 and 7 are particularly germane in the context of this study. Some of the modules analysed in Set B are at NQF level 6, and the assessment theory module on NQF level 7. This researcher is of the opinion that standards and criteria as understood in this study should be at NQF level 7, as the B Ed and PGCE are NQF 7 qualifications.

Selecting participants for HPI

As indicated in Chapter 1, Section 1.8.1, participants for HPI were selected by means of reputational case sampling primarily, combined with snowball sampling, where participants referred the researcher to other information rich individuals and these were deemed appropriate for the collection of more data. The researcher applied for

and obtained ethical clearance from the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee and indicated the following in the application:

The decision to select participants in various categories resulted in considering experiences regarding the phenomenon from various similar, yet significantly different perspectives to deepen the understanding of the phenomenon as lived experience. With this mind, a list of criteria for selection of suitable participants was designed, informed by the research focus and the contextual/theoretical and conceptual literature studies. Information-rich persons in this context would meet some of the following criteria:

- a. Experience in accrediting teacher education programmes
- b. Experience in delivering and managing teacher education programmes in a distance education context
- c. Experience in teacher education with specific focus on the competence of student teachers as assessors
- d. Experience in mentoring student teachers during teaching practice and particularly with regard to their competence as assessors
- e. Experience in co-ordination and conducting teaching practice in distance education contexts
- f. Qualified in the field of assessment in education
- g. Experience in the field of assessment should be gained in South African contexts
- h. Experience in being assessed as a student teacher, specifically being assessed as an assessor in education during teaching practice
- i. International experience would be beneficial but would not be required

The designed list of criteria was used to identify the following information-rich participants:

- ITE Programme manager/s from the UNISA College of Education (2)
Criteria a. to g., as well as criterion i., were met by both participants.
- ITE Programme manager/s from other institutions (3)
Managers from other institutions enhanced the credibility of data collected and interpreted in this study. Criteria a. to g. were met by all three participants

while one also met criterion i. In addition, these participants had formal associations with the UNISA College of Education in assessment of student teacher contexts. They also confirmed during interviews that they had permission from their institutions to participate in the research.

- UNISA lecturers responsible for the relevant modules (4)
Two taught the assessment theory module, and two others, teaching practice modules. All were experienced in terms of criteria b. and c. and also met criteria f. and g.
- Mentor-teachers and supervisors of student teachers during teaching practice (3)
All met criteria c. to f.
- Teachers receiving student teachers during teaching practice (3)
All participants, except student teachers were experienced in criterion d. specifically.
- Student teachers who have been assessed during ITE including teaching practice (3)
All three participants met criterion h., and had experience in teaching and assessment prior to enrolling in the teacher education programmes at the UNISA College of Education.

In total, 16 participants were interviewed. Most participants had experience in several of the categories as they had extensive experience as teachers, mentors, lecturers or managers in ITE context. This meant that some participants responded as participants in more than one category. All participants were requested to complete consent forms when invited to participate. Participants from other institutions had permission to do so. (Refer to Annexures A and D in this regard).

A combination of informal conversation and interview guide type interviews was used in this study. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) distinguish these types of interviews, as well as standardised open-ended interviews. Standardised open-ended type interviews were regarded as inappropriate as the participants were selected from different categories in terms of experience related to assessment of the competence of student teachers as assessor. Interviews were key informant, elite and

hermeneutical phenomenological in terms of nature (McMillan and Schumacher 2014). (Also refer to Chapter 1, section 1.7.3). An overview of the actual participants interviewed is presented in Chapter 5, Section 5.1 and in Table 5.1.3.

4.6.2 Strategies and instruments for data collection

The entire empirical research process is overviewed here to indicate how it unfolded and how the process is substantiated by means of relevant and appropriate documents and interviews. In the data collection process related to QDA, the researcher created data sheets from original documents containing content related to standards and criteria as understood in this study. (Refer to Annexure C). In conducting HPI, the researcher invited information rich individuals to participate in the research. (Refer to Annexure D – Example of invitation letters and consent forms). The researcher used fit-for-purpose, semi-structured interview schedules to guide the interaction with participants. (Refer to Annexure E for examples).

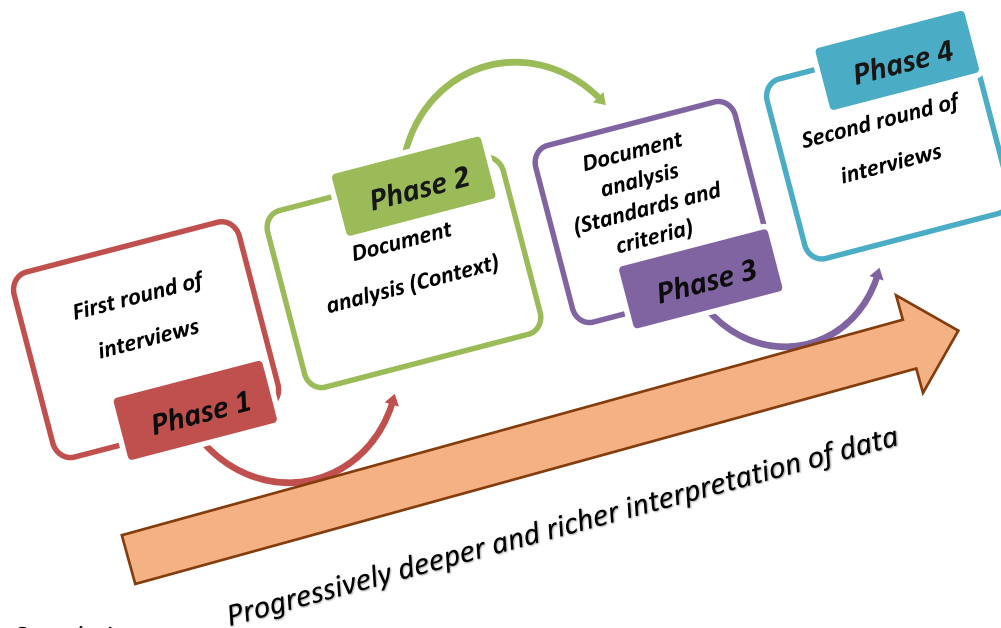
The researcher contracted a professional transcriber to transcribe sound/voice recordings of interviews conducted. (Refer to Annexure F for a confidentiality agreement in this regard). The QDA conducted with regard to context as well as standards and criteria resulted in several accounts and findings that were integrated with findings of HPI later and presented as final findings in Chapter 5, Sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 respectively. The findings of the two QDA's conducted in this regard are indicated in Annexures G, H, and I. The broad process described here provides a limited view on the sequence of events during data collection. The sequence of employing two research methods, sometimes concurrently, needs clarification.

4.6.3 Sequence of employing two research methods

In Chapter 1, 1.8, mention was made that the initial plan was to conduct the qualitative document analysis first and then the hermeneutical phenomenological interviews, and that due to a variety of contextual circumstances in reality a somewhat different sequence unfolded. The data collection started with a planning phase during which

the researcher located participants and gained permission/agreement for conducting the research, followed by a basic data collection phase. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) propose two initial phases: beginning of data collection and basic data collection. In the first phase, trust and rapport with participants were established. In the second phase, the researcher began hearing and seeing beyond what was listened to, observed and recorded. In a broad sense, in this study, a similar approach was followed. Interviews and document analysis were intertwined as is illustrated in Figure 12. The figure illustrates the sequence in which the empirical work unfolded. The actual phases in data collection followed a sequence somewhat different to what was originally planned, as described briefly in Chapter 1, section 1.8 and illustrated here in Figure 12. The design that emerged from these circumstances (Creswell and Poth, 2018) resulted in an unforeseen yet quality enhancing process of data collection and analysis which allowed the researcher to work in a way that resulted in progressively deeper and richer interpretation of data.

Although some overlap and concurrent data collection occurred, the data were collected in four broad phases. The first round of interviews was conducted with participants in all categories of the sample indicated in the research design in Sections 4.3.3 and 4.4, during Phase 1. Data relevant to a distance education context and data related to standards and criteria used in assessing student teachers as assessors, were collected during this phase. The data gathered in Phase 1 supplemented data from the conceptual and contextual analyses in Chapters 2 and 3 of the study, informing the document analyses done in Phase 2 to describe the distance education context used by UNISA College of Education, and standards and criteria for assessing student teachers as assessors, in Phase 3.



Source: Own design

Figure 13: Phases of Data Collection

The context was attended to first: this allowed the researcher to interpret documents related to standards and criteria considering a distance education context as well as the influences of other contexts indicated in Chapter 3. The data collected during both context- and standards and criteria-related qualitative document analyses informed the final phase, when selected participants were interviewed in a second round of interviews to probe deeper and obtain more nuanced data related to both context and standards and criteria researched.

During the interviews, the following guidelines were borne in mind:

- (i) Engaging in close discussions about participants' experiences of assessing student teachers as assessors (Cohen *et al.*, 2018);
- (ii) Unearthing the underlying factors assessing student teachers as assessors in understanding the participants' views of the world of practice of assessment in a distance education context (Cohen *et al.*, 2007);
- (iii) Bearing in mind that responses from participants were going to be used to describe the phenomenon and to explain the phenomenon, and to use such descriptions and explanations to design and describe standards and criteria for assessing student teachers effectively (Creswell and Poth, 2018); and

- (iv) Considering that face-to-face interviews do not allow the participants to think through answers they provide and at times not convenient answers, and may feel threatened to disclose sensitive information that they feel might jeopardise their position (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014).

With the latter guideline in mind, prior to the second round of interviews, the researcher made some of the results of the document analyses available to the participants to allow them to peruse these in preparation for the second round interviews. These results included a description of the major themes that emerged from the first round of interviews and document analyses, a list of abilities or standards related to competence as an assessor. These participants were informed beforehand of the questions for the second interviews.

This four-phase process integrated to some extent the two data collection methods. A more detailed account is presented to indicate how the two methods are underpinned in research theory and to provide a clear account of how every method contributed to the data analysed in the empirical work done in this study, despite overlapping and concurrent application.

4.6.4 Data analysis

Scientific work demands a systematic approach. According to Bowen (2009) and Lavery (2003) document analysis is a systematic approach towards examining existing documents used by participants. Flick (2018) argues that, in a research context, documents should not be viewed as a source of information but rather, as a source that describes how events are unfolding within the context of the phenomenon under investigation. According to Wood et al. (2020) qualitative document analysis (QDA) is used across a wide range of disciplines, from various epistemological viewpoints, and for diverse research purposes. It is an emergent process concentrating on underlying meanings, themes and patterns, asserting that there is no “one size fits all” approach to rigidly determine the nature of that search. Cardno (2018) identifies several advantages of document analysis in qualitative research, including availability of documents, usually at little or no cost to the researcher, the unobtrusive

nature of documentary analysis that makes it non-reactive, and its ability to add rigour to a study through a multi-method form of triangulation. Bowen (2009) identifies the immense value of documents in case study research, and its usefulness as a stand-alone method for specialised forms of qualitative research. At the same time, Cardno (2018) warns against disadvantages of document analysis, such as: documents cannot always be retrieved, or are protected in the sense that access is deliberately blocked, making it difficult to locate and access them for geographical reasons; documents are not always produced specifically for research purposes and may contain insufficient detail; the authenticity of documents may be questionable, as well as a concern that a collection of documents may not be complete, referred to as “biased selectivity”.

QDA was used in this study to describe the context in which student teachers are assessed in a distance education context, to identify current trends in assessing student teacher and teacher competence as assessors, including standards and criteria and standards used, specifically, and to triangulate data obtained from participants in in-depth interviews.

In Chapter 1, sections 1.7 and 1.8, the plan the researcher had in mind was set out. A detailed account is given here of the way QDA and HPI were employed in this study, describing how the plan was executed with reference to research theory underpinning the employment of the two research methods

The researcher relied upon Flick’s (2018) notion, and regarded the documents related to a distance education context analysed in the study, not as sources of information, but rather as accounts that describe how events, assessment of student teachers as assessors, unfold within the distance education context of the phenomenon under investigation, standards and criteria as understood in this study. Taking this stance, the researcher then applied the approach suggested by Creswell and Poth (2018) to analyse the documents. Similarly, the documents related to standards and criteria were regarded as sources that describe how assessment of student teachers and beginning teachers unfolds internationally, focusing on standards and criteria used in this regard. The same approach was followed for analysing documents related to qualification standards. Likewise, when transcripts interviews were analysed, the same

approach was followed. The Creswell and Poth (2018) approach to phenomenological analysis explained in 4.5.2 above, was applied as indicated in Figure 14 below.

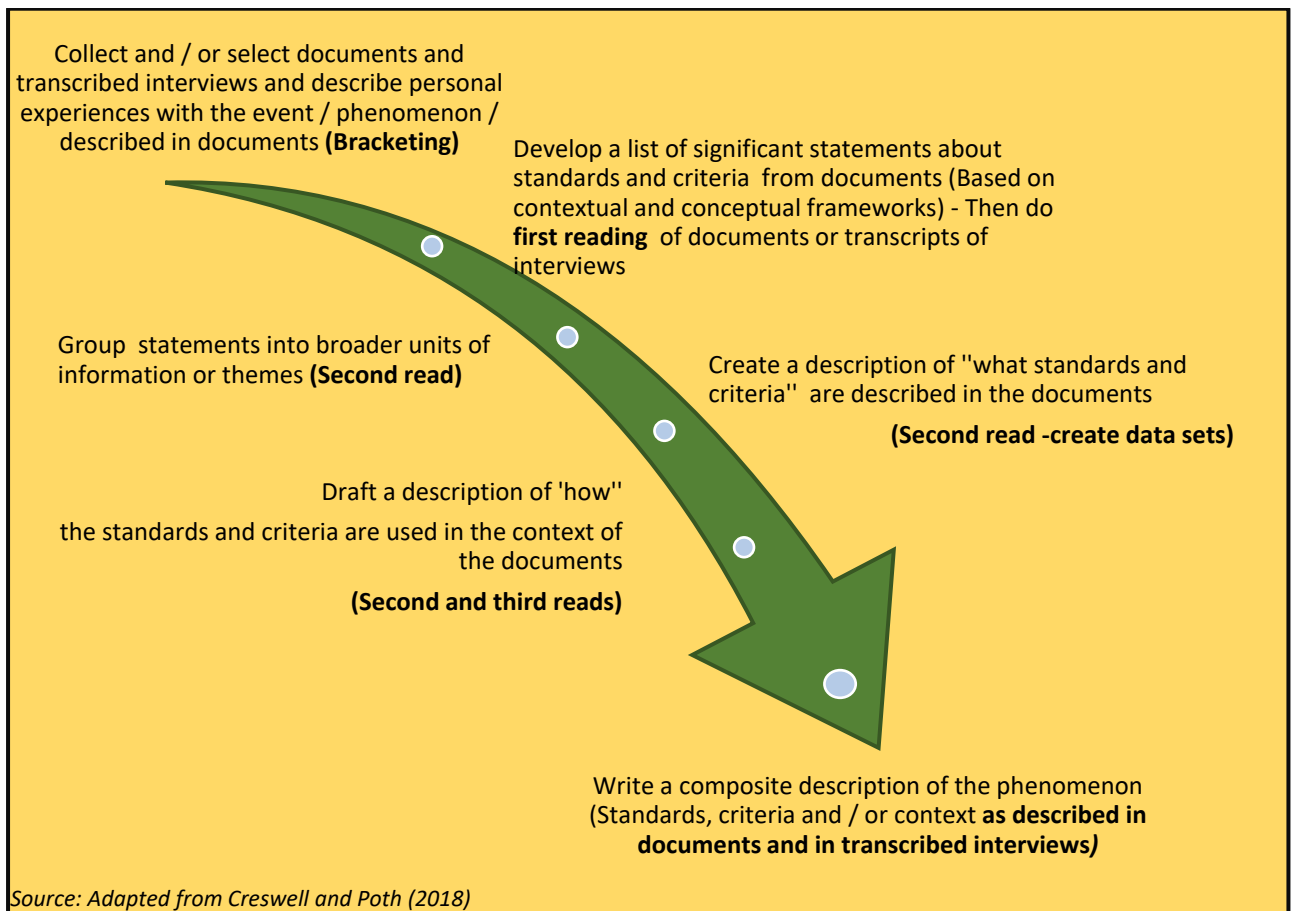


Figure 14: A Qualitative Document Analysis and Interview Analysis Approach

(As applied in this study of standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context)

All documents and transcripts analysed were organised into sets and sub-sets prior to actual analysis, as indicated in section 4.5.3. The researcher followed the procedure or strategy illustrated in Figure 14 and described below in the QDA employed. It is important to note that the process illustrated and described was employed four times, once for each of the three sets of documents analysed and a fourth time when interview schedules were analysed using the same strategy and procedures. The following aspects describe how QDA was applied in this study: bracketing researcher perspectives; and drafting significant statements, first global read; drafting data

sheets, second read – identifying themes; coding emerging themes; drafting descriptions of themes.

Bracketing of researcher perspectives and draft significant statements

When every round of QDA or interview analysis started, the researcher reflected on his own experience in assessing student teachers as assessors over many years and reminded himself to disregard his own experiences and reasoning as far as possible while reading and analysing the documents and interview transcripts, to allow the authors and participants to make their voices heard. Before the first read was complete, the researcher drafted significant statements taken from the summary descriptions of the conceptual or contextual analyses in Chapters 2 and 3. This facilitated identification of similar statements in the documents or transcripts analysed, and described what the researcher expected to be contained in the documents, notwithstanding the researcher reminding himself to keep an open mind in order to hear the authors' voices rather than expected statements. Using significant statements guided the search for meaning, rather than pre-empting findings.

First read and 'incidental' identification of themes

The researcher read all documents in a particular set or sub-set to gain a sense of views expressed in general. The "global" first read revealed the need to focus on the competence as assessors more pertinently and the context in which such competence is assessed, using the significant statements drafted from frameworks. Some statements were congruent, while others were contradictory with the significant statements and were identified but not recorded as themes due to their 'incidental' nature. First readings were undertaken on a computer reading of the original documents while field notes were made to indicate which sections in particular documents were relevant, and which section were to be discarded.

Second reads and drafting data sheets containing mostly verbatim statements

The researcher drafted data sheets including summaries of the type of document or interview transcript and verbatim statements from those sections from every document or transcript. This was conducted concurrently with the second reading by using the field notes made in the first read. In some instances, third readings were done to ensure that the data sheets included all relevant data (verbatim statements) related to the documents, significant statements and/or themes identified. Themes were identified by colour coding, emerging themes and using high-lighter pens to mark corresponding statements. Corresponding statements were copied into the data sheets afterwards. These data sheets contained only relevant sections and verbatim accounts and were printed out for second and third reads during which colour coding was used to identify and record themes.

Second and third reads for identifying or confirming themes

Although some themes emerged in the first reading, and were recorded, the researcher read every document, data sheet or interview transcript, in depth a second, and sometimes thrice for identifying or confirming themes relevant to assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors, and on themes relevant to the context in which such competence was assessed, as well as the level of competence assessed. In analysing every document or transcript, emerging themes were identified and recorded. In some cases, the researcher went back to the original documents to ensure interpretation of themes was accurate. In analysing transcripts of interviews, the researcher followed up on issues that warranted further research by means of telephone conversations with participants.

Summary descriptions of themes and preliminary findings

After analysing every document, data sheet or transcript and colour coding the themes, the researcher drafted first draft descriptions of every theme, structured themes in a logical order and added some preliminary comments to indicate interpretations made on the themes emerging in terms of the aims and objectives of the study. Four sets of data resulting from the four phases of the research process were analysed, and resulted in three sets of preliminary findings, namely preliminary findings from the first round of interviews, preliminary findings from the QDA related to context describing

documents, and preliminary findings from QDA of standards and criteria describing the documents. These sets of preliminary findings included several references either to further document analyses and/or the second round of interviews for deeper analysis. Two Annexures describe the findings from the two qualitative document analyses in detail. ANNEXURE G contains an account of the document analysis done to describe the distance education context in detail. ANNEXURE H summarises these findings. ANNEXURE I contains the findings of the document analysis done to describe standards and criteria as understood in this study. All three Annexures contain sets of preliminary findings and/or references to procedures followed when the actual document analyses were undertaken.

From preliminary to final findings

The sets of preliminary findings referred to above were reworked after the second round of interviews was completed, transcribed and analysed. In Chapter 5, only the final reworked findings are presented in two major sections, namely findings describing the context in which standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers are assessed, and findings describing the actual standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context. The results of the analyses of documents are included in Annexures G, H and I. These analyses as well as the analyses of transcribed HPI were used to present findings in Chapter 5, sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 of the study. Where Chapter 5 presents the findings from the empirical work done reflecting the voices of the authors of documents analysed and those of the participants in the interviews, Chapter 6 includes the conclusions drawn from of these findings describing in detail and with clarity the standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context.

During the entire data collection and analyses process, the researcher had to respect ethical considerations.

4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

4.7.1 Introduction

The researcher used various ways to address ethical issues during this study: such as informed consent, confirming confidentiality and anonymity by means of consent forms and verbal confirmation during interviews, using negotiation and open discussions to promote fairness and displaying genuine care towards participants and the research inquiry. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) regard research ethics as focusing on what is normally proper and improper when engaged with participants or when archival data are accessed. They identify full disclosure or deception, voluntary participation, informed consent, no harm or risk to participants, privacy, and confidentiality as principles of, or guidelines for, conducting research in an ethical way. Creswell and Poth (2018) identify a wide variety of ethical issues in various stages during a qualitative study, namely prior to the study, at the beginning, during data collection, when analysing data, reporting data and when the study is published. They suggest how to address these issues. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) indicate that, although most studies must be approved by an institutional review board (the UNISA College of Education Research Ethics Committee, in the context of this study) prior to implementation, the researcher must be able to apply ethical principles and guidelines to each study. In Chapter 1 the researcher indicated that ethical issues would be considered throughout the study. This was done by reflecting on the study often and considering ethical issues related to every stage in the research process. Ethical clearance by the UNISA College of Education Research Ethics Committee implies that the research would be regarded as ethical, provided it was done as indicated in the application. (Refer to Annexures A and B in this regard.)

4.7.2 Ethical issues considered and addressed

The way ethical issues were considered and addressed in this study is summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Ethical issues considered and addressed during this study		
<i>When?</i>	<i>Ethical issue</i>	<i>The way the issue was addressed</i>
Prior to the study and at the beginning of the study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seek university approval - Gain access permissions - Disclose the purpose of the study - Refrain from pressurising participants to sign consent forms 	<p>Two successful applications were submitted in this regard. The first to the <i>UNISA College of Education Research Ethics Committee</i> to obtain research ethics clearance for directly involving humans, in terms of UNISA Policy on Research Ethics. The second application was submitted to the <i>UNISA Research Permission Subcommittee (RPSC)</i> to gain access permission to interview UNISA College of Education employees and access relevant UNISA College of Education study material. All participants were informed about (amongst others) the purpose of the study, what was expected from them, assurance that no harm would come from participating, and that they would be allowed to withdraw at any time without any negative consequence to them. Refer to The Ethical Clearance Certificate (Annexure A), Permission letter (Annexure B) and Participant Informed Consent Letter (Annexure C) in this regard.</p>
Collecting data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respecting the site and minimising disruptions - "Using" participants without giving back 	<p>All participants were interviewed at a time and venue convenient to them. All confirmed that the time spent on the interviews did not unduly disrupt their work. When one participant could not find time for a second interview, a telephone conversation was transcribed to capture the participant's views. The researcher indicated to all participants that the outcomes or results of the study would be available to them after the study was completed.</p>
Analysing data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respecting the privacy of participants 	<p>All participants gave their informed consent by means of signing a participant consent form and/or confirming such consent during the interviews. Refer to the Participant Informed Consent Form (Annexure D) in this regard.</p>

Reporting data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoid falsifying authorship, evidence, data, findings and conclusions - Avoid disclosing information that would harm participants - Communicate in clear, straightforward language - Do not plagiarise 	<p>The researcher used pseudonyms to refer to participants in all references to their experiences and contributions, reported truthfully and with research integrity, using clear and straightforward language in writing up findings, conclusions and recommendations. A language editor was contracted to do language editing as the researcher is a second language English user. The researcher made every effort to ensure that every author referred to was properly referenced in the text and in the list of references. The thesis was submitted to Turnitin screening to confirm that no plagiarism occurred.</p>
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Research at the level of this study requires that the researcher not only addresses ethical issues. Enhancing the trustworthiness, particularly in qualitative research also needs pertinent attention and action.

4.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS

In the course of this study, the researcher often reflected on the quality of the research conducted. The researcher sought to ensure that the findings would be sound, believable, or credible. This section presents some of the researcher’s work in this regard. Literature on qualitative research reveals that several measures or strategies can be used to enhance the “trustworthiness” of qualitative research. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) propose prolonged and persistent fieldwork, multi-method strategies, verbatim accounts of participant views, low-inference descriptors, multiple researchers, mechanically recorded data, participant researcher, member checking, participant review, and negative or discrepant data, as possibilities. Creswell and Poth (2018) categorise a similar set of strategies as summarised in Table 4.2 below, indicating that three lenses may be applied when qualitative research is validated and evaluated, namely the researcher’s lens, the participants’ lens and the reader’s/reviewer’s lens.

Table 4.2: Lenses in validation and evaluation of qualitative research		
<i>Researcher's lens</i>	<i>Participant's lens</i>	<i>Reader's / reviewer's lens</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corroborating evidence through triangulation of multiple data sources - Discovering negative case analysis or disconfirming evidence - Clarifying researcher bias or engaging in reflexivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Member checking or seeking participant feedback - Prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field - Collaborating with participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enabling external audits - Generating a rich, thick description - Having a peer review or debriefing of the data and research process. <p>(Creswell and Poth, 2018)</p>

Creswell and Poth (2018) suggest that researchers engage in at least two of the nine strategies described in the set for validation and evaluation purposes in any study. Although examples of several other of these strategies may be cited in this study, particular mention is made of the following strategies specifically employed in this study to enhance its trustworthiness, namely triangulation of multiple data sources, clarifying researcher bias including engaging in reflexivity, seeking participant feedback, discovering disconfirming evidence, and generating rich and thick descriptions.

4.8.1 Triangulation of multiple (two) data sources

The research design included two research methods, namely qualitative document analysis and hermeneutic phenomenological interviews. This allowed the researcher to triangulate data from documents describing a distance education context and describe standards and criteria for assessing student teachers as assessors, with the views of participants describing their experiences of such a context and such standards and criteria as lived realities.

4.8.2 Clarifying researcher bias including engaging in reflexivity

Although it was not always entirely possible, the researcher made a serious effort to bracket his own perceptions, especially during data analysis, in both QDA and in

analysing transcripts of interviews. The researcher often reminded himself to allow the voices of the authors of documents, and of the participants in the interviews, to be heard, rather than his own. To this end, verbatim records of interview participants' and document authors' views were recorded. When the researcher interpreted the data, it was done with reflexivity, searching for the essence rather than merely describing the phenomenon.

4.8.3 Seeking participant feedback

In engaging with some of the participants in second interviews, participant feedback on what was emerging from document analyses and from the first round of interviews could be compared. In the second interviews, participants were specifically required to give feedback on a list of eight themes that emerged from the document analysis focused on standards and criteria. In both the first and second round interviews, feedback was solicited regarding the impact of assessing student teachers in teaching practice given a distance education context.

4.8.4 Discovering disconfirming evidence

This strategy was not specifically planned, but was expected to occur. When disconfirming evidence was discovered, this was used to delve deeper into the experiences of participants and meanings conveyed in documents, in order to describe either context, or standards and criteria, or both in a richer and thicker way. An example is discovering in literature that student teacher assessors tend to use their own inner personal beliefs about student teacher competence when making judgements of their performances in lessons observed, rather than the standards and criteria provided to them by the university in the assessment tool designed for that purpose (Aspden, 2017). This discovery suggested that a criterion-referenced approach, partly underpinning the rationale for this study, may be questionable. This concern was specifically focused on in the second round of interviews, resulting in a more nuanced description of both context and standards and criteria in the findings relevant to this concern. (See Findings 5.1.1 and 5.2.2 as well as Conclusion 6.) Although participants agreed with the notion that assessors tend to use their own personal beliefs in making judgements, the need for clearly described standards and

criteria was not diminished. In fact, some argued that when clearly described standards and criteria are presented to university assessors, such descriptions would not vary fundamentally from the beliefs of individual assessors.

4.8.5 Generating rich and thick descriptions

The complexity of both context and standards and criteria as understood in this study necessitated rich and thick descriptions of both context and standards and criteria. Descriptions of standards and criteria as understood in this study had to include all aspects of the competence of student teachers as assessors, on one hand, leading to rich descriptions, while bearing in mind that these standards and criteria were studied as phenomena-in-context that resulted in thick descriptions, of the context, particularly, on the other.

In applying these strategies to enhance the trustworthiness of the study, the researcher applied all three lenses referred to by Creswell and Poth (2018), in order to enhance further the trustworthiness of findings of the study.

4.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The research design, focusing on research methods, was presented in this chapter. The rationale for the empirical research was clarified first. A critical reflection on the philosophical frameworks underpinning the research design was set out after which the research approach including data collecting methods, document analysis and hermeneutic phenomenological interviews and how data was analysed was explained and illustrated. The chapter concluded with detailed accounts of the measures implemented to ensure ethical integrity as well as trustworthiness of the study. While this chapter focused on how the research was done, Chapter 5 presents the findings resulting from the fieldwork conducted in this study.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the findings of the empirical research employed. The process used to collect qualitative data was indicated in Chapter 4, section 4.6 as illustrated in Figure 14, and employed two research methods: QDA and HPI. The details pertaining to documents analysed during QDA as well as biographical information related to the participants interviewed in the HPI, are presented first in this introduction to the chapter. The findings of this study are presented after that, in sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4.

5.1.1 Documents analysed in QDA

Two sets of data analysed in the empirical work of this study are indicated here: documents analysed to describe context, as well as documents analysed to describe standards and criteria. The documents analysed to describe the context in which student teachers are assessed are indicated in Table 5.1.1, below.

Table 5.1.1 Documents analysed to describe the assessment context		
<i>Documents related to Foundational competence</i>	<i>Documents related to Applied competence</i>	<i>Documents related to Applied competence in Subject Methodologies</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNISA Module Planning Grid for AED3701 (1) - Tutorial Letter 101 for Assessment Theory Module AED3701 (1) - The prescribed text for the module (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tutorial Letters 101 of Teaching practice modules (6) - Tutorial Letters 103 – Teaching Practice Portfolio requirements (6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tutorial Letters 101 for Geography Methodology and English Home Language Methodology (2) - Tutorial Letters 103 – Subject didactics Portfolio requirements (2) - UNISA Module Form for TMS3716 – Home Language Methodology (1) - Teaching Geography Only Guide for TMS3713 (1)
<i>Documents relevant to an ODL context</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNISA Website and Tutorial Letter 301 - Preparation for Distance Education 		
<i>Documents referred to the researcher during interviews</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNISA College of Education Training Manual for Teaching Practice Supervisors and Mentor Teachers - UNISA College of Education Guidelines for Teaching Practice Supervisors and Mentor Teachers 		

The data relevant to standards and criteria as defined in this study were derived from several documents containing lists of standards and/or criteria/descriptors of aspects of the competence of teachers or student teachers as assessors, as indicated in Table 5.2, below. The data are listed in three sections. Section A contains data from documents describing the competence of student teachers or teachers in a list of related abilities or standards only: no progression of competence is indicated. Section B includes documents that mark progression of competence over a number of phases or levels of competence/proficiency. Third, the authors of the documents are indicated in the right-hand column. Tables 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 list the documents analysed in the qualitative document analyses (QDA). In the hermeneutical phenomenological interviews (HPI) conducted, sixteen participants were interviewed.

Section A No grading of standards	Author/s and titles
1. Ghana (GHA)	Ministry of Education (Ghana). 2017. <i>National Teachers' Standards for Ghana: Guidelines - Updated version, November 2017.</i>
2. New Zealand (NZ)	Education Council New Zealand. (ECNZ) (2015). <i>Practising teacher standards and criteria</i>
3. SACE (SA1)	South African Council for Educators. 2020. <i>SACE Professional Teaching Standards.</i>
4. Germany (GER)	Schneider, C. and Bodensohn, R. 2017. <i>Student teachers' appraisal of the importance of assessment in teacher education and self-reports on the development of assessment competence</i>
5. USA California (1) (USA1)	Commission on Teacher Credentialing (2016) <i>California Teaching Performance Expectations</i>
Section B Grading at several levels	Author/s and titles
6. Australia (AUS)	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL): (2011). <i>Australian Professional Standards for Teachers</i>
7. UNISA (1) (UN1)	UNISA (n.d.) <i>Working document – Student Teacher Standards</i>
8. IQMS (SA2)	Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) n.d. <i>Integrated Quality Management System</i>
9. USA (INTASC) (2) (USA2)	Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) 2013. <i>Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Model of Core Teaching Standards and Learning Progressions for Teachers 1.0: A Resource for Ongoing Teacher Development.</i>
10. Japan (JAP)	JACET SIG (2013) <i>J-POSTL</i> and Sakai, S. 2014. <i>Toward Setting Professional Standards for Teacher Development in Japan</i>
11. United Kingdom (UK)	Department for Education U.K. (2013) <i>Teachers' Standards and Descriptors</i>
12. SALRubric (SR)	Edwards, F. (2017). <i>A rubric to track the development of secondary pre-service and novice teachers' summative assessment literacy.</i>
13. USA (Massachusetts) (USA3)	Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, (DESE) 2019. <i>Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation.</i>

14. USA (CUSD) (3) (USA4)	Coronado Unified School District (CUSD) (2010). California Department of Education, Commission on Teacher Credentialing and New Teacher Centre. <i>Continuum of Teaching Practice.</i>
15. UNISA (2) (UN2)	UNISA (n.d.) <i>Module Planning Grid AED3701 Working Document</i>

5.1.2 Participants interviewed in HPI

The research design envisaged several categories of information-rich individuals to be interviewed. (See Chapter 1, section 1.8.1). The list of participants interviewed is indicated in Table 5.1.3, reflecting categories of participants, pseudonyms, relevant qualifications, years of experience in the field of ITE and evaluation of student teachers or those being examined as student teachers in a distance education context.

Category	Pseudo	Qualification	Experience
Programme managers	Joey	D.Ed	30 years+
	Jessie	Ph.D	20 years+
	Lodi	Ph.D	30 years+
	Lucy	D.Ed	15 years+
	Lizzie	Ph.D	20 years+
Lecturers of assessment theory modules	Allie	Ph.D	15 years+
	Ellie	Ph.D	25Years+
Lecturers teaching practice modules	Kitty	M.Ed	10 years
	Bessie	PhD	15 Years+
	Hank	D.Ed	10 years+
Mentors and supervisors	Cathy	M.Ed	20 years+
	Pete	B Ed Honours	15 Years+
	Hollie	B.Sc Honours	12 Years+
Recently qualified teachers	Ted	B.A & PGCE	12 years+
	Lunie	B.Sc& PGCE	5 years+
	Lottie	B.Com & GCE	2 years

The experience of all participants, with the exception of Ted, Lunie and Lottie, overlap in terms of categories and related experience. These participants had considerable experience as mentors receiving student teachers in their classrooms when they were teachers: they were extensively involved with assessing student teachers in ITE modules related to assessment theory and/or teaching practice. Some such as Lodi, Bessie and Lizzie did so in both distance and contact delivery contexts. Several participants such as Joey, Lodi, Bessie and Lizzie have had international experience

in teacher education and assessment of student teachers. All participants, except Lunie and Lottie, were selected for their knowledge of assessment as a key area in teaching and learning in education. Ted, for example, was an experienced programme manager in an industry outside teacher education for more than a decade. He did the PGCE to learn more about assessment in teaching and learning in spite of his extensive experience. Bessie, Lizzie, Hollie and Kitty were selected by means of snow-ball sampling, having been referred to the researcher by participants during the first round of interviews, particularly for their experience in, and passion for, assessment in teacher education.

In the second round of interviews, the emphasis was on delving deeper into both contextual and standards and criteria-related issues related to the study, bearing in mind that these were conducted after insights were gained in the two qualitative document analyses. Kitty, Lodi, Allie, Bessie, and Lizzie were interviewed in the second round of interviews, after document analyses were completed. Bessie, Lizzie, Kitty and Hollie were only interviewed in the second round of interviews because they were referred to the researcher during the first round and circumstances only allowed for including them in the second round. Some of the aspects dealt with in the first interviews were included in the interviews of these participants where applicable.

As indicated in Chapter 4, Section 4.6.4, the results of the QDA and HPI conducted in this study were used to formulate the findings presented here. The researcher analysed both sets of documents. One related to contexts and the other related to standards and criteria. Drafted preliminary findings were based on these analyses. These preliminary findings are recorded in two annexures. Annexure G contains detailed findings related to context. Annexure H is a summary of those, while Annexure I contains detailed findings related to standards and criteria. These preliminary findings were fragmented and did not include inputs from participants in the HPI conducted. The researcher analysed the transcribed interviews and incorporated insights from the QDA in the two annexures to draft the findings from the empirical work completed. The findings presented here are numbered as indicated in Table 5.1.4.

Table 5.1.4: Overview of findings		
Findings from Phases	Description and discussion of findings from ...	Numbers
1, 2 and 4	... first and second rounds of interviews as well as the document analysis related to the distance education context at UNISA College of Education	5.2.1 to 5.2.3
3 and 4	... document analyses related to standards and criteria for assessing student teachers as assessors as well as analyses of second-round interviews	5.3.1 to 5.3.4
All phases	... QDA and HPI as informed by literature overviews in Chapters 2 and 3	5.4.1 to 5.4.3

5.2 FINDINGS RELATED TO A DISTANCE EDUCATION CONTEXT IN WHICH THE COMPETENCE OF STUDENT TEACHERS AS ASSESSORS ARE ASSESSED.

Introduction

Findings describing the context echoed the voices of the authors of the context describing documents analysed as well as those of the participants in the phenomenological interviews conducted in both rounds. Findings were presented in **bold** and formulated in an abbreviated way concentrating on the essence of every finding. Each finding is then described as formulated in essential detail in a first paragraph, followed by an overview of participant views and experiences related to the finding. All direct and verbatim views expressed by participants are given in *italics*, to suggest the voices of the participants. The researcher's voice is included in a brief summary discussion rounding off the finding or aspect of a finding. This approach resulted in thick, rich and detailed descriptions of the standards and criteria as envisaged in this study as phenomena-in-context.

Three major findings related to context are presented: (i) that there is a fracture between the ideal of student teacher competence as assessors and what is delivered in reality; (ii) that there are several challenges when assessing student teacher competence in a distance education context; and (iii) a variety of approaches are

used to meet these challenges and address the fracture between the ideal and reality regarding student teachers' competence as assessors.

5.2.1 A fracture between the ideal and the reality of the competence of student teachers as assessors

The ideal is that student teachers are competent assessors who can assess learners effectively as beginner teachers. The reality, however, is that they do not reach such a level of competence during ITE in a distance education context as delivered by the UNISA College of Education. The fracture between ideal and reality resulted as a consequence of a complex of factors. This finding was derived from QDA Findings G1 – G4 (in Annexure G) as well as participant experiences and views in HPI. Lucy, when asked towards the end of the interview: "In your experience, what are the critical standards and criteria for assessing student teachers as assessors in a distance education context?", indicated that *ideally* (own emphasis), student teachers should display several abilities that she listed in statements very similar to outcome statements. When Lucy's list of abilities are interpreted and categorised within SAQA's understanding of applied competence discerned in this study in Chapter 2, section 2.2.4, the following emerge, incorporating Lucy's list into SAQA's views on three constituent competencies underpinning applied competence:

Foundational competencies:

- *Demonstrate a critical understanding of theoretical underpinnings of teaching, learning and assessment, including curriculum, that brings back assessment into teaching and learning*

Practical competencies:

- *Formulate meaningful tasks at different levels of difficulty;*
- *Write outcomes and associated assessment standards and criteria for assessment tasks*
- *Design items for tests and examinations*

Reflexive competencies:

- *Interpret the cognitive demands of learners*
- *Give meaningful feedback and feed forward*

Applied competencies:

- *Analyse learner responses to assessment tasks*
- *Conduct item analysis after assessment and use the results for revising assessments and teaching approaches*

Viewed holistically, Lucy's list of abilities describes the ideal student teacher as an assessor, implying that ITE should deliver student teachers with these abilities prior to them entering the profession. The list corresponds with the results of literature overviewed and findings from documents analysed to discern standards and criteria for assessing student teachers as assessors in a distance education context. (See Table. 5.2.7 in this chapter, and section 2.2.5 and Figure 7 in Chapter 2.). It is critical to bear in mind that both the B Ed and PGCE qualifications aim to foster *self-reflexivity and self-understanding* (own emphasis) among prospective teachers (UNISA Website: 2021). Being competent in the abilities in Lucy's list contributes to student teachers' self-reflexivity and self-understanding as assessors in particular, as emphasised by Lucy, and confirmed by Joey, Lodi, Bessie, Ellie and Lizzie. As far as the standard of competence of graduates ITE providers should aim at, Joey indicated that ideally '*... student teachers should be at the same level of competence as beginner teachers*'.

The reality, however, is that student teachers do not reach such a level of competence in all the competencies indicated above, during ITE in a distance education context. Joey indicated that *... we are aiming for someone to be prepared to start as a beginner teacher...but they can't be expected to be competent as assessors when they start teaching. They will learn on the job... so the level we are talking about in terms of competence as a student teacher, is that of a beginner teacher.* Jessie responded in this regard that *... the moment that they enter the schools,... they've got a survival kit available just to get them going, but they know what to expect ... they will definitely have to be trained more in practice, it must be in practice.* Lottie's experience as a recently qualified teacher, confirmed this by stating: *I realised, ... you know what, you need time in front of the class, you need time behind your desk, prepping and doing assessments, being mentored and shadowed for a while... .* These views substantiated the notion of the teacher education continuum, implying that competence at student teacher level needs to articulate with continued competence development as beginner teachers.

With regard to the question of whether the reality of not achieving the ideal is a consequence of a distance education approach to ITE, Jessie and Hank argued that large numbers of student teachers in a distance education context do make it difficult to teach assessment skills and even more challenging to assess them in doing actual assessments. Joey and Lodi, however, having had experience in both contact and distance education ITE contexts, regard the difficulty of assessing student teachers as assessors as a universal concern. With reference to assessing student teachers during teaching practice, in both distance education and contact contexts, Lodi indicated that challenges include the effect of the observer being in the classroom, the observer not necessarily being a subject matter expert in the subject taught by the student teacher, and that observing the ability to evaluate requires more than observing one lesson as evidence of competence as assessors. He indicated that informal and formative assessment undertaken during a lesson can be assessed, only if and when it occurs, but formal summative assessments are virtually not observable and therefore not able to be assessed, in both contexts, unless the assessor spends several days in the classroom. Joey, when asked if contact programmes have a better chance of preparing student teachers, and whether he regards this concern to be unique to South African teacher education, responded: *I don't think so, because the people I work with in Australia say exactly the same thing ... beginner teachers get to the school and they are not prepared, the school managers say the first-time employed teachers come to them and they cannot ...* . This prompted the question: Although they can teach, they can't necessarily assess? *Joey responded: They also can't teach.* During the second round of interviews, another participant, being a programme manager at a university in Australia agreed by stating that: *... we do not prepare our graduate teachers to have some kind of capacity to assess summative tasks in particular, ... , and it is not good enough to say, they can do... informal assessment, they can do ... formative assessment, yet they can't do summative assessment.*

Joey commented as follows on the seemingly innate reality that recently qualified teachers traditionally only really learned how to teach and assess once they were appointed as beginner teachers, encapsulating what is experienced by teachers universally: *I mean, you start teaching and you learn by teaching, and you learn by assessing, because up to that stage I had no idea how to do it. I mean, I did not learn*

at university how to teach, unfortunately, and the first two years, I was a terrible teacher until I found a way of dealing with it, and I can't remember that assessment specifically was a challenge. I think everything was a challenge at that stage... . Whether this is still the case was pursued in the interviews with other participants. All five participants questioned in second round interviews confirmed that currently similar realities still exist.

There is a complex of reasons for why student teacher competence as assessors is an elusive ideal for both student teachers and for ITE assessors of student teachers. These reasons are reflected in participant experiences.

Joey, Jessie and Lodi indicated that demonstrating competence as an assessor is challenging for a student teacher because applied competence as an assessor has to be demonstrated in a real-life classroom context. During teaching practice, many student teachers are not allowed by the receiving teacher or school management to do formal summative assessments during their placement at the school. In addition, the complexities of the teaching practice triad (Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2) manifested in the interviews in several instances. Joey, Jessie, Lizzie and Bessie indicated that the relations in the triad are complex and often lack clear guidelines according to which assessment of student teachers should be done by the receiving teacher who is expected to be a mentor to the student teacher.

Lodi and Joey indicated that evaluating student teachers as assessors in more formal contexts is even more difficult because it requires that the evaluator should observe a lesson in which an assessment task is presented. S/he has to have insight into how the learners' responses were assessed by the student teacher, and how feedback is given to students afterwards. This is often only observable in the next lesson when the evaluator may not be there anymore to observe feedback processes and related student teacher behaviour, even including how the results may be used to inform teaching and learning in future lessons.

Jessie, Joey and Lodi experienced that expecting the receiving teacher during teaching practice to assess the competence of the student teacher is fraught with challenges. According to them, only dedicated receiving teachers who regard their

engagement with student teachers as a mentoring obligation, do justice to such assessments. It is often the case that the assessment of student teachers' abilities tends to be lenient, and favourable towards the student teacher, because a receiving teacher needs to maintain a workable relation with the person who spends a few weeks in the classroom and the school with them. These observations are manifestations of the complexities of evaluating student teachers in the teaching practice triad (as referred to by Aspden, 2017 in Chapter 3, Section 3.2.2). Joey touched on another related concern indicating that at the UNISA College of Education ... *we have a lot of schools that are not very functional, which means that the opportunities would be even less there. In good schools, we get some good feedback from students in terms of the mentoring they receive in all aspects of teaching. They do get opportunities and it is definitely to their benefit but that is limited, and even in contact universities, my daughter studied teaching, ...and had two mentors ... She indicated that the only thing she learned from them, is how not to teach, and how not to assess. We have a problem that even if they go to school, and even if they are allowed to assess, they do not only see good practice.* Hollie, a teaching practice co-ordinator at a prestigious school, described the other side of the coin, that it was often observed that receiving teachers even behaved in ways reflecting feelings of being threatened or feeling inferior to student teachers, especially when student teachers perform very well or seemingly better in classrooms than they do. Bessie's experiences were similar.

Jessie raised several concerns with regard to a distance education context and large numbers of students, such as not being able to assess all domains of competence; about authenticity of evidence; about difficulty in evaluating the ability to reflect on assessments done; and concerns about sufficiency of evidence in evaluating teaching practice or subject methodology portfolios. As indicated, she experienced these concerns in teaching and assessing language methodology specifically. Ellie, one of the participants who taught the assessment theory module, regards authenticity as a concern – *[Assessing practical aspects] is difficult because you don't have evidence, you know, ... sometimes they send in evidence but you don't have proof that it is the student's own work.* This prompted a question about the challenges of assessing students' ability to assess. Response by Ellie: *You can ... mostly assess their theoretical knowledge, the foundational competence, but it is very difficult to assess*

the applied competence, the practical, their ability to assess in a distance education situation, because what you often see on paper, is not, you are not certain that it is their own work... . This refers to student teachers including evidence in their portfolio's that are clearly not their own work, yet they are not successful in presenting it as authentic evidence: ... and it is difficult to assess their ability to reflect on an assessment because they didn't go ... through all the steps, in the assignment, they just had to mark this essay, or had to mark this examination paper, but they didn't have time to implement the examination paper and see which questions they had to change in the next assessment.

This response prompted a question suggesting that newly appointed teachers do not consciously recognise that they are busy with a phase or step in the assessment process, at any given time. Ellie: *Yes. They just do it. ... But they do it intuitively..., they don't know that they are busy with planning, or busy with implementing... .* When prompted to reflect on the sufficiency of evidence received, Jessie responded: *Definitely not, because ... you can focus on writing, the assessment of writing and grammar in a way, but otherwise you can't focus on assessment of speaking and reading and listening.* She indicated that this was relevant to teaching and assessing language methodology specifically. During the second round interview, Lizzie reported similar experiences in Australia, at a university doing both contact and distance ITE.

The experiences of participants referred to above clearly confirm that there is a fracture or disjuncture between the ideal of what is expected and the reality of what is achieved situation when it comes to the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context. It confirms the need for describing competence as assessors in detail, irrespective of whether aspects of such competence are easy, difficult to assess, or not assessable at all in the current distance education model applied by the UNISA College of Education. In the second round of interviews, Bessie underscored the importance of assessment in the teaching and learning situation, and as a consequence of competence as assessors, as follows: *... for me it is, the crux of the matter, it is the heart of education, everything either comes together or falls flat if we don't get assessment right. There has to be a focus on summative assessment in particular,...so assessment is really, really critical.* Despite the importance of

assessment in education, evaluating the competence of student teachers as assessors presents several challenges, most of which are related to the reasons for the fracture between ideal and real described above.

5.2.2 Challenges in assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors

Several challenges were experienced in assessing student teachers as assessors in the context in which the UNISA College of Education delivers ITE. This finding was derived from experiences of participants and views related to possible reasons for the fracture between ideal and real achievement of student teachers as assessors. The challenges identified in this regard include A. Evaluating large numbers of student teachers in a distance education context, B. Assessing student teachers' competence in summative assessment being virtually impossible, and C. Curriculum issues pertaining to language of learning and teaching (LOLT) and theoretical foundations of the current curriculum.

Challenge A.

Evaluating large numbers of students nationwide in difficult circumstances

Evaluating student teachers during teaching practice is challenging given the numbers and circumstances such as geographical distribution of student teachers. This challenge has been exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching practice in particular.

Hank gave an overview of the scope of work: ... *we make use of external supervisors, [who] are all over the country, in total we have about 400, if not more by now. [They are] external supervisors who are very well experienced teachers, some of them have been in the education offices, district officials and so on ... So we use them to go and assess our students, we also use our lecturers of UNISA, as internal supervisors, [who] also go and visit our students and assess them and then of course, ... we depend mostly on the mentor teacher's assessment and the feedback that we get from the mentor teacher regarding the assessment.* Hank indicated that ... *in reality it is difficult to reach each student at least once in ... four years to be visited by a university supervisor.* Student teachers per university supervisor were indicated as 100:1. Hank

indicated that in 2021, as many as 72 566 students were registered in ITE programmes with UNISA College of Education. The geographical distribution of student teachers makes reaching all of them by internal or external supervisors a very challenging task as student teachers are placed at schools all over the country, many being placed at schools not functioning well at all. (See Joey's views with regard to school functionality). Hank remarked: *We must bear in mind that many student teachers will end up teaching in those very same schools, so we argue that it is useful to expose them to the realities out there, rather than creating unrealistic expectations if we only place them at well-functioning schools... it is impossible to do so anyhow, given the numbers.*

The nature of engagement between supervisor and student teacher is described by Hank as follows: *... the supervisor is going to spend half an hour with the student, when the student is presenting the lesson, but before the lesson starts, the student teacher is supposed to give the supervisor the written lesson plan... .* Hank speculated that such a plan may include evidence of assessment done by the student teacher: *I suppose that documentation may also include an example of a test that the [learners may] write about this lesson... .* When prompted regarding supervisors being subject matter experts in the subjects student teachers teach during their visits, Hank responded: *... it is a debate we continue to have in our College ... amongst the lecturers, but no. It is totally impossible, ... let's say in Kuruman, a small village in the countryside , we have five students, we have identified one supervisor ... staying in Upington, two hundred kilometres from Kuruman, ... driving to Kuruman, so he will assess one student teaching Grade R, and may also assess another student teaching matric learners.* According to Hank, this does not detract from the quality of assessments done by supervisors, but illustrates the difficulties logistically. Hank indicated that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on implementing teaching practice during 2020 and 2021 was immense. (Refer to Chapter 3, section 3.7). Very few student teachers were visited by supervisors during 2020 and even in 2021. The UNISA College of Education had no choice but to revise their approach and rely on receiving teachers to assess student teachers during teaching practice.

It is clear from this participant's experiences that the context of teacher education generally, and of teaching practice in particular, changed dramatically with the COVID-

19 pandemic. Large numbers of student teachers have to be placed in schools nationwide, supervised, visited and assessed, when access is severely limited due to restrictions and schools being closed for several weeks at a time. Since standards and criteria as defined in this study are studied as phenomena-in-context, the impact of the pandemic needs to be considered even though such a context does not change the essence of the competence of student teachers as assessors fundamentally. The practice of assessing student teachers effectively in a COVID-19 context is enhanced by concentrating on, and using, clearly described standards and criteria for assessing their competence as assessors.

Challenge B.

Assessing student teachers' competence in summative assessment, being virtually impossible

Participant experiences clearly indicate that students benefit from studying theory, policy and curriculum in the assessment theory module, but indicated that assessing practical application is challenging. Several aspects of competence as assessors cannot be assessed within the current distance education and teaching practice context as evidence of these aspects is only observable during teaching practice. The lecturer responsible for the theoretical module depends on assessors (university supervisors and/or receiving teachers) of teaching practice for assessing practical application of what is learnt in the theory module. Contrary to expectation, there seems to be insufficient coordination regarding assessment strategies, including standards and criteria used to assess competence as assessors in assessment theory and teaching practice modules.

Ellie indicated that it is challenging to assess several crucial aspects of practical application of assessment theory, policy and curriculum. These include: assessment implementation, feedback and reflection - *it is difficult to assess these skills and also the values and to assess them really as reflective practitioners. ... it is very difficult to assess if you don't see the student in practice. ... So you don't know how the student teacher approaches the learners, or what is exactly happening in the class if you are not there, and we rely on mentors ... on their [judgements] and marks that they award students. [It is also] difficult because you don't have evidence, ... they might send in*

evidence, but you don't have proof that it is the student's own work. Allie also indicated that *...the theoretical part is adequate to prepare the students, but the practical part of it in the application ... for that, we go to teaching practice ...* When prompted on co-operation among lecturers responsible for the assessment theory and teaching practice modules, Ellie responded: *I think it is quite rigid, I don't think it is transparent enough, so I think there is room for improvement.*

Assessing summative assessments is virtually impossible during teaching practice, in the current context because university supervisors observe one lesson and spend half an hour with a student teacher providing feedback in a debriefing conversation. Virtually no direct evidence is provided by the student teacher in terms of all the steps in a summative assessment process. At most, they are required to reflect on what they observed in schools, particularly when the receiving teacher does the summative assessments. Although it is virtually impossible to assess summative assessment ability, supervisors are required to assess both formative and summative assessment done by the student teacher during teaching practice. Supervisors can make judgements on formative assessments since these should happen during every lesson observed and assessed but not on summative assessments.

Hank, referring to the manual used, (UNISA, 2012) responded as follows: *Regarding the teaching practice and the role of the supervisor, we don't really ask that kind of feedback, [although] I think it is extremely important to take note of it and to incorporate it in the feedback that we get, specifically regarding the summative assessment ...* . He referred the researcher to an experienced teaching practice co-ordinator and supervisor with whom a telephone interview was conducted. This participant, (pseudonym Hollie) confirmed that it is impossible to make an accurate judgement about the ability to conduct a summative assessment, when one lesson only is observed. She indicated that a more effective approach is followed by another university which requires that three consecutive lessons are observed, allowing the student teacher to provide evidence of preparing for summative assessment, implementing the task, assessing learner responses, and providing feedback. Hollie indicated that judgements on the ability to conduct summative assessments should be left to receiving teachers who may have more opportunities to observe the entire process. According to Joey, assessments by receiving teachers are only credible in

schools that function well and where receiving teachers take their responsibility as mentors seriously. This means that only some student teachers, those that are fortunate to be placed at a well-functioning school where receiving teachers engage with student teachers as mentors, have opportunities to improve their summative assessment ability, and be assessed effectively by the receiving teacher. As far as the assessment of student teachers by receiving teachers is concerned, the complexities of the teaching practice triad need to be borne in mind.

Some receiving teachers do allow student teachers to assess learners in formal assessments during teaching practice. Many others, however, do not, for various reasons. These reasons include high stakes assessments, workload and issues related to mentoring student teachers, as confirmed by participants Bessie, Joey and Lizzie. The consequences are that most student teachers do not have sufficient opportunities to practise assessment skills, and they are not assessed adequately prior to entering the profession, particularly with regard to summative assessments.

Student teachers achieve competence as assessors at beginner teacher level but only when the mentors or receiving teachers regard their role as part of their responsibilities as a professional teacher. (See Ted's experiences being guided and assisted by a true mentor). Pete, an experienced receiving teacher, indicated that giving student teachers opportunities to set tests and examinations and other assessment tasks, is important, ... *because if you want [to see what learners have learnt] from what you [have taught] the learners, you should be able to implement an assessment like a test or an exam ... to see if they know the work ... and whether the student teacher can do the assessment.* Cathy views the ability as crucial, yet indicated that student teachers and beginner teachers cannot set assessment tasks: *Never did one of them come to me and tell me listen I have set this assessment task, can you please moderate it. You know what they do? They use activities from the textbook.* Pete had similar experiences indicating that they ... *use pre-standardised tests, which were compiled by someone else, but I think, as a teacher you should have the skills and abilities to set your own exam papers and test papers.* He indicated that student teachers he received and mentored could cope with setting their own assessments, or adapting assessment task in textbooks, provided they were assisted by him as an experienced teacher and mentor.

Cathy described engagement with student teachers as intense yet enjoyable: *I had them every day, and it was ... for the whole month ... I was one of those teachers, I am there all the time when they teach. In the end, I am responsible for them, so I was in the class every time they teach.* On the question, "Did you allow student teachers to mark tests?", she responded: *I did. I ... never let them mark it at home. They had to mark at school in my presence, and then I made it very clear to them that if they don't understand the answer they need to ask me. You know those interpretations of answers ... but no, to be honest, I don't let them mark Grade 12s. They mark Grade 9s. And that was fine because it was more straightforward, and if she wasn't sure, she came and asked.* Pete allowed student teachers to mark formal assessments such as tests. He indicated that concerns such as limited time spent on teaching practice, inexperience as assessors, and even sometimes displaying a lack of appropriate values and attitudes, are all surmountable if student teachers are provided assistance and support by their mentors (receiving teachers). An illustration of commitment as a mentor comes from Cathy. In all other aspects of school life beyond teaching in the classroom, she expected student teachers to shadow her, no matter where she went or what she did. She expected to see the student teacher there, with her, observing what she was doing and asking questions about it at the appropriate time. Obviously, being a dedicated mentor, Cathy would explain what she was doing and why, even when the student teacher did not ask. Pete and Cathy showed that dedicated and effective mentoring is a condition for developing the competence of student teachers as assessors during teaching practice. Assessing summative assessment ability remains a challenge, however, even when student teachers are mentored effectively by receiving teachers.

The context in which practical skills and abilities are assessed plays a crucial part in the effective assessment of student teachers as assessors. Even if the standards and criteria for practical summative assessment are clearly described, and made available to student teachers and mentors, as well as university supervisors, this ability can only be assessed if the context allows for observation of evidence provided throughout the summative assessment process - preparing, implementing, providing feedback and reviewing assessments.

The complexities of the teaching practice triad are relevant here, particularly with regard to university supervisors and receiving teachers using their own personal notion of a “good teacher/good assessor”, rather than a set of standards and criteria provided by the university when assessing student teachers. (See Chapter 3, section 3.4.5 and 3.4.6.) At a deeper level of analysis, during the second round interview, Bessie’s reference to Schoenfeld’s (2011) views regarding teacher decision making, applies. In-the-moment decision-making of teachers can be modelled and explained as a function of three interrelated domains: (i) their knowledge and other intellectual, social, and material resources; (ii) their goals; and (iii) their beliefs, values, and preferences. Townsley and Schmid (2020) propose alternative forms of grading as an entry point for faculty incrementally progressing toward competency-based education axioms in higher education. The implication is that ideally, standards and criteria for assessing student teachers as assessors should be congruent with the resources of mentor teachers, including their knowledge, their beliefs and their goals related to the assessment of learners.

This finding underscores the view that learning to become competent as an assessor depends on the quality of mentoring provided by the receiving teacher. The participants found that assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors was manageable, given the opportunities to do so during teaching practice. Both Pete and Cathy referred the researcher to the instruments used by the university when asked about the standards and criteria used in assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors during teaching practice and in examining subject didactics portfolios. The portfolio templates were analysed in the document analysis done after the first round of interviews were completed.

Challenge C

Curriculum issues pertaining to language of learning and teaching (LOLT) and theoretical foundation of the curriculum

Lucy, one of the programme managers, raised concerns related to curriculum issues in terms of the language of instruction context. (See Annexure G, Finding G8). She feared that such issues detract from good assessment practice. This concern is presented here since it relates to foundational competence and reflective ability which are developed and assessed mainly in the assessment theory module. The

foundational competence of student teachers includes a critical understanding of curriculum issues as indicated in Chapter 2 (2.1.3) describing teacher competence. (See the first competence or ability Lucy mentioned in Finding 5.2.1, in this regard, namely, ... *a critical understanding of theoretical underpinnings of teaching, learning and assessment, including curriculum, that brings back assessment into teaching and learning*). Two salient aspects related to the current curriculum context in South Africa are pertinent here, as well as the implications of these for their ability to assess learners in the current (CAPS) curriculum. The first relates to language development of learners and the use of English as the language of learning and teaching (LOLT), and the second, to the shift from a social-constructivist underpinned curriculum resulting in a flexible and open educational state to an instructional transmission underpinned curriculum resulting in a more rigid and solid educational state.

Lucy indicated that student teachers should have a clear understanding of these critical issues related to the CAPS curriculum. With specific reference to mother tongue education and English as language of learning and teaching (LOLT), impacting on the teacher, and by implication the student teacher as assessor, Lucy argued: [The curriculum provides for] ... *mother tongue education in the foundation phase, up to grade 3 with English as a subject. So English ... is a communication tool, but it is dealt with as a subject and not to build the basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), to prepare a learner to move towards more sophisticated use of language and benefit from English as LOLT. In our research we found that BICS ought to be in place before a learner can move to cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). BICS ought to be taught up to grade 6, and then you can move gradually to cognitive academic language proficiency, but currently, there is what many refer to as the "Grade 4 slump". When BICS has not been established sufficiently in three years of dealing with English as a subject, [the effect] ... hits the learner straight in the face in the senior phase. So it is a culmination of things not being in place.* The researcher then asked: Have you done any work in that context that focuses specifically on consequences regarding the assessment model currently used in schools in South Africa?

Lucy's response: *Yes, ... if you have a look at CAPS, Section 4, ... the current model for all the grades, it is mostly assessment-driven. There is less emphasis on SBA and*

more on summative examinations... You see the BICS towards CALP, ... it is ... a teaching, learning and assessment problem. It is a curriculum problem as well, because if you have a look at what is stipulated in the curriculum, the kind of tasks are limited to BIGS. However, it suddenly is CALP in the intermediate phase, and ... [the learners'] basic inter-personal communication skills are not in place. So [they] cannot deal with the language as a language of learning, a language of teaching, language of interacting amongst learners. If you suddenly do not have cognitive academic language proficiency underpinned in the senior phase, how do you prepare learners for the last three years of schooling? The implication is that student teachers should have a deep and critical understanding of this concern, and those preparing for the intermediate and senior phases, in particular, should be aware of the implications for teaching and assessing learners. (Refer to Cummins, 2016, on the relation between and development of BICS and CALP in language development and the consequences of development in this regard, for second language English users in an educational context).

Probing for assessment-related implications, the researcher asked: But isn't that part of the reason why there is such a strong focus on content-based summative assessment rather than developing a broad spectrum of skills when assessed in a constructivist approach? Lucy responded: ... *When we moved from the NCS to RNCS to the amended CAPS curriculum a lot got lost along the way, because we moved from a social constructivist underpinned curriculum to an instructional transmission model. The amendment towards CAPS, was a full re-curriculumation ... towards a topic-driven and a content driven curriculum. Now, for some teachers it came as a relief, because CAPS indicates what they have to teach, when you have to teach it, how much time you have to spend, and how do you have to assess it, with limited guidelines in terms of assessment. But for the innovative teacher it was a boxing mechanism, ... not allowing him to do his own thing, ... now some of the teachers can move beyond the box and ... work across the curriculum but what happened as well, in terms of curriculum demarcation, we moved from a horizontal demarcation to a strict subject boundary vertical demarcation.* This led to the question: Have we gone back to the silos? ('Silos' refer here to vertical compartmentalisation with rigid subject boundary demarcation in curriculum, here). Lucy responded: *Yes, and for the teachers who struggled with learning programme development and so forth... it came as a relief.*

This finding has to be understood in relation to the context described in Chapter 3, Section 3.2. It is particularly important given the self-evident reality that most learners in the South African education system are second, or even third language English users. The same applies to teachers. (See Department of Basic Education, 2012 and Cummins, 2016). Student teachers have to demonstrate a deep and critical understanding of assessment as it manifests in the school curriculum. A competent student teacher as assessor (and as subject teacher) understands the relevance of school curricula to evaluation of learners generally, and the relevance of the CAPS curriculum as it developed since democratisation in South Africa, including the challenges created in the current curriculum when it comes to assessing learners within a language of teaching and learning (LOLT) context.

Competent student teacher assessors must demonstrate a deep and critical understanding of the impact of BICS, CALP and LOLT on one hand, and of the shift from a social constructivist underpinned curriculum to an instructional transmission curriculum, on the other. They have to be able to appreciate and evaluate the effect of these, and other curriculum issues on assessing learning and learners. Standards and criteria for assessing student teachers as reliable, consistent and accurate assessors help to build up such an appreciation of assessment in a curriculum context.

This finding identified several interrelated challenges in assessing the competence of student teacher assessors in a distance education context at the UNISA College of Education. In the second round of interviews, the researcher probed participants to share experiences related to ways and means being employed to meet these challenges, concentrating on assessing competence as assessors in a distance education context, specifically.

5.2.3 Approaches to meet the challenges in assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context

Several approaches were indicated by participants in both first and second round interviews that address or mitigate the challenges referred to in Finding 5.2.2. Such approaches include: (i) identifying what can be assessed and assessing those aspects

as effectively as possible; (ii) enhancing the use of teaching practice placements as opportunities for evaluating student teachers by receiving teachers as effective mentors as well as university supervisors; (iii) instilling a culture of reflection in student teachers to become reflective practitioners capable of self-development; (iv) relying on continued professional development and learning of student teachers once they become beginner teachers within the teacher education continuum; (v) considering prolonged periods of placement for teaching practice, and (vi) using clearly described standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context to facilitate all the approaches mentioned above. Obviously considerable overlaps exist among approaches. This finding was derived from QDA findings G1 – G4 in Annexure G as well as participant responses related to each of these approaches described below. These approaches are numbered for the sake of referencing and clarity.

Approach (i)

Identifying what can be assessed effectively and assessing those aspects as effectively as possible

This approach incorporates several ideas emanating from the interviews conducted in the study. These include: (i) identifying aspects that can be assessed effectively, (ii) assessing the foundational competence of student teachers as assessors, (iii) considering the way assessment theory (content) is being assessed, (iv) assessing some practical aspects of assessment such as planning and assessment design, (v) enhancing the quality of mentoring of student teachers, (vi) assessing practical aspects of assessment in teaching practice portfolio assessment, as well as (vii) assessing the ability to apply theory, policy and CAPS curriculum in the assessment of subject methodology modules. These are overlapping ideas which should be considered as a multi-pronged approach to manage the fracture between ideal and reality in the context of this study.

The QDA of context-related documents (Findings G1 –G4 in Annexure G) indicated that several aspects of competence as assessors are assessed effectively. Joey confirmed this and indicated that in the assessment theory module as well as subject didactic (methodology) modules, the foundational competence of student teacher

assessors is effectively and comprehensively assessed by means of assignments, examinations and/or portfolios. As far as applying practical skills such as planning assessments, implementing assessments, providing feedback on assessments and reviewing (reflecting on) assessment are concerned, only *assessment planning* (own emphasis) can be effectively assessed in a distance education and teaching practice context. Joey responded as follows: ... *What you can do is limited, because they have limited contact with schools and the actual practice, in many instances, they cannot, they are not allowed to assess learners' work ... They can develop an assessment task, but the practical aspects of assessing and giving feedback, they seldom get involved in that. But then I asked them to develop assessments, using a model I designed of about ten questions or so where they have to use the outcomes, the content they want to include, values and all those aspects – they could provide evidence of competence in assessment design.*

[The model Joey referred the researcher to, is included in a module planning document (UNISA Module Planning Grid - AED3701). The participant made the document available to the researcher, subsequent to the interview, and was included in the documents analysed in this study].

Joey continued ... *in that way we can at least say they are competent to function as beginner teachers.* When asked how practical aspects such as actual implementation of assessments are assessed, Joey responded: ... *In the subject didactics, they have to develop different types of assessments, some formative, some summative and they do quite a number of that.* According to Joey these tasks are assessed by means of instruments that include criteria related to the questions in the model designed, describing exactly how an assessment task should be designed and planned. Joey referred the researcher to such instruments when asked about the actual standards and criteria used. These standards and criteria are presented here in Table 5.4 and were included in the document analysis.

The experiences of lecturers teaching the assessment theory as well as the document analysis related to the theory module illustrate the relevance of Joey's views. Although the assessment theory module focuses on foundational competence related to

assessment theory, the NPA and the CAPS curriculum, some practical competencies such as assessment design and assessment planning are assessed in the module.

Table 5.2 Standards and criteria for designing assessments
<p><i>Standard: Plan and prepare for effective assessment (formative and summative assessments)</i></p> <p><i>Criteria:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Who is going to do the assessment (teacher, self-assessment, peer assessment) and why?</i> 2. <i>Where (during lesson, after lesson, at home), when (submission date) and how (group/individual) will assessment(s) take place?</i> 3. <i>How will you take into account individual learning styles, aptitudes and interests (e.g. different ways of presenting it or inclusion of pictures, graphs/environment, etc.)?</i> 4. <i>Are local values, content and/or standards reflected in your assessment(s) – i.e. is it authentic?</i> 5. <i>How will you make sure that assessment is an integral ongoing part of the learning process (where does it fit into your assessment plan [CAPS] and type of assessment - informal, formal assessment task or practical assessment task such as assess, research project, etc.)?</i> 6. <i>Which assessment products and/or activities will be required (written work, oral presentation, poster, model, etc.) and why?</i> 7. <i>How will you make sure that assessment(s) are credible (accurate, objective, valid, fair, and manageable) and time efficient?</i> 8. <i>How will you make sure that assessment(s) are appropriate to the developmental level of the learners?</i> 9. <i>How will you make sure that assessment(s) are bias free and sensitive to gender, race, cultural background and abilities?</i> 10. <i>Which assessment instrument will you use? (Attach the complete instrument including descriptive assessment standards and criteria to your assessment task)?</i>
<p><i>Source: Adapted from: Module Planning Grid (UNISA:n.d.(ii))</i></p>

The experiences of lecturers teaching the assessment theory as well as the document analysis related to the theory module illustrate the relevance of Joey's views. Although the assessment theory module focuses on foundational competence related to assessment theory, the NPA and the CAPS curriculum, some practical competencies such as assessment design and assessment planning are assessed in the module.

Three experienced lecturers who taught the assessment theory module were interviewed and indicated that the content of the module is assessed using the classical approach requiring student teachers to submit assignments and write an examination. A wide variety of topics is covered in assessment theory and the National Protocol for Assessment (NPA) and the current CAPS curriculum, collectively containing the content for the module. (See the overview of the content of the module presented below). The participants indicated that practical application of theory, policy

and curriculum is more challenging. Allie indicated that ... *The theoretical part of it, I think we have reached a high level* [of effective assessment of student teachers], ... [but] *the practical part of it, we still need to improve...* . Ellie indicated that more practical assessments included that student teachers ... *design lessons, make use of grids, different levels of assessment, types of assessment*. Joey clearly indicated that at best, in the assessment theory module, practical planning and design of assessments, design of assessment instruments, and reflecting on assessment practices may be assessed effectively.

With regard to the content being assessed in the assessment theory module, the document analysis revealed that two major theoretical frameworks are used to ground assessment in school context: *assessment theory* and *assessment in education in an Africanisation context*. (See Annexure G: Finding G1). A wide variety of theoretical themes are covered, including aspects such as indicated in Figure 14 below. A comparison of the conceptual framework for understanding student teacher competence as assessors in Chapter 2, (Section 2.1.5 as illustrated in Figure 2.7), with the content of the assessment theory module analysed here, is reflected in Table 5.4. Applied competence was not included in the comparison as the module is not primarily focused on applied competence but rather on foundational and reflexive competence.

From the comparison, the content of the assessment theory module corresponds closely with the competencies described in the conceptual framework derived from literature in Chapter 2 of the study. The competencies described in the conceptual framework related to foundational competence are congruent with the specific outcomes of the module analysed. The module is aligned with the qualification purposes referred to earlier, and assessment theory in more general terms. Student teachers have to demonstrate their mastery of the content when providing evidence in relation to the specific outcomes when their foundational competence as assessors is assessed.

The outcomes require student teachers to demonstrate a critical, comprehensive and deep understanding of assessment theory, policy (NPA) and curriculum (CAPS).

(Refer to Table 5.10). Although the theme “Assessment and Curriculum” is included in the prescribed text, the document analysis could not determine whether critical analysis of issues such as those raised by Lucy (Finding 5.2.2) related to language development and theoretical foundations of CAPS were covered. About the way the foundational competence of student teacher assessors is assessed, the document analysis revealed that assignments are seen as part of the learning material for the module. The assignments as well as the examination would include assessment design tasks as critical parts of the assessment of student teachers as assessors.

Both formative and summative assessments should be practised by the student teacher and assessed by the mentor or supervisor. From the analysis of the assessment theory module it was clear that the specific outcome statements of the module have to be read in conjunction with the criteria related to every outcome. These criteria are clearly described in the module planning document made available to the researcher by Joey. When outcomes are read in conjunction with the criteria, it is explicitly clear that the limited ability to assess practical application is accounted for in the module design. (Refer to Annexure G, Finding G1). Even teaching practice module assignments have limited focus on competence as assessor. None of the module assignments included assessment standards and criteria directly focused on assessing learners. (Refer to Annexure G, Finding G2).

In Challenge B (5.2.2 above) concern was raised regarding the quality of mentoring that student teachers receive during teaching practice in some schools. With regard to the enhancing effect of proper mentoring by supervisor or receiving teachers, one of the recently qualified student teachers, participant Ted, indicated the following: *The one mentor, a very experienced teacher, allowed me to do that and then she double checked the marking I did. That was possibly the single most valuable exercise I had as a student teacher.*

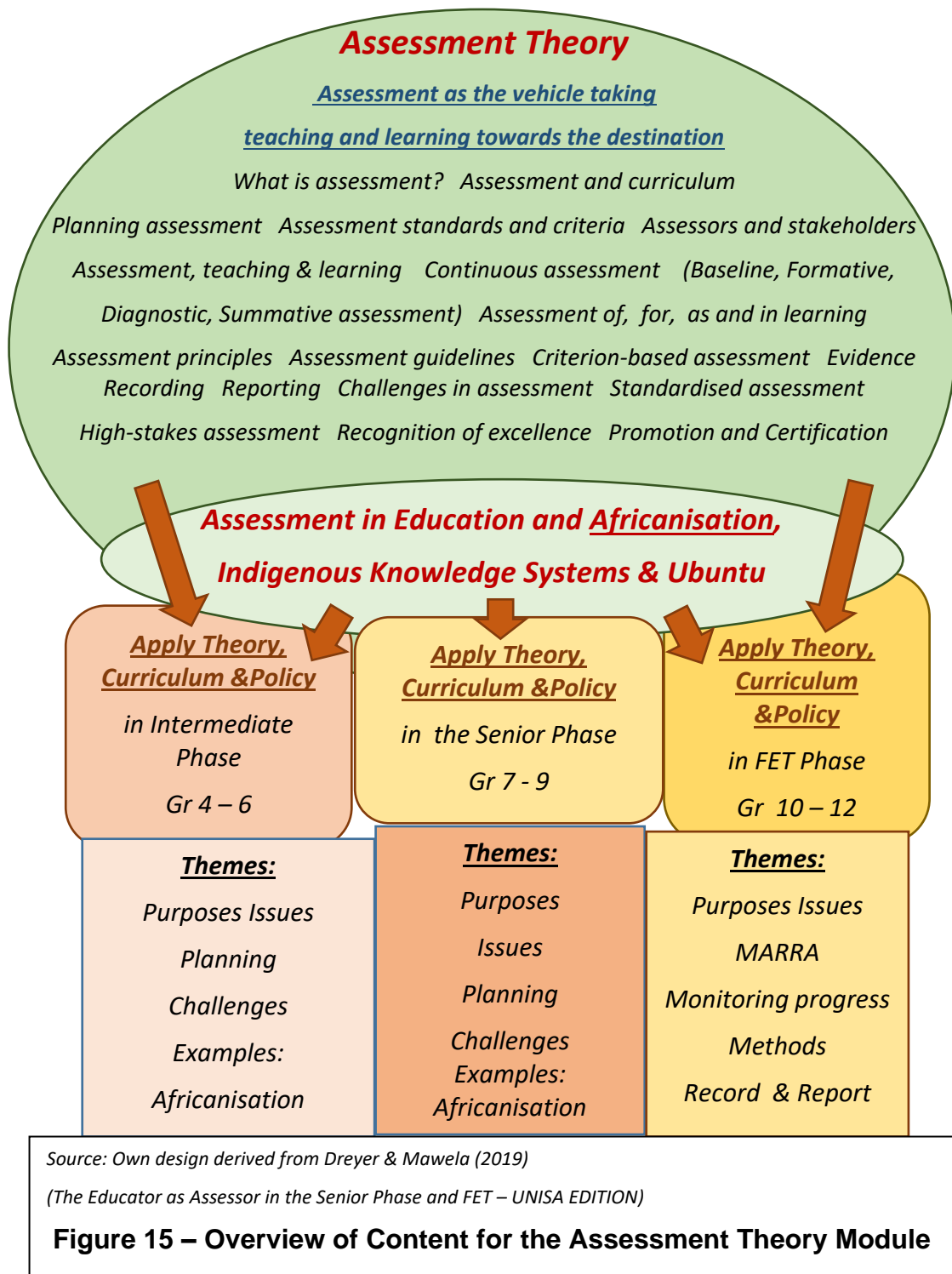


Table 5.3: A comparison of concepts and content	
Competencies in the conceptual framework	Content of the assessment theory module
<p><i>Foundational competencies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being knowledgeable on assessment theory, methods, principles, etc. - Integrates a variety of assessment modes with teaching and learning - Integrates theory into practice 	<p><i>What is assessment?; Assessment and curriculum; Planning assessment; Assessment standards and criteria; Assessors and stakeholders; Assessment, teaching & learning; Continuous assessment including Baseline, Formative, Diagnostic, Summative assessment; Assessment of learning, assessment for and assessment as learning; Assessment evidence; Recording and Reporting; Standardised assessment; High-stakes assessment; Recognition of excellence; as well as Promotion and Certification.</i></p>
<p><i>Practical competencies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan and prepare for assessment activities - Assess learner responses - Provide written and verbal feedback to learners - Keep records and communicate progress 	<p><i>Applied to planning for assessment in Intermediate, Senior and FET phases in schooling:</i></p> <p><i>Purpose & Principles; Documents used in assessment; Monitoring Administering Assessment; Monitoring progress; Assessment Methods used in the respective phase; Recording & Reporting on assessment.</i></p>
<p><i>Reflexive / social competencies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrate awareness of policy and curriculum - Making credible assessment judgements - Reflect on improving learning, teaching and assessment 	<p><i>Assessment principles and guidelines; Criterion-based assessment; Challenges in assessment.</i></p>

When prompted why this was the case, he added: *It was the culmination of the whole process, you understand how assessment works and how learners are assessed, immediately. It all came together but it was a very rare experience.* Ted enthused further: *The second most valuable experience was when I was allowed to give homework, and mark the homework ... that opened my eyes to the value of intermittent class tests and homework and to check it because then immediately you understand what these kids know and don't know ...* . It was also clear from Ted's experiences that the quality of mentoring by the receiving teacher is key, as was expected given the findings in literature overviewed in this respect, confirmed by the experiences of all other participants in the first and second rounds of interviews.

This finding indicates that the foundational competence of student teachers as assessors is the most assessable component of competence being assessed by the UNISA College of Education. Assessment planning and the design of assessments are assessed effectively in delivery of the assessment theory module. When the assessments done in the teaching practice portfolios are considered, however, the focus on student teacher competence as assessors is frequently assessed. Table 5.3 contains a wide variety of assessment-related aspects assessed in teaching practice portfolios analysed (Refer to accounts of portfolio tasks in Annexure). Several of these aspects are required, repeatedly providing student teachers with opportunities for improvement over the course of ITE programme.

Table 5.4: Assessment-related aspects assessed in TP portfolios	
<i>Assessment tasks required in portfolios</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reflect on various assessment methods making education more accessible, as informed by Africanisation. - Respond to "How do teachers adapt teaching and learning to context?" - Respond to questions on formative assessment such as: How is the previous day's homework dealt with?; How does the teacher praise or reward learners?; How does the teacher handle a question he/she cannot answer?; How does the teacher facilitate a discussion or feedback at the end? - Observe lessons by an experienced teacher, comment on: Activities learners were involved in; Questions the teacher asked during the lesson. Attach a copy the assessment activity done during the lesson to the observation schedule. Give three examples of formative assessment you observed in lessons taught by the mentor; Mention three content areas covered in CAPS and included in the lesson; and Identify assessment activities related to these areas. - Submit at least five lesson plans demonstrating that you can plan and present your own lessons including assessment planning. - Describe the main aspects of the school assessment plan, indicate whether it was aligned with CAPS. - Indicate and describe aspects such as invigilation and marking you were involved with. - Reflect on the assessment practice in relation the assessment module after observing 20 lessons – refer to specific themes or topics contained in the prescribed text. - Identify good practices at the school – make specific mention of quality teaching and assessment practices in this regard. - Reflect about the school, classroom and learners impacted on planning for teaching and assessment. - Provide evidence of a subject assessment plan. Comment on the plan in terms of assessment principles such as reliability, fairness, validity and manageability. - Provide evidence of any actual assessment task/s conducted by you as student teachers. At least one assessment task, including a copy of a marked/assessed response and the memorandum/instrument used in assessing the task/s. - Record assessments – attach copies of records of assessment done – the number of learners who completed the assessment task, the number that passed, the number that failed, etc. - Include Independent Teaching Lesson Plans - the template includes several references to evidence related to assessment during the lesson – such as questions you will ask during the 	

introduction, main part and at the end, as well as a section in which an assessment activity and an explanation thereof have to be attached.

- Mentor-teacher is required to assess the effectiveness of formative assessment done during the lesson, as well as homework or summative assessment relevant to the lesson
- Respond to several reflective questions, most of which imply that the effectiveness of informal and formative assessment during their lessons.

Source: QDA Context – Annexure G, Findings G3, G4 and G5

The ability to integrate and apply theory, policy and CAPS curriculum requirements to assessment is most effectively judged in the subject methodology modules. Analysis of both examples of subject methodology modules (TMS3713 – Teaching Geography, and TMS3716 – Teaching English Home Language) revealed a focus on assessment design rather than actual implementation to demonstrate students' applied competence as assessors. In TMS3716 Module Document, Outcome 6 reads: Plan and design lessons and assessment activities in a Home Language and reflect on own teaching practices. The following assessment criteria are listed. (These are numbered here for reference purposes and those with specific reference to assessment are emphasised by means of italics):

1. Apply appropriate learning strategies, teaching methods and teaching media in the planning of teaching;
2. Integrate the subject content of the curriculum, relevant pedagogical knowledge and contextual realities to plan and present lessons in their subject;
3. *Evaluate assessment principles to design suitable assessments at appropriate cognitive levels that will assess learners' Home Language proficiency effectively and objectively;*
4. *Provide useful/meaningful feedback on formative assessments to improve learning and record assessments in accordance with curriculum requirements;*
5. *Reflect on own teaching and assessment practice and improve/change/adapt where needed.*

Similarly, in TMS3713 (Teaching Geography) Specific Outcome 4 and related assessment standards and criteria read as follows: *Locate, conduct and reflect on assessment in their subject.*

The assessment criteria related to the specific outcome read:

1. *Apply assessment principles to design assessments;*
2. *Use learning intentions and assessment criteria to design assessments and instruments that can be used to assess learners effectively and objectively;*
3. *Apply the requirements for assessment in the curriculum to design appropriate assessments for the school environment;*
4. *Apply the requirements for assessment in the curriculum to design assessments at appropriate cognitive levels;*
5. *Make assessment decisions from scenarios/case studies/practical examples.*
6. *Give useful/meaningful feedback on formative assessments to improve learning;*
7. *Record assessments in accordance with curriculum requirements using scenarios/case studies/practical examples; and*
8. *Reflect on assessments and improve/change/adapt where needed.*

The outcomes and associated assessment criteria clearly describe what is regarded as assessable in both modules. Two important notions are derived from analysis of the two sets of outcomes and criteria. The first is the design of assessments, rather than actual implementation, suggesting that the challenges of assessing actual implementation as identified in this study (cf. Chapter 1, par 1.2 and 1.4, Chapter 3, Section 3.2.2 and the findings in the first round of interviews), are accounted for in the assessments designed for these modules. The second notion derived from the analysis, is that *scenarios/case studies/ practical examples* (own emphasis) are used as alternatives for actual implementation of assessments by student teachers. Requiring student teachers to respond to assessment tasks using such alternatives is predicated on the assumption that student teachers are competent in reflective ability.

Approach (ii)

Enhancing the use of teaching practice placements as opportunities for assessing student teacher assessors by receiving teachers as effective mentors

Joey described the need to enhance the use of receiving teachers (mentors) as follows, and linked the use of mentors to clearly described standards and criteria for assessing competence as assessors: *In the current model the student teacher gets*

one opportunity to present a lesson and maybe do some assessment ... When are they going to assess the summative assessment? ... When are we going to see the feedback? ... When are we going to see the improvement? ... It is not going to happen when I see them in action, because then I have to be there for the week or so. So only the mentor can see them in that situation, but they usually would not be involved in all those things. So ... the standards and criteria, if we can have such standards and criteria they [student teachers] must do this whole assessment and then they must report on each aspect or criterion and they must include that in the portfolio ... that would make a difference, because then the receiving teacher or mentor must help them to do it to meet all standards and criteria. Joey clearly indicated that effective assessment of the competence of student teachers depends on properly formulated and clear standards and criteria in a criterion-referenced approach to assessing competence. (See the views of Flores et al. (2015) and Deacon (2016) in Chapter 1, section 1.4, Dreyer and Mawela (2019) and Boud et al (2020) in Chapter 2, 2.3.4 and 2.4.6 in this regard). In the second round of interviews, Lizzie similarly indicated: *We can't assess it if we don't have rubrics, so it is a given, you [student teachers and practicing teachers] have to have your rubric and you do your assessment and you do your moderation with your co-tutors or co-teachers, so that's a given, you have to do it, it is not a choice.* Rubrics imply the use of assessment standards and criteria in a criterion-referenced approach. (See Valesco-Martinez and Hurtado, 2018). During the interviews, both Lucy and Joey indicated that student teachers should be able to design assessment tasks, including the design of assessment instruments using standards and criteria. Joey, Lizzie, Allie, Hank, Ted, Lunie, Lottie as well as Hollie suggested that although all receiving teachers are expected to be effective mentors to the student teachers placed with them, this was not the case in all instances. Effective mentoring of student teachers by the receiving teacher makes the difference to effective learning about, and assessment of, the competence as a teacher and as an assessor. (See the teaching practice in triad context, Section 3.2.4, and the standards and criteria used in selecting participants in this study, Section 4.6.1, in this regard).

Both Ted and Lottie regarded the quality of mentoring as crucial in teaching practice. Ted had experienced the influence of an experienced teacher and that of a lesser experienced mentor as follows: *She was open about my mistakes and shortcomings, and that was the most valuable. The other ones were generally very polite to me*

because I was slightly older and their feedback wasn't as valuable. The one that didn't pull her punches helped me a lot. Lunie experienced the mentors she was exposed to during teaching practice as supportive and helpful: *It was a very warm experience for me... it felt like I was standing next to a friend, but I got constructive feedback, and yes... I learned a lot from them, just by watching them handle situations in the classroom...* Lottie indicated that she would need the assistance of a mentor beyond teaching practice, even when appointed as a teacher: *I felt even though the teaching practice is essential and helpful, what I took away when I finished my PGCE is that I am still left with a lot of theory and my practical will have to improve at the workplace. I would have to be coached or mentored by a departmental head who would check my first year, or two years of doing things, and that it would be very much on the job training...* . This response reflected an understanding of competence within the teacher education continuum, reiterating the view expressed by Joey, Jessie and Ellie in this regard earlier. Lunie indicated that as a beginner teacher in a distance education context, she realised that several aspects of her competence as assessor were work in progress. When asked if the coursework prepared her adequately for the task of sitting down and assessing scripts or online submissions by the learners ... or whether she learned about that "on the job", her response was: *I must be honest with you ... it was a week by week learning process.*

It was not possible nor the purpose of this study to determine the quality of receiving teachers as mentors that student teachers were exposed to, nor what the functionality of schools was where student teachers were placed. The experiences of Ted, and those of Joey's daughter, as well as Joey's description of conditions at many schools in this regard, indicate that both the UNISA College of Education and student teachers have to be realistic in their expectations of what will be contributed by the receiving teacher. This is more concerning with regard to student teachers and their assessors in the PGCE programme since there are significantly fewer opportunities in the teaching practice placements than in the B Ed programme, as confirmed by Joey, Ellie and Lodi during their interviews. As far as standards and criteria for assessing student teacher competence as assessors are concerned, however, the same standards and criteria apply for student teachers who qualify in either programme. Such standards and criteria may be used to guide receiving teachers as effective mentors of student teachers as assessors, specifically.

Approach (iii).

Instil a culture of reflection in student teachers to become reflective practitioners capable of self-development using clearly formulated assessment standards and criteria

As was seen in several instances thus far in this presentation of findings, the ability to reflect is a critical condition for being a competent teacher and assessor. During the first round of interviews, both Jessie and Joey as well as Bessie and Lizzie, in the second round of interviews, showed that reflection on teaching and assessment done by student teachers during teaching practice is critical, yet not easily measured. Joey argued as follows: *On a daily basis they have to reflect on what they observed during the lesson [including] the assessment that has been done. I also ask them to tell me how things in school are different from what we teach them. They get opportunities for reflection, but I am not sure that they are experienced enough to reflect effectively.* Jessie responded: *It is difficult to assess their ability to reflect on an assessment because you did not expect them to go through all the steps, in the assignment, they just had to mark this essay, or set an examination paper, but they didn't have time to implement the examination paper and see which questions they had to change, what they've got to change in the next assessment.* Ellie indicated that although the ability to reflect is required, assessing reflection is not straightforward. This notion was given further consideration in the document analyses, and as indicated, in the second round of interviews, underscoring the notion that reflection is enhanced when clearly formulated assessment standards and criteria for the assessment task reflected upon, are available. In this regard Kitty indicated that in teaching practice: *We ask our students to reflect on their teaching but we don't specify that they must reflect on the assessment of the learners, or reflect on the feedback that the learners have given, but we do ask them to reflect on their own teaching and how can they improve it, but we don't specifically tell them how did your assessments and your findings of your assessments influence your teaching.* Bessie clearly demonstrated that reflection is a learnt skill that needs to be nurtured and developed; to ask students to reflect on an assessment task they observed during teaching practice, for example, does not mean they know how to reflect. Clear standards and criteria provide a framework for effective reflection and a means to develop reflective ability.

Approach (iv).

Rely on continued professional development of, and professional learning by student teachers once they become beginner teachers within an application of the teacher education continuum

Both Joey and Jessie suggested that a “once trained, always trained” approach is not what is required in ITE, including assessing student teachers’ competence as assessors. When asked: Within the context of the teacher education continuum, are you satisfied that in the model that you are currently using in the distance education situation, that the level of competence is such that they can function as assessors? Joey responded: *No, definitely not. If they don’t practise, they would not be competent.* Jessie, as indicated, holds the same position. (See Lottie’s realisation referred to earlier, namely that she needs practice and mentoring). Lizzie indicated that in Australia, ... *we received a critical analysis of the quality of ITE, especially regarding our professional experience placement subjects ... there were questions asked around quality preparation of our pre-service teachers, especially graduating teachers, ... about their readiness for classrooms and preparedness to take ownership of their own classrooms*, indicating that concerns about teacher readiness on entry level is not unique to ITE in South Africa.

Lizzie made a distinction between professional development and professional learning, as follows, ... *professional development is often generalised, ... while professional learning is focused on context, ... student teachers learn what is needed in a specific context, while professional development is often general.* The researcher then asked: In your experience, does professional learning continue after initial teacher education? Lizzie responded: *Yes. It is ongoing for your whole career. I think the moment when we stop to reflect on our teaching, we stop to learn and I had 26 years in the classroom, and lectured for more than five years, and I am still learning.*

The ability to reflect on assessment is emphasised in these participant experiences as an essentially crucial ability student teachers should have. These views also confirm that ITE lays a foundation for career-long professional learning and professional development, underpinned by a culture of reflection. (See this in regard to SAQA’s understanding of competence as reflexive ability, Chapter 2, section 2.2.1, the teacher education continuum Chapter 2, section 2.2.2 and ITE in South Africa in a wider global

and professional context in Chapter 3, section 3.2). Assessing student teachers' ability to reflect is challenging however, especially when there is a lack of standards and criteria according to which reflection may be guided.

Approach (v).

Consider more prolonged teaching practice placements to provide better opportunities

Teaching practice provides authentic assessment contexts and many opportunities in which the competencies of student teachers including competence as assessors are practised and in which the competence as assessors can be assessed. Models of teaching practice that include more prolonged placements provide better opportunities for practising and assessing applied competence when the entire assessment cycle of planning assessment, implementing assessment, assessing responses, providing feedback, and reviewing assessment can be observed and assessed. Such a model is currently used in the South African ITE context and was described by a participant in this study and supported by several others.

Joey indicated that such a model has merit: ... *so they [contact mode universities] can do better than us, ... if they send them to schools for six months or something like that, ...* while Ellie indicated that teaching practice should be prolonged, ... *because ... we can't visit all the students, and I also think they need more time to do assessment, ... the teaching practice should be more than five weeks in a subject.* Lodi shared his experiences in designing, developing and implementing such a model at a South African university. He indicated that in the model, student teachers in a four-year ITE course did four weeks' teaching practice per year in the first three years, and were placed at a school for six months, at the end of the ITE programme, in the fourth year. He then described the teaching practice including assessment of student teachers during the six-month placement in the final year, as follows: *Student teachers would take over the class, one specific grade, and would do [all] the teaching for [several weeks]. They had to set tests and classwork assignments and ... [assessed these] also. As university supervisor [evaluating the programme], I interviewed the student teacher, the receiving teacher, as well as with the head of the department in terms of how the student coped with all the activities that they were supposed to do... Every*

student teacher was also required to be appraised at least once, and preferably twice, in terms of the IQMS when this was done at the school where they were placed during the six month period, usually scheduled during the latter part of the year. The resultant Personal Development Plan had to be submitted in the teaching practice portfolio. The standards and criteria relevant to assessing the competence as assessors in the IQMS instrument are therefore most relevant to this study, in spite of Joey's view, namely that these standards and criteria are not detailed enough to describe competence as assessors adequately for ITE purposes. These standards and criteria were analysed in the document analyses that followed the first round of interviews.

The rationale for the current teaching practice model, as well as the possibility of prolonging the placement of student teachers may seem to fall outside the focus of this study. The issue of alternative approaches was pursued in the second round of interviews, however, because the standards and criteria as understood in this study are phenomena-in-context. The possibility of extending the placement period in the model used by the UNISA College of Education was investigated during the second round of interviews. Hank considered the possibility, yet indicated that managing the current model was challenging given the distance education context and large numbers of student teachers being placed country-wide, and argued that longer placements would make it even more challenging. He added that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the current rounds of teaching practice and that changing the model would be focused on coping with the COVID-19 impact rather than changing the model fundamentally as a more prolonged placement in the final year would imply. He also indicated that prolonged placements would be challenging in PGCE context given limited time spans.

Approach (vi).

Use clearly described standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context to facilitate the approaches mentioned above (Approaches (i) to (v))

Joey responded as follows when asked if there was a need for clear standards and criteria as envisaged in this study, given the fact that it is so difficult to assess applied competence as assessors: *I think if we have them [clearly described standards and criteria], then at least we know what we should focus on, because ... even the IQMS*

and the SACE standards and criteria are not specific enough. ... when we applied outcomes based education we started with ... what the learner must know and be able to do and values. I think we should start in the school and go and look at what a good teacher, ...a good assessor... does, what is it that they practice that makes them good, because only then would we know what ... the end product is like, and we move away from our theoretical understanding and approach.

Clearly formulated standards and criteria describing in detail what a competent assessor (experienced teacher) does, can be used by student teachers in practising applied competence during teaching practice. A student teacher can be assisted by the receiving teacher as mentor in generating a description of the school context and collect specific evidence related to such standards and criteria of competence in that context and include such evidence in the teaching practice portfolios. According to Joey, such evidence reflects competence much better than the current situation where the applied competence, particularly summative assessment, is not even assessed at all. Standards and criteria facilitate identifying what can be assessed and result in more effective assessment. It enhances reflection, as student teachers can assess observed and own practice in terms of specific standards and criteria rather than a general notion such as in terms of what is learnt in the assessment theory module, as was reflected in one of the portfolios analysed. Even continuous professional development and professional learning may be structured and appraised using such standards and criteria focused on applied practical competence. All of these advantages imply that supervisors, receiving teachers and student teachers, need to be well informed of such standards and criteria, as well as the reasons why these are important. They should 'buy in' to the use of such standards and criteria as suggested in Chapter 3, paragraph 3.2.2 when the complexities of the teaching practice triad were contemplated. The researcher asked Lizzie: How do we get both the mentor teacher and the university supervisor, to buy into the same set of standards? She responded: *The ideal is that there needs to be a meeting where the pre-service teacher, the school supervising teacher or mentor teacher and then the university liaison are present. So it is a moderation exercise actually, that is what it is, because they sit down and decide what the standard is, and why the performance was satisfactory or not, and why not ... to keep a consistent judgement.* Lodi concurred with this view, indicating that at another university where he was involved with teaching practice, such meetings took

place before the visit by the university supervisor, and again after the lesson(s) were observed and assessed. He indicated that clearly described standards and criteria enhance such meetings as these focus the reflection during meetings on what really matters. (See Townsley and Schmid, 2020, referred to earlier regarding a lack of buy-in among assessors in HEI's).

In conclusion, the six approaches to address the fracture between the ideal and the reality of student teacher competence as assessors proposed by participants during HPI and described in this finding, were considered when conclusions and recommendations were made in Chapter 6 of this study.

The findings related to the context in which student teachers are assessed support the need for clearly described standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teacher assessors in a distance education context. Findings directly related to standards and criteria are presented next.

5.3 FINDINGS RELATED TO STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING THE COMPETENCE OF STUDENT TEACHERS AS ASSESSORS IN A DISTANCE EDUCATION CONTEXT

Introduction and overview of documents collected and analysed

The findings describing standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teacher assessors echoed the voices of the authors of fifteen documents analysed as well as those of the participants in the second round of the phenomenological interviews. Findings were numbered and structured as those in 5.2 above. Table 5.1.2. presents a list of the documents analysed, reflecting the country of origin, whether or not the standards described in the documents are graded at different levels, as well as the author/s and titles of the documents. Except for two documents (UNISA, Module Planning Document and SALRubric), all documents contained descriptions of other teacher competencies beyond competence as assessors. The analyses undertaken in this study, however, focused on competence as assessors only, including the need to integrate assessment planning with lesson planning, and learning, teaching and assessment. In this regard, Bessie argued that lesson planning provides broad intentions of what is envisaged. In almost every

lesson or series of lessons on a given topic/content taught, the teacher deviates from the plan when the lesson/series of lessons is being presented, based on what is found in informal or formative assessment done at the start of the lesson/series.

The researcher used the two conceptual frameworks in Chapter 2: that for understanding competence and that for understanding assessment (Sections 2.2 and 2.3) as points of reference and identified three major themes describing competence as assessor in general theoretical terms: Theme A – knowledge and understanding or foundational competence; Theme B - applied competence referring to what competent teachers do, and Theme C - values, attitudes and dispositions competent teachers hold and exemplify. The applied competence where such knowledge, practical abilities and values, attitudes and dispositions are applied, was described in terms of eight themes emerging from documents analysed. (Refer to Annexure I, Finding 6.2). In Annexure I, findings of the first round of analyses, mostly verbatim records of content on standards and criteria described in documents were recorded. Again, as was the case with findings related to context, the researcher conducted a second round of interpretation of findings in Annexure I, in view of findings in Annexure G as well as participant experiences and views in HPI, and formulated the findings presented here.

The researcher used three closely related terms: themes, elements and standards (Sadler, 2005) to describe the findings in the section. In this research context:

- *Themes* refer to recurring notions in documents analysed and are presented as *verbatim* accounts of the authors' descriptions of competence as assessors, as applied competence
- *Elements* refer to the notion of components of applied competence as assessors, expressed in the documents using various terminologies including abilities, performance areas, focus areas, aspects, components, and criteria.
- *Standards* refer to themes and/or elements interpreted by the researcher as definite levels of attainment, or definite degrees of qualities as the recognized measures of what is adequate for some purpose, in this instance assessing competence as assessors, so established by authority, custom, or consensus (Sadler, 2005).

Due to the close relation among these terms, some overlap in meaning may occur in this presentation of findings.

Four findings relating to standards and criteria as understood in this study are presented, namely:

- 5.3.1 Only one document describes competence as assessors in terms of foundational, practical and reflexive competencies
- 5.3.2 Levels of competence as an assessor are indicated in a variety of ways and mostly do not include competence at student teacher level, specifically
- 5.3.3 Descriptions of experienced teachers' competence as assessors vary and reveal eight themes describing essential elements of applied competence as assessors
- 5.3.4 The standards of competence of experienced assessors derived from the essential elements of applied competence provide a useful benchmark for describing standards and criteria at beginner and student teacher levels.

These findings are described in rich and thick ways and discussed below.

5.3.1 Only one document describes competence as assessors in terms of foundational, practical and reflexive competencies

Only one of the documents analysed, the InTASC document (CCSSO, 2013), describes assessor competence in terms of three categories: essential knowledge, performances, and critical dispositions. The document uses somewhat different terminology but the three areas of competence described correspond with SAQA's notions of foundational, practical and reflexive competencies as illustrated in Table 5.6. In all other documents analysed, descriptions did not include such distinctions and presented lists of abilities or elements to describe what is expected of teachers as assessors. Every element in these lists may be interpreted as foundational, practical or reflexive in nature by considering the focus of every description in terms of knowledge, skill or value/attitude. By underlining the do-word or verb or phrase in statements describing competence, attention is drawn to what student teachers

should do to demonstrate competence. This in turn facilitates assessment of an ability or competence. Note that such underlining indicated in tables in this section of the chapter was added by the researcher to aid analysis and formulation of standards and criteria.

This finding validates the notion that competence is an applied ability which is underpinned by foundational (essential knowledge and understanding), practical (performances), and reflexive (critical dispositions) competencies or constituent elements. Such an understanding enhances the ability of student teachers to reflect on their own competence as assessors in the context of this study. Table 5.6 provides a detailed account of InTASC's (CCSSO, 2013) understanding of competence as assessors. The bulleted lists in every category are most relevant to this study since these informed several standards and criteria for assessing the three constituent areas of competence as assessors during synthesising standards and criteria as envisaged in this study. The UNISA Standards for Student Teachers were valuable since these considered the context of distance education in this study. The descriptions provided in these two documents were used as benchmarks against which standards and criteria described in other documents were analysed and described.

The InTASC document (CCSSO, 2013) presents the most comprehensive and detailed description of competence as assessors among all documents analysed, as reflected in the lists of competencies provided in the three constituent competencies reflected in Table 5.6.

Table 5.5: Competence as an assessor described as foundational, practical and reflexive competencies
<i>InTASC Description (CCSSO:2013)</i>
<p>Theme A: Foundational competencies (<i>Essential knowledge in InTASC</i>): <i>The teacher:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Understands</u> the differences between formative and summative assessment approaches and knows how and when to use each. - <u>Understands</u> the range of types and multiple purposes of assessment and knows how to design, adapt or select appropriate assessment to address specific learning goals and individual differences, and to minimize sources of bias. - <u>Knows</u> how to analyse assessment data to understand patterns and gaps in learning, to guide planning and instruction, and to provide meaningful feedback to all learners - <u>Knows</u> when and how to engage learners in analysing their own assessment results and in helping to set goals for own learning. - <u>Understands</u> the positive impact of effective descriptive feedback for learners and knows a variety of strategies for communicating this feedback.

- Knows when and how to report learner progress against standards
- Understands how to prepare learners for assessments and how to make accommodations in assessment and teaching conditions, especially for learners with disabilities and language learning needs.

Theme B: Practical competencies (Performances in InTASC) The teacher:

- balances the use of formative and summative assessments as appropriate to support, verify, and document learning
- designs assessments that match learning objectives with assessment methods and minimizes sources of bias that can distort assessment results
- engages learners in understanding and identifying quality work and provides them with effective descriptive feedback to guide their progress towards that work.
- engages learners in multiple ways of demonstrating knowledge and skill as part of the assessment process.
- models and structures processes that guide learners in examining their own thinking and learning as well as the performance of others.
- uses multiple and appropriate types of assessment data to identify each learner's learning needs and to develop differentiated learning experiences.
- prepares all learners for the demands of particular assessment formats and makes appropriate accommodations in assessment or assessing, especially for learners with disabilities and language learning needs
- continually seeks appropriate ways to employ technology to support assessment practice both to engage learners more fully and to assess and address learner need

Theme C: Reflexive competencies (Critical dispositions in InTASC)

The teacher is committed to

- engaging learners actively in assessment processes and to develop each learner's capacity to review and communicate about their own progress and learning
- aligning instruction and assessment with learning goals
- providing timely and effective descriptive feedback to learners on their progress.
- using multiple types of assessment processes to support, verify, and document learning.
- making accommodations in assessment and assessing, especially for learners with disabilities and language learning needs
- ethical use of various assessments and assessment data to identify learner strengths and needs to promote learner growth.

Source: Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO): 2013

The lists of competencies in the document were relied upon in this study to ensure that standards and criteria presented in 5.4 below include the most critical aspects. This did not detract from the significance and relevance of any other document analysed. Every document analysed, described competence as assessors in a particular and unique way. There was considerable overlap in meaning in spite of differently structured presentation of descriptions. Where this finding mainly described competence as assessors in terms of foundational, practical, and reflexive competencies, the next finding provides descriptions of assessment as applied competence at different levels of competence.

5.3.2 Levels of competence as an assessor are indicated in a variety of ways and mostly do not include competence as student teacher specifically

Most documents analysed describe competence as an assessor at different levels of competence. The authors providing different levels in their documents, use frameworks other than “*student teacher – beginner teacher, - experienced teacher, and - expert teacher*”, to distinguish between, and/or link levels. Only the document describing standards in Japan (Sakai: 2014), and UNISA Student Teacher Standards (UNISA, n.d.(i)) used categories similar to “*student teacher – beginner teacher, - experienced teacher, and - expert teacher*”. Varying frames of reference are used to describe different levels resulting in diversity in terminologies used. This variety of descriptions of levels is illustrated in Table 5.6.

In terms of using the levels described in the documents to discern competence at beginner teacher and student teacher levels, the following challenges arose:

- Standards in Australia (AITSL, 2018) starts with graduate level suggesting that it is at beginner teacher level, whereas this study is focused on student teacher level – formulation of standards and criteria at this level had to be adjusted to describe competence at a slightly lower level.
- The labelling of IQMS (DoE, 2006) standards at Level 1 (Unacceptable) seems somewhat inappropriate, even if understood as describing performances of employed teachers. It does not provide descriptions aligned with student teacher competence.

<i>Number of levels described</i>	<i>Levels indicated using varying frames of reference</i>
USA3 (CUSD, 2017) Three (3) Levels	Emerging/Exploring/Applying
Standards in UK (DoE, 2013) Four (4) Levels	Developing/Standard met/Secure/Excellent
Standards in Australia (AITSL, 2011, 2018) Four (4) Levels	Graduate/Proficient/Highly accomplished/Lead

Standards by UNISA (UNISA, n.d.ii) Four (4) Levels	Still developing/Satisfactory - Meets minimum requirements /Transcend minimum requirements/Exemplary performance
Standards in SA IQMS (DoE, 2006) Four (4) Levels	Unacceptable/Satisfy minimum requirements/Good/ Outstanding
Standards in Japan (Sakai, 2014) Four (4) Levels	Student teacher/Apprentice teacher/Practicing teacher/Veteran teacher
Standards in USA4 (DESE,2019) Four (4) Levels	Unsatisfactory/Needs Improvement/Proficient/Exemplary
Standards in SALRubric (Edwards, 2017) Five (5) Levels	Novice/Advanced beginner/Competent/Proficient/Expert
USA2 (CCSSO,2013) Three (3) Levels	Although three levels are clearly tabled in the document, the three levels are unlabelled, yet describe competence in terms of aspects or criteria illustrating that competence is continually developing. It also indicates that abilities per level are accumulated rather than being categorised in three distinct levels. This is why the phrase 'and...' is inserted at the beginning of the second and third levels to indicate this understanding. Nonetheless three levels are described in terms of what teachers do – no reference is made to student teachers.

- Standards in the UK (DoE, 2013) (Developing – Standard met) seems to describe the competence of a beginner teacher yet allowances had to be made in this regard when student teacher level would be described using this standard
- SALRubric (Edwards, 2017) makes clear distinctions between Novice and Advanced beginner levels which were useful in formulating standards and criteria related to both student teacher and beginner teacher levels. The rubric is focused on competence in summative assessment only. At the same time this was helpful given the concern identified in earlier findings related to context, namely that summative assessment specifically is difficult to assess in the UNISA College of Education context.
- The UNISA Module Planning Grid (UNISA, n.d.) was the only document analysed in this context that did not discern different levels of competence. It was included because it clearly accommodates many of the concerns related to a distance education context, and is focused on the assessment theory module specifically.

The above challenges notwithstanding, the analysis to discern standards and criteria for beginner and student teacher levels was undertaken by first recording verbatim accounts of all standards and criteria or descriptions in the documents. This resulted in a series of tables reflecting standards and criteria and descriptions in the two lower levels in the documents, namely Tables 2.6 to 2.15 in Annexure I. The data in these tables were used to describe competence of assessors in two ways. The first described competence of assessors in terms of the three constituent competencies, foundational, practical and reflexive competence (Annexure I - Table 6.1) and secondly in terms of applied competence. (Annexure I - Table 6.2).

Inferences had to be drawn with regard to what is expected of student teachers, in terms of the distinctions between levels used in the documents analysed, and/or more relevant data had to be obtained during interviews with information rich participants. Only two documents, namely that used in Japan (Sakai, 2014) and the document used by the UNISA College of Education to describe student teacher competencies (UNISA, n.d.ii), use the term "student teacher" to indicate that particular level of competence. All other documents describing levels of competence regard the first level as that of a recently graduated beginner teacher, including "Emerging" (USA1 - CUSD, 2017), "Developing" (UK, DoE, 2013), "Graduate" (AUS, AITSL 2011), "Still developing" (UNISA, n.d.ii), and SALRubric (Edwards, 2017) "Novice". The IQMS document uses "Unacceptable", and USA4 (DESE, 2019) "Unsatisfactory" as a first level of competence. These are in the researcher's view unfortunate if not inappropriate phrases to use to categorise the competence of teachers. Descriptors of this kind should describe what student teachers can do, and how they may develop to a next level of competence. Using unlabelled descriptors as is done in the INTASC document (CCSSO, 2013) has merit in this perspective.

In the context of this study, two levels, that of student teacher and that of beginner teacher, are most relevant. The most comprehensive document, namely the InTASC standards (CCSSO, 2013) was valuable in this study because deep, thick and rich descriptions of teacher competence, including competence as assessors are provided. This document uses unlabelled columns to discern levels of competence and as indicated in Annexure I, Tables I2.12.1, I2.12.2 and I2.12.3, emphasises an understanding of competence as developing throughout a teacher's career, rather

than pinning down distinct levels of competence at any particular stage. The document describes practising teachers' competence and not that of student teachers. When analysing this document, inferences had to be made about what is expected of student teachers, particularly because of the detailed descriptions given at the first level indicated, inferred in this study to be at beginner teacher level. (See Table I2.12.2 in Annexure I).

5.3.3 Eight themes describing essential elements of applied competence as assessors

At a first level of analysis, the researcher found that competence as assessors is described by means of lists of abilities, performance areas, focus areas, criteria, components and/or aspects. All these phrases describe the essential elements of the phenomenon. The researcher preferred using the term "element" for this reason. Critically, these elements are understood in this study as standards. Every element on its own, but more pertinently the set of elements when read collectively, describes the standard that teachers as assessors are required to meet. (See Sadler's distinction between standards and criteria, Chapter 1, Section 1.10.1). The lists contained in the documents analysed differ in terms of the number of elements, the detail in terms of description and the format in which these are presented. The similarity of these documents lies in the focus on describing the essence of assessment in an educational context. (Refer to the frameworks for understanding competence and assessment in chapter 2, Sections 2.2.and 2.3). Table 5.7 contains excerpts from five documents analysed in this regard. The five documents selected for this purpose illustrate the variety of descriptions of competence as assessors in terms of similarities, differences and overlaps in meaning.

This finding is the result of the first reading of all collated documents in the first step of QDA as indicated in Chapter 4 (Section 4.5.4 and detailed in Annexure I). The structure, width and depth of description among documents varied considerably, yet provided useful descriptions of applied competence as assessors. The analysis revealed eight themes that collectively describe the essence of competence as assessors as applied competence, congruent with descriptions presented in Chapter 2, section 2.2.4 illustrated in Figure 6. In Annexure I, Tables 2.1 to 2.15 descriptions

from every document relevant to every theme are presented, also illustrates such congruence. These themes identified in the QDA are presented below in Table 5.9. Every theme is indicated by means of a key phrase as well as a verbatim description taken from some of the documents analysed. The description chosen in every case was in the opinion of the researcher the most appropriate verbatim description among several similar descriptions in the documents analysed. The sequence of themes is random, as these were revealed during the QDA and themes or descriptions were not sequenced in terms of the same logic in the documents analysed. The researcher used a logic proposed by authors such as Dreyer (2014), Markle (2019) and Elturki (2020), namely that a comprehensive assessment framework guides the phases of the assessment cycle, from pre-assessment creation to post-assessment analyses, to sequence the eight themes according to the assessment cycle.

The eight themes are regarded as the eight most essential aspects of the competence of the teacher, and student teacher as assessor as described in the documents analysed. Consequently, these themes are regarded as valid, appropriate and reliable standards for assessing applied competence as assessors.

The researcher asked participants during the second round of HPI to consider these themes as elements of competence as assessors, as indicated in Chapter 4, Section 4.6.3 and 4.6.4. This was done by sending a working document to participants prior to the second round interviews and asking them to peruse these in order to facilitate reflection and discussion during interviews. The working document contained the list of specific outcomes and associated assessment standards and criteria sourced from the UNISA Module Planning Document, as well as the list of eight themes as elements of applied competencies discerned in the first synthesis as listed in Table 5.9.

INTASC CCSSO (2013) Performance areas	Australia AITSL (2011, 2018) Focus areas	IQMS DoE (2006) Aspects of assessment in context	CSTP Commission on Teacher Credentialing (2016) Elements	Germany Schneider & Bodensohn (2017) Criteria
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher uses, designs or adapts multiple methods of assessment to document, monitor and support learner progress appropriate for learning goals and objectives. 2. The teacher uses assessment to engage learners in their own growth. 3. The teacher implements assessments in an ethical manner and minimizes bias to enable learners to display the full extent of their learning. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess student learning; 2. Provide feedback to students; 3. Make consistent and comparable judgements; 4. Interpret student data; 5. Report on student achievements 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Feedback to learners; 2. Knowledge of assessment techniques; 3. Application of techniques; and 4. Record keeping. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applying knowledge of the purposes, characteristics, and uses of different types of assessments 2. Collecting and analysing assessment data from a variety of sources to inform instruction 3. Reviewing data, both individually and with colleagues, to monitor student learning 4. Using assessment data to establish learning goals and to plan, differentiate and modify instruction 5. Involving all students in self-assessment, goal setting, and monitoring progress 6. Using available technologies to assist in assessment, analysis and communication of student learning 7. Using assessment information to share timely and comprehensible feedback with students and their families 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers diagnose pupils' prerequisites for learning and learning processes; they support individual pupils and counsel learners and their parents 2. Teachers assess pupils' learning outcomes by means of transparent evaluation criteria 3. Teachers understand their profession as a perpetual learning task

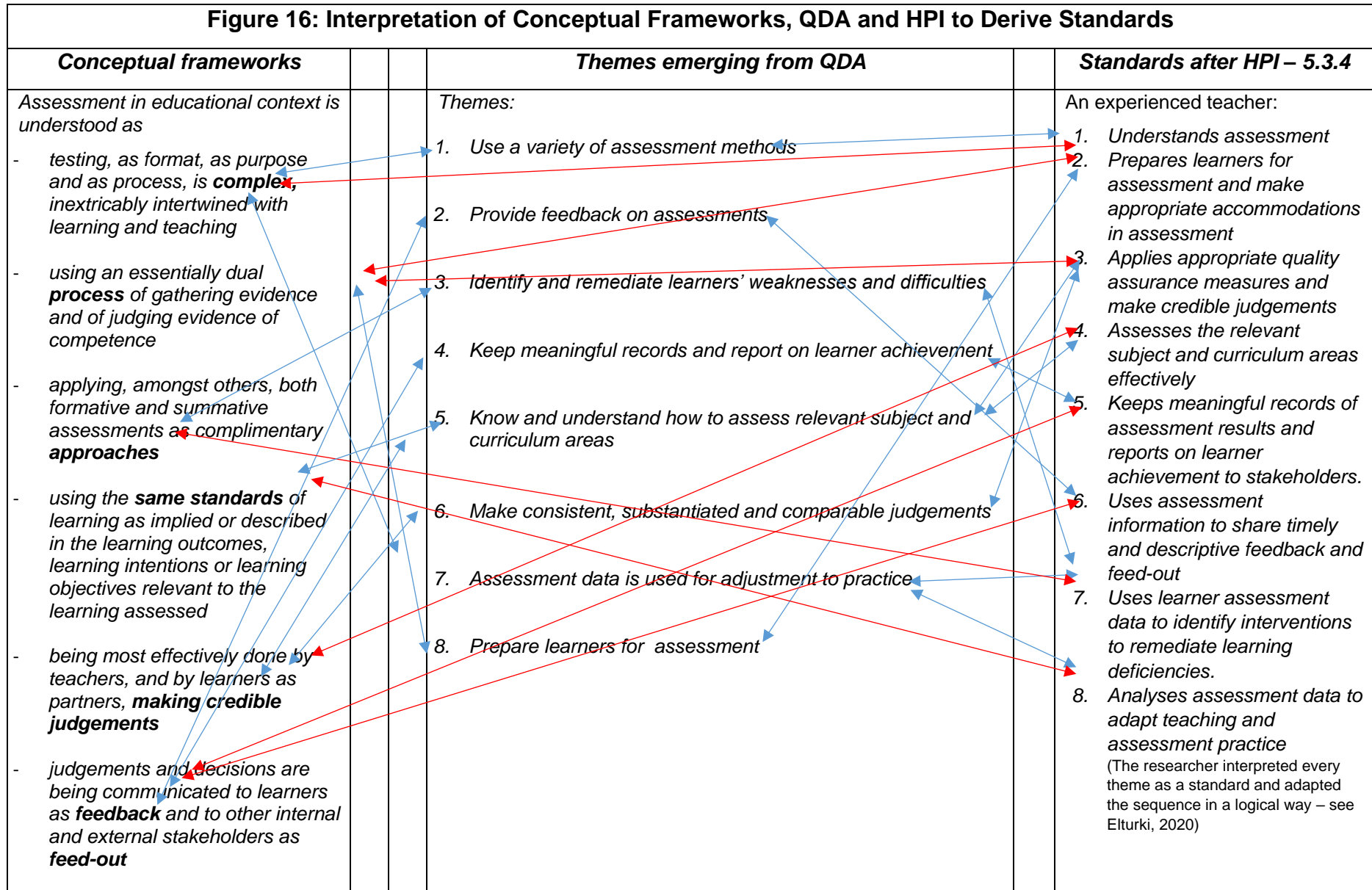
Theme	Verbatim description and originating document/s
Theme 1: Use a variety of assessment methods	<i>Apply knowledge of the purposes, characteristics, and use of different types of assessments (CSTP)(Commission on Teacher Credentialing (2016:16)</i>
Theme 2: Provide feedback on assessments	<i>Using assessment information to share timely and comprehensible feedback with students and their families (CSTP) (Commission on Teacher Credentialing (2016:17)</i>
Theme 3: Identify and remediate learners' weaknesses and difficulties	<i>The teacher effectively uses multiple and appropriate types of ... assessment data to identify each student's learning needs to develop differentiated learning experiences ... and ... The teacher knows how to analyse data to understand patterns and gaps in learning, to guide planning and instruction, and to provide meaningful feedback to all learners. (InTASC) (CCSSO,2013:31)</i>
Theme 4: Keep meaningful records and report on learner achievement	<i>Teachers analyse learner contributions, their questions and their errors as important data that shows what the learners do and do not yet understand to inform future planning.(SACE, 2020:11)</i>
Theme 5: Know and understand how to assess relevant subject and curriculum areas, including statutory assessment	<i>Apply assessment planning, practice and review in the specific subjects they are going to teach by indicating how they are going to put assessment theory into practice (UNISA – Module Planning Grid) (UNISA, n.d.ii: 1)</i>
Theme 6: Make consistent, substantiated and comparable judgements	<i>Teachers are familiar with different frames of reference [social, criterion-related and ipsative assessment] in appraising pupils' achievement and apply them appropriately... and ... know and make use methods of internal and external evaluation for purposes of developing and ensuring instructional quality. (Germany – Schneider & Bodensohn 2017:132)</i>
Theme 7: Use assessment data for adjustment to practice	<i>Essential knowledge. – The teacher knows how to analyse assessment data to understand patterns and gaps in learning, to guide planning and instruction, and to provide meaningful feedback to all learners (InTASC). (CCSSO, 2013:31)</i>
Theme 8: Prepare learners for assessment	<i>The teacher prepares all learners for the demands of particular assessment formats and makes appropriate accommodations in assessment especially for learners with disabilities and language learning needs. (InTASC). (CCSSO:2013:32)</i>

In a first round of synthesis, the researcher reflected on the formulation of these essential components of competence, in terms of the conceptual frameworks in Chapter 2, Sections 2.2.5 and 2.3.7, the contextual framework in Chapter 3, Section 3.7, as well as the findings related to the context (5.2.1 to 5.2.3). Every theme was understood as a description of competence of an experienced teacher (and

importantly, as a standard against which teachers may be assessed, evaluated or appraised). Every theme in section 5.3.4 and its description (verbatim as formulated by authors) was then rephrased into a statement reflecting the essence of the element or component of competence as assessors as a standard (formulated as interpreted by the researcher). Collectively, the set of eight standards describes competence as assessors at experienced teacher level. The set of standards was sequenced differently to the sequence of themes in 5.3.3. This was done to mirror general practice underpinned by a thorough understanding of assessment practice, rather than present these in a random list as these originally emerged from QDA. The re-phrased and re-sequenced set of standards of teacher competence as an assessor is presented below as in 5.3.4. Finding 5.3.3 predominantly reproduces the voices of the authors of the documents analysed, whereas the voice of the researcher is incorporated in the rephrased standards in 5.3.4, including notions from the conceptual frameworks underpinning the study.

The researcher's reasoning in formulating finding 5.3.4 is illustrated in Figure 16. Note that all descriptions were abbreviated for the sake of illustrating links between the three constructs (conceptual frameworks from literature, themes identified in QDA and standards derived by the researcher from the themes identified in QDA). The blue arrows link the eight themes in the middle column to the corresponding descriptions in literature in the left-hand column, and also link the themes to the appropriate standards in the right-hand column. The red arrows indicate how the descriptions in literature in the left-hand column are incorporated in the standards in the right-hand column.

Figure 16: Interpretation of Conceptual Frameworks, QDA and HPI to Derive Standards



5.3.4 The standards of competence of experienced assessors derived from essential elements of applied competence provide a useful benchmark for describing standards and criteria at beginner and student teacher levels

This finding presents the essential outcome of this study as a set of standards derived from documents analysed. By describing the applied competence of experienced or “good” (competent) teachers as assessors, this set of standards is a useful benchmark for further synthesis of standards and criteria at beginner and student teacher levels of competence.

Standards of competence as assessors at experienced teacher level as a useful benchmark

An experienced and competent teacher:

- 1. Understands the continuum of continuous assessment, principles, purposes, characteristics, and uses different types of assessments, to effectively assess learning, and apply such understanding in authentic classroom contexts.*
- 2. Prepares learners for the demands of particular assessment formats and makes appropriate accommodations in assessment, especially for learners with disabilities and language learning needs.*
- 3. Applies appropriate quality assurance measures and appropriate frames of reference to make credible judgements on learners' performances.*
- 4. Assesses the relevant subject and curriculum areas effectively in terms of statutory and curriculum requirements.*
- 5. Keeps meaningful records of assessment results and reports on learner achievement to stakeholders.*
- 6. Uses assessment information to share timely and descriptive feedback with learners and their families and feed-out to other stakeholders.*

7. *Uses learner assessment data to analyse and evaluate learner understanding of subject/curriculum content, skills and values, in order to identify interventions to remediate learning deficiencies.*
8. *Analyses assessment data to understand patterns and gaps in learning, to guide planning and instruction, and to adapt teaching and assessment practice.*

The researcher used this set of standards of competence as assessors at experienced teacher level as a benchmark for analysing documents describing such competence at different levels to discern two more levels of competence, namely at beginner teacher and student teacher levels. This approach was followed to achieve what one of the participants in the first round of interviews suggested. (Refer to Joey's argument in 5.2.1 regarding starting with what experienced and "good" assessors do).

The researcher had to analyse those descriptions found in the documents that make a distinction between the two levels in terms of what is expected of an experienced teacher (assessor). This was challenging because, as indicated earlier, the levels applied in the documents did not use "student teacher", "beginner teacher" and "experienced teacher", etc., as categories or frames of reference. After the second round of interviews were conducted, the final synthesis of standards and criteria as understood in this study was done. The findings of the final synthesis are presented in section 5.4 below as the answer to the central research question indicated in Chapter 1, section 1.5, namely:

How should standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context be described?

5.4 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING THE COMPETENCE OF STUDENT TEACHERS AS ASSESSORS IN A DISTANCE EDUCATION CONTEXT.

Introduction

The standards and criteria envisaged in this study are presented here in three sets: Set A includes standards and criteria for assessing the foundational competence of

student teachers as assessors; Set B includes standards and criteria for assessing the applied competence of student teachers as assessors, while Set C describes the standards and indicators for assessing the reflexive competence of student teacher assessors.

In finding 5.3.4 competence as assessors was described in a list of eight standards, formulated as outcomes. The first standard in the list broadly describes the foundational competence of a competent assessor in educational context, while the other seven elements collectively describe the applied competence of a competent assessor. As this ability is foundational (theoretical) in nature, the same knowledge and understanding are expected of student teachers, beginner teachers and experienced teachers, barring the ability to apply such understanding in authentic classroom contexts with regard to summative assessments, as indicated earlier. The assessment theory module used by the UNISA College of Education was designed to provide student teachers registered for the PGCE and B Ed programmes with such foundational competence. The analysis of this module done in the QDA of this study revealed a detailed description of the outcomes related to the module as well as detailed standards and criteria for every outcome listed in the Module Planning Document for AED3701 (UNISA, n.d.ii). It is clear from the QDA done that these outcomes and related assessment standards and criteria took into account the fact that regarding summative assessment, only assessment planning can be assessed in the module in terms of applying knowledge and understanding gained in the module. These descriptions were used here to formulate finding 5.4.1 as the only finding related to assessing foundational competence as understood in this study. The SAQA Level descriptors were used to ensure that the formulation of outcomes and standards and criteria described in the conclusions are pitched at appropriate levels of complexity, as most of the modules of the PGCE and B Ed qualifications and the qualifications are at NQF level 7, and some modules at NQF 6. These two sets of level descriptors were most relevant and are included in Annexure I.

The format used for presenting the standards and criteria is illustrated in Table 5.10. A broad description, corresponding with the respective ability in the list given in the introduction, is provided at the top of the table. The outcomes relative to ability are presented in the left-hand column and the associated criteria for assessing the

standards appear in the right-hand column. A similar format is used to present all findings describing the standards and criteria as understood in this study, in Sets B and C respectively.

Set A Standards and criteria for assessing the foundational competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context

Only one finding is presented in this set.

5.4.1 Standards and criteria for assessing the foundational competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context

The standards related to the foundational competence of student teachers are described in six specific outcomes to be achieved by them in studying the assessment theory module. The criteria for evaluating student teacher performances in these outcomes describe foundational competence in sufficient detail and at NQF Level 7. The standards and criteria indicated here are informed by the UNISA Module Planning document (UNISA, n.d.) Minor adaptations were made in terms of verbs used in standard statements and criteria descriptions. Table 5.10 presents the standards and criteria at student teacher level.

Table 5.9: Standards and criteria for assessing the foundational competence of the student teachers as assessors in a distance education context	
<p>Student teachers demonstrate a critical, deep and comprehensive understanding of assessment theory including the continuum of continuous assessment, principles, purposes, characteristics, and different types of assessments to effectively assess learning; requirements of relevant assessment policy; as well as the current curriculum in use, and apply such understanding in authentic classroom contexts.</p> <p>NB. 1. References to practice refer to informal, formative and summative assessments as described in scenarios, case studies, observed practice and/or personal experience. 2. Reflection refers to interpreting the “object” of reflection in terms of assessment theory, policy and/or curriculum as indicated in the assessment standards and criteria and specifically excludes description and discussion.</p>	
Outcomes	Assessment Standards and criteria
<p>Outcome 1: Critically reflect on, compare and evaluate key ideas and debates on assessment theory, planning, practice and moderation in the school curriculum.</p>	<p>AC 1 Comparisons and evaluations of assessment theory, planning, practice and moderation display a consideration for historical and current perspectives.</p> <p>AC 2 Reflections on, comparisons and evaluations, related to assessment theory, planning, practice and moderation show a consideration for the impact of curriculum on assessment including curriculum developments and language of learning and teaching (LOLT)</p>

	<p>AC 3 Reflections on assessment planning, practice and moderation take due cognisance of the diversity that exists in sites of practice.</p> <p>AC 4 Reflections on assessment planning, practice and moderation illustrate the ability to act ethically and professionally, and the ability to justify assessment decisions and actions</p> <p>AC 5 Reflections on, comparisons and evaluations related to the conventions of academic debate demonstrate the ability to analyse published research reports and articles in this area.</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Plan, analyse, review and justify a variety of assessment strategies, instruments and processes.</p>	<p>AC 1 Analyses of assessment planning, practice and review are based on a sound understanding of diverse learning, teaching and assessment needs and the level of readiness of learners and other stakeholders in diverse contexts of practice.</p> <p>AC 2 Reflections on, and evaluations of, the best ways of engaging with, and improving, aspects of assessment planning, practice and review including assessment processes and instruments take due cognisance of the diversity that exists in sites of practice.</p> <p>AC 3 Roles assumed and positions taken with regard to planning and improving aspects of assessment planning, practice and review (including processes and instruments) are justified by means of appropriate reference to theory, policy, observed practice and/or personal experience and demonstrate the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Select, adapt and/or design assessment tasks and strategies appropriate to the specialisation and a range of learning contexts; ➤ Explain the link between the method of assessment, the overall assessment purpose and the learning intentions being assessed; ➤ Use a range of assessment strategies to accommodate differences in learning style, pace and context; ➤ Design assessment tasks applying appropriate assessment taxonomies, including appropriate instruments containing own item designs as well as adapted existing item designs, i.e. in question papers, memoranda, assessment checklists, grids and rubrics, using clear language and instructions; ➤ Collect, from a variety of sources, sufficient confirming evidence of learner competence, achievement and/or performance; ➤ Assess evidence of learner competence, achievements or performance making sound judgements using appropriate ways of referencing; ➤ Record systematically the progress of individual learners; ➤ Use assessment results to provide feedback and feed-out in educationally constructive ways on learner progress and achievement to learners and other stakeholders; ➤ Interpret and use assessment results to inform future teaching, learning and assessment strategies; ➤ Justify choice and design of assessment strategies, methods, instruments and procedures in ways which show knowledge and understanding of the assumptions that underlie a range of assessment approaches and their particular strengths and weaknesses in relation to learner age, phase taught, and subject being assessed. ➤ Evaluate own and others' assessment strategies in terms of their credibility (validity, fairness, reliability and manageability), sensitivity to gender, culture, and language, as well as barriers to learning and development;
<p>Outcome 3: Identify, critically reflect on and justify, varied strategies for engaging with aspects of assessment planning, practice and review in ways that are appropriate for different purposes and contexts.</p>	<p>AC 1 Evaluations of different strategies for engagement display a consideration for historical and current perspectives as well as a deep understanding of context.</p> <p>AC 2 Reflections on the efficacy of different strategies for engagement by means of assessment take due cognisance of the diversity that exists in sites of practice and the evolving nature of policy and practice.</p> <p>AC 3 Selections of different strategies for engagement are justified by appropriate reference to theory, policy, observed practice and/or personal experience.</p>
<p>Outcome 4: Use innovative ways to contribute to the development</p>	<p>AC 1 Selections of different strategies for positive engagement in Africanisation of assessment are justified by appropriate reference to</p>

<p>of aspects of assessment planning, practice and review in ways that are informed by contextual realities, the nature of multi-cultural schools and classrooms, historical legacies, social diversity, and the integration of indigenous knowledge.</p>	<p>theory including indigenous knowledge, observed practice and/or personal experience.</p> <p>AC 2 Critical reflection on, and evaluation of, aspects of assessment planning, practice and review display a consideration for historical and current social perspectives and the need to engage in collaborative meaning-making.</p> <p>AC 3 Reflection on, and evaluation of, aspects of assessment planning, practice and review take due cognisance of the diversity that exists in sites of practice, stakeholder preparedness and the evolving nature of policy and practice.</p>
<p>Outcome 5: Apply assessment planning, practice and review in the specific subjects they are going to teach by indicating how they are going to put assessment theory into practice</p>	<p>AC 1 Applications of knowledge on assessment planning, practice and review to design various assessments for their subjects reflect a command of assessment theory, subject knowledge, subject methodology, learner attributes, assessment policy and curriculum requirements.</p> <p>AC 2 Reflection on own assessment designs by critically analysing and justifying their decisions on the following illustrates command of subject knowledge, assessment theory, relevant policy and curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Who is going to do the assessment (teacher, self-assessment, peer assessment) and why? ➤ Where, when and how will assessment(s) take place (during lesson, after lesson, at home)? ➤ How did you take into account individual learning styles, aptitudes and interests? ➤ How are local values, content and standards reflected in your assessment(s) – i.e., is it authentic? ➤ How did you make sure that assessment is an integral, ongoing part of the learning process (where does it fit into your assessment plan and type of assessment – informal, formal assessment task or practical assessment task such as assess, research project, etc.)? ➤ Which assessment products and/or activities did you require (written work, oral, presentation, portfolio, etc.) and why are these appropriate? ➤ How did you make sure that assessment(s) are credible (reliable, accurate, objective, valid, fair, manageable), and time efficient? ➤ How did you make sure that assessment(s) are appropriate to the developmental level of the learners? ➤ How did you make sure that assessment(s) are bias-free and sensitive to gender, race, cultural background and abilities? <p>AC 3 The impact of possible unforeseen circumstances on assessment planning and implementation is reflected on and indicated, including proposing appropriate adjustments to planning and or implementation</p>
<p>Outcome 6: Undertake assessment related research in the specific subjects they are going to teach to develop a better understanding of assessment that will underpin the assessment decisions they have to take when designing assessments.</p>	<p>AC 1 A problematic area of assessment that is a remaining learning need is identified and formulated accurately.</p> <p>AC 2 As self-directed learner, the student undertakes research through the use of a variety of relevant sources to obtain relevant, valid and sufficient data.</p> <p>AC 3 Data are analysed, synthesised and evaluated in terms of requirements of limited small-scale research.</p> <p>AC 4 Decisions are made on contested knowledge areas of assessment such as the best way to assess a specific subject or a section of it.</p> <p>AC 5 Students motivate their choice or solution based on their exposure to theory, practice and other sources of information.</p>
<p><i>Source: Adapted from UNISA (n.d.ii) AED3701 Module Planning Document</i></p>	

Concluding remarks on standards and criteria related to assessing the foundational competence in the context of this study

The outcomes and standards and criteria described in Table 5.10 illustrate that assessment in an educational context demands higher order cognitive engagement by student teachers at NQF level 7, particularly because student teachers and qualified beginner teachers alike, need to be reflective practitioners. This justifies the decision to exclude description and discussion from reflective activities. Reflective ability develops throughout the delivery of ITE programmes and continues to grow throughout their careers. The need for reflective ability is punctuated when the standards and criteria for assessing the applied competence of student teachers are presented.

Set B Standards and criteria for assessing the applied competence of student teachers as assessors.

This set comprises seven findings, each finding related to a corresponding standard in the list of standards in 5.3.4, and focused on the applied competence described in standards 2 – 7 in the list.

5.4.2 Standards and criteria for assessing the applied competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context include seven standards and associated assessment criteria

This finding is presented in a series of tables (Table 5.10 – 5.16). The format of the tables describes the standards and criteria for assessing every one of the seven essential elements (standards) of competence separately. The element describing the competence of an experienced teacher as assessor is used as a caption for the table. The same competence is described at student teacher and beginner teacher levels to indicate growth and development towards competence at experienced teacher level. The standards and criteria associated with the element are presented in two columns, the first describing the standards and criteria for assessing student teachers, and the standards and criteria associated with appraising beginner teacher competence in the second column as benchmark between student teacher and experienced teacher levels

Table 5.10: Standards and criteria for preparing learners for assessment	
Experienced teachers as assessors: Prepare learners for the demands of particular assessment formats and make appropriate and effective accommodations in assessment, especially for learners with disabilities and language learning needs.	
Beginner teachers as assessors: Prepare learners for the demands of particular formative and summative assessment formats and begin to make accommodations in assessment, especially for learners with disabilities and language learning needs.	
Student teachers as assessors: Prepare learners for the demands of mostly formative assessment formats, and understand the need to make accommodations in assessment, especially for learners with disabilities and language learning needs.	
Standards and criteria for Assessing Student Teachers	Standards and criteria for Appraising Beginner Teachers
AC 1 Interactions with learners regarding formative assessment tasks engage them in understanding and identifying quality work, and provide them with descriptive feedback to guide their progress towards producing such quality work.	AC 1 Interactions with learners regarding formative and summative assessment tasks engage them in understanding and identifying quality work and provide them with descriptive and constructive feedback to guide their progress towards producing such quality work.
AC 2 Lesson plans and preparation include written instructions and assessment instruments to facilitate effective interaction and clarity regarding formative assessment tasks related to lessons delivered in teaching practice contexts.	AC 2 Lesson plans and preparation include written instructions and assessment instruments to facilitate effective interaction regarding formative and summative assessment tasks in routine teaching contexts.
AC 3 Reflections on observed or possible learner disabilities and language learning needs are shared with the receiving teacher/mentor in teaching practice context, including suggestions for possible accommodations in assessment practices.	AC 3 Possible accommodations in assessment based on observed learner disabilities and language learning needs are shared with the teacher leader or mentor and are applied in consultation with the teacher leader or mentor.

Table 5.11 Standards and criteria for making judgements using frames of reference and applying quality assurance measures	
Experienced teachers: Make credible judgements on learners' performances using appropriate frames of reference including community values-referenced approaches and apply appropriate quality assurance measures	
Beginner teachers: Make judgements on learners' performances using frames of reference preferred at the practice site, and begin using other frames of reference including community values-referenced approaches, and apply appropriate quality assurance measures for every formal assessment task assessed.	
Student teachers: Make judgements on learners' performances in selected formal formative assessment tasks during teaching practice placements, using preferred appropriate frames of reference including community values-referenced approaches and apply appropriate quality assurance measures to such tasks in consultation with the receiving teacher/mentor.	
Standards and criteria for Assessing Student Teachers	Standards and criteria for Appraising Beginner Teachers
AC 1 Own assessment designs or selections of existing designs and using such designs in informal, formal and formative approaches to assess learning demonstrate a keen awareness and fundamental understanding of the purposes and characteristics of all assessment approaches above, including summative approaches.	AC 1 Own assessment designs or selections of existing designs and implementation of such designs in informal, formal, formative and summative approaches to assess learning demonstrate a keen awareness and fundamental understanding of the purposes and characteristics of assessment approaches above as well as confidence to begin exploring approaches not tried before.
AC 2 Informal and formal as well as formative assessments are implemented to display the ability to assess learner performances in authentic classroom contexts during teaching practice placements.	AC 2 Informal, formal, formative and summative assessments are applied to assess learner performances in authentic classroom situations at the practice site.
AC 3 Norm- and criterion-referencing applied in teaching practice contexts demonstrate a fundamental understanding of different frameworks and reflection on	AC 3 Applying frames of referencing commonly used at the site of practice and exploring the use of untried frameworks such as self- and community values-

assessment practices demonstrate an understanding of self- and community values- referencing as well.	referencing, result in effective assessment of learning.
AC 4 Assessment moderation and its application to support consistent and comparable judgements of learners' learning, is understood and illustrated in participating in pre-assessment, during-assessment, and post-assessment moderation of selected assessments at the site of practice during teaching practice placements.	AC 4 Assessment moderation and its application to support consistent and comparable judgements of learners' learning, is applied by participating in moderation pre-assessment, during-assessment and post-assessment at every possible opportunity.

Table 5.12: Standards and criteria for assessing relevant subject and curriculum areas	
Experienced teachers: Assess the relevant subject and curriculum areas effectively in terms of statutory and curriculum requirements.	
Beginner teachers: Assess the relevant subject and curriculum areas under supervision and in consultation with leader teachers in the subject and curriculum area to align own practice with statutory and curriculum requirements and develop own effectiveness.	
Experienced teachers: Assess formal formative tasks during teaching practice placements in the relevant subject and curriculum areas under supervision and in consultation with receiving teachers in the subject and curriculum area and reflect on aligning own practice with statutory and curriculum requirements to develop own effectiveness.	
Standards and criteria for Assessing Student Teachers	Standards and criteria for Appraising Beginner Teachers
AC 1 Informal and formal formative assessment tasks for the age group, phase and subject assessed, implemented in delivery of lessons during teaching practice placements reflects understanding and the ability to apply own subject matter expertise, knowledge and understanding of subject	AC 1 Informal and formal formative assessment as well as summative tasks implemented in delivery of lessons during routine teaching demonstrates the ability to apply own subject matter expertise, knowledge and understanding of subject methodology, assessment policy requirements,

methodology, assessment policy requirements, curriculum guidelines and existing assessment tasks provided by the site to plan for, and design assessments appropriate to the age group, phase and subject assessed.	curriculum guidelines and existing assessment tasks provided by the site to plan for, and design assessments appropriate to the age group, phase and subject assessed as routine practice.
AC 2 Subject related procedures and protocols are applied in implementing planned assessment tasks in delivering lessons during teaching practice placements.	AC 2 Subject related procedures and protocols are applied in implementing planned assessment tasks in routine teaching programmes on site.
AC 3 Reflections on own experiences and receiving teacher performances during teaching practice placement illustrate an appreciation of the need to align summative assessments with statutory and curriculum requirements	AC 3 Quality assurance measures such as moderation and interactions with leader teachers leads to progressively better alignment with statutory and curriculum requirements, particularly with regard to summative assessments.
AC 3 Lessons planned and delivered in teaching practice context illustrate the use of teaching practice site assessment procedures and instruments designed or selected assessment activities, excluding implementing summative assessments.	AC 3 Lessons planned and delivered at the practice site context illustrate increasing compliance with practice site assessment procedures and instruments designed or selected, including implementing summative assessments.

Table 5.13: Standards and criteria for keeping meaningful records and reporting on learner achievement	
Experienced teachers: Keep meaningful records and report on learner achievement to stakeholders according to policy requirements.	
Beginner teachers: Keep meaningful records and report on learner achievement to stakeholders according to policy requirements under supervision of leader teachers.	
Student teachers: Gather anecdotal evidence at teaching practice sites related to keeping meaningful records and reporting on learner achievement to stakeholders.	
Standards and criteria for Assessing Student Teachers	Standards and criteria for Appraising Beginner Teachers

<p>AC 1 Anecdotal evidence collected during teaching practice at practice sites demonstrate understanding of the purpose of keeping, accurate meaningful and reliable records of learner achievements, as well as applying a range of strategies for reporting to learners and parents/carers.</p>	<p>AC 1 Hard copy or digital evidence at the site of practice demonstrates the ability to create, maintain and start using accurate, meaningful and reliable records about learner achievements, and report clearly, accurately and respectfully to learners and other stakeholders</p>
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<p>Table 5.14: Standards and criteria for using assessment information to provide feedback and feed-out</p>	
<p>Experienced teachers: Use assessment information to share timely, descriptive and constructive feedback with learners and their families and appropriate need oriented feed-out to other stakeholders</p>	
<p>Beginner teachers: Use assessment information to share timely, descriptive and constructive feedback with learners and their families and provide need oriented feed-out to other stakeholders in consultation with a leader teacher</p>	
<p>Student teachers: Use assessment information to share timely, descriptive and constructive feedback with learners on formative assessment done in teaching practice context and appreciate the need for feed-out to other stakeholders</p>	
<p>Standards and criteria for Assessing Student Teachers</p>	<p>Standards and criteria for Appraising Beginner Teachers</p>
<p>AC 1 Reflections on observed and own interaction with learners during lessons in informal and formative assessments in teaching practice contexts demonstrate an appreciation of the purpose of providing timely and appropriate feedback to students about their learning.</p>	<p>AC 1 Feedback provided to learners about their achievements relative to their learning goals in informal, formal, formative and summative assessment contexts are in line with learning site formats and procedures ensuring timely, effective and appropriate feedback.</p>
<p>AC 2 Feedback during teaching practice placements on formal formative assessments are limited to grades and task completion with limited impact on improving learner performance.</p>	<p>AC 2 Feedback on informal, formative and summative assessments to learners about their performance goes beyond grades and occasionally also solicits feedback from learners on how to improve their performance toward objectives.</p>

<p>AC 3 Reflections on observed and own conduct as well as anecdotal evidence collected in teaching practice contexts demonstrate an understanding of feed-out as a means to communicate relevant information regarding learner proficiencies, challenges, and behavioural issues to other stakeholders through practice site mandated procedures.</p>	<p>AC 3 Hard copy or digital evidence at the site of practice demonstrates regular feed-out to other stakeholders regarding learner proficiencies, challenges, and behavioural issues through practice site mandated procedures and notifies families and other relevant stakeholders of learner proficiencies, challenges, and behavioural issues through practice site mandated procedures.</p>
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<p align="center">Table 5.15: Standards and criteria for analysing and evaluating learner performance to identify interventions</p>	
<p>Experienced teachers: Use learner assessment data to analyse and evaluate learner understanding of subject/curriculum content, skills and values, in order to identify interventions to remediate learning, including the development of differentiated learning experiences.</p>	
<p>Beginner teachers: Use learner assessment data to analyse and evaluate learner understanding of subject/curriculum content, skills and values, and share such analyses with teacher leaders in order to identify interventions in consultation with them to remediate learning and begin to explore the use of differentiated learning experiences.</p>	
<p>Student teachers: Use learner assessment data to analyse and evaluate learner understanding of subject/curriculum content, skills and values and share such analyses with receiving teachers in teaching practice contexts in order to identify interventions in consultation with them to suggest ways to remediate learning and reflect on the use of differentiated learning experiences in consultation with them.</p>	
<p align="center">Standards and criteria for Assessing Student Teachers</p>	<p align="center">Standards and criteria for Appraising Beginner Teachers</p>
<p>AC 1 Reflection on teaching practice site practices observed as well as own experiences and analyses, including anecdotal evidence collected during teaching practice placements, illustrate an understanding and appreciation of using</p>	<p>AC 1 Learner assessment data are analysed and evaluated in consultation with teacher leaders to interpret and evaluate learner understanding of subject/content at an elementary level.</p>

learner assessment data to analyse and evaluate their understanding of subject/content.	
AC 2 Reflection on teaching practice site practices observed and participated in, including anecdotal evidence collected during teaching practice placements illustrate an understanding and appreciation of using learner assessment data to identify appropriate interventions to remedy learning deficiencies	AC 2 Learner assessment data is analysed and evaluated in consultation with teacher leaders to identify learning interventions to remedy learning deficiencies.

Table 5.16: Standards and criteria for analysing data to guide planning, and improve teaching and assessment practice	
The experienced teacher: Analyses assessment data to understand patterns and gaps in learning, to guide planning and instruction, and to adapt teaching and assessment practice.	
The beginner teacher: Analyses assessment data in consultation with the leader teacher to understand patterns and gaps in learning, and share considerations to guide planning and instruction with the leader teacher, and to adapt teaching and assessment practice.	
The student teacher: Analyses assessment data from formal formative assessments and shares these with the receiving teacher in teaching practice contexts to understand patterns and gaps in learning, share considerations to guide planning and instruction with the receiving teacher, and reflect on possible adaptations to teaching and assessment practice.	
Standards and criteria for Assessing Student Teachers	Standards and criteria for Appraising Beginner Teachers
AC 1 Reflection on, and participation in, scenarios and case studies or actual data provided by teaching practice sites demonstrate an elementary understanding of drawing conclusions about learner progress and the effectiveness of teaching strategies employed.	AC 1 Conclusions about learner progress and effectiveness of teaching strategies are drawn at an elementary level and supervised by a leader teacher, and are based on data from summative assessments conducted routinely in a practice site context.

<p>AC 2 Reflection on, and participation in, scenarios and case studies or actual data provided by teaching practice sites demonstrate an understanding of suggesting adapted or alternative teaching strategies that would be more effective.</p>	<p>AC 2 Proposed adaptations or suggestions to use alternative teaching strategies are informed by data from summative assessments analysed for this purpose as supervised by a leader teacher, colleague or mentor.</p>
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Concluding remarks on findings related to assessing applied competencies

The tables in the set collectively describe what experienced, beginner and student teachers do as assessors. These tables describe the practical competencies of teachers as assessors. The reflexive competencies (values, attitudes and critical dispositions) related to being a competent teacher as assessor are presented in Set C.

Set C

Standards and indicators related to assessing reflexive competencies of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context

Only one finding describes these standards and indicators. The term ‘indicators’ is used rather than criteria as reflexive competence is very difficult to assess using criteria that spell out detailed measures to be observed in behaviour and conduct.

5.4.3 Standards and indicators for assessing the critical values, attitudes and dispositions or reflexive competencies of student teachers envisaged in this study

The reflexive competence of teachers was included and described in the documents analysed as well as in some of the participant responses in the interviews conducted and recorded in Chapter 5, and Annexures G and I. Since values, attitudes and dispositions are probably the most difficult aspects of competence to assess, trying to describe these at different levels as was done for applied competencies in Set C, proved to be unmanageable. Instead, a list of reflexive competencies was synthesized from descriptions in Chapter 5 and Annexures G and I, including some references to contexts in which these competencies are illustrated or demonstrated in teacher conduct. In spite of not being able to describe these competencies at different levels,

it is assumed that student teachers as well as beginner teachers display these in more elementary ways and more sporadically, while these competencies are more easily inferred from experienced teachers behaviour and conduct. Table 5.17 contains the reflexive competencies derived in this study. The descriptors given in the table are not standards and criteria for assessing student teachers but are understood as indicators reflecting the student teachers' ability to display these critical values, attitudes and dispositions.

Table 5.17: Reflexive competencies of student teachers and associated indicators	
Reflexive competencies	Associated indicators of values, attitudes, and dispositions
<p>1. Ideal citizen and learner</p> <p>Throughout progression from being a student teacher, beginner teacher, experienced teacher and beyond, the teacher exemplifies the seven characteristics of the ideal learner or citizen envisaged in CAPS to colleagues and learners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use critical thinking to solve problems - Organise own life and activities - Function as individual and a member of teams - Source, critically evaluate and use information - Communicate effectively - Use science and technology responsibly - Apply context awareness and systems thinking <p>These values are observed in a variety of contexts, behaviours and conduct.</p>
<p>2. Professional commitment</p> <p>Throughout progression from being a student teacher, beginner teacher, experienced teacher and beyond, the teacher is committed to assessment practices and conduct becoming of a professional teacher and educator</p>	<p>Behaviour and conduct reflecting commitment to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - engaging learners actively in assessment processes and developing each learner's capacity to review and communicate about their own progress and learning, - aligning instruction and assessment with learning goals, - providing timely, effective descriptive and constructive feedback to learners on their progress, - using multiple types of assessment processes to support, verify, and document learning,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - making accommodations in assessment and assessing, especially for learners with disabilities and language learning needs, - regarding fairness as more than just treating all learners the same in assessment, such as being willing to explore and apply alternative modes of assessment, and identifying various ways learners are enabled to provide evidence of their learning, as well as - ethical use of various assessments and assessment data to identify learner strengths and needs to promote learner growth.
<p>3. Professional relations</p> <p>Throughout progression from being a student teacher, beginner teacher, experienced teacher and beyond, the teacher establishes and maintains professional relationships and behaviours focused on learning and the well-being of each learner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relations with learners and others at the site of practice reflect Ubuntu values of respect and dignity - Interactions with learners exemplify educative care for and unconditional acceptance of the person - Interactions with learners and/or parents at individual level are characterised as helpful and supportive counselling - Relations with colleagues, leader teachers, parents and other stakeholders reflect Ubuntu values of joint responsibility for learner well-being and their learning; teamwork; and community interest and well-being (It takes a village to educate a child).

Concluding remark – findings related to assessing reflexive competencies

Reflexive competence is arguably the most difficult to assess, in spite of also being the most critical ability of any student teacher, beginner teacher and experienced teacher. Clearly this area of concern warrants further research. The reflexive competencies and related indicators presented above are regarded as a basis for reflection on current practice. The dangers of not teaching what is difficult to assess have been indicated in this study and should be borne in mind. Assessors of student teachers as assessors have to incorporate similar indicators in the assessment instruments used. These thoughts conclude the presentation of the findings derived from the data collected and analysed in this study.

5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS ON FINDINGS

The findings from the QDA and HPI conducted in this study to collect and analyse data related to standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context were presented in two major categories, namely findings related to context and findings related to standards and criteria. The researcher found that a **fracture** exists between the **ideal and the reality** of student teacher competence as assessors. The ideal, described in documents and by participants in this study corresponds with the general understanding as identified in the literature overviewed in Chapter 2, Sections 2.2.5 and 2.3.7. The reality, however, is that theoretical aspects and the practical abilities to plan assessments, informal and formative are effectively assessed, yet summative assessment in particular is not assessed effectively at all, particularly during teaching practice: the most significant context in which practical aspects are assessed. The fracture is not limited to distance education contexts nor to competence as assessors only. It is also relevant to the ability to teach.

The research showed that at the UNISA College of Education several **challenges** contribute to the fracture. Large numbers of student teachers distributed across the South Africa form an immense and challenging task. Assessing practical application of summative assessments is virtually impossible since the entire process is not observed during teaching practice, the only context in which it can be assessed prior to entry into the profession. Assessing student teachers implementing formative as well as summative assessments is required yet very limited opportunities exist and many receiving teachers do not allow student teachers to be involved in summative assessments. Finally, participants reported curriculum issues related to teaching, learning, assessment and the language of instruction, particularly relevant in a multi-cultural context in South Africa.

Several **approaches to meet these challenges** were proposed by participants in HPI include identifying what can be assessed and assessing those aspects as effectively as possible; enhancing the use of teaching practice placements as opportunities for assessing student teachers; instilling a culture of reflection in student teachers to become reflective practitioners capable of self-development; relying on

continued professional development and professional learning once students become beginner teachers; considering more prolonged teaching practice placement to provide better opportunities, and finally, describing the standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context to facilitate the approaches mentioned. This approach is most relevant to this study.

The second category of findings focused on standards and criteria. These findings include that descriptions of competence as assessor in documents analysed may be interpreted as **foundational, practical and reflexive competencies**, in line with the conceptual framework (competence) underpinning this study, including the notion of **applied competence** that is described in a variety of ways revealing **essential elements of the phenomenon as standards**. This realisation was concerning because this study is focused on this particular population. The number of elements or standards describing applied competence of an assessor was found to vary, yet still describe the **essence of assessment** qualitatively in similar ways. Crucially, the study revealed that **standards of competence as assessors** at experienced teacher level comprise an appropriate benchmark for deriving standards and criteria at beginner and student teacher levels. Critically, it was found that the standards which the researcher derived in a **first synthesis** of findings do in fact describe competence as assessors adequately for the purposes of this study, namely to be used for assessing student teachers as assessors in a distance education context. The findings from the two categories were used to **synthesise standards and criteria** for assessing the competence of student teachers in a distance education context as originally envisaged when this study commenced. The final synthesis in this regard was presented in three sets of findings. These three sets of findings collectively answer the central research question in this study, by clearly describing the standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers in a distance education context. These are the findings of an exploratory hermeneutical phenomenological and qualitative study, so the standards and criteria presented here are open to reinterpretation and revision.

5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the findings of the study and focused on two essential questions, namely, “In what context are student teachers assessed with regard to their competence as assessors at UNISA College of Education?”, and “How should the standards and criteria used in this context be described?”. The findings related to the first question included several approaches that may be used to address the fracture between the ideal and the reality of assessing student teachers as assessors identified in this study, given a distance education and global context relevant to ITE. The findings related to the second question presented standards and criteria for assessing the foundational, applied and reflexive competencies of student teachers as assessors described in a rich, detailed and clear way. In Chapter 6 the research is overviewed, recommendations are made, limitations are contemplated, suggestions for further research are presented and the study is concluded.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the research process, as envisaged when the study commenced, is concluded. Conclusions drawn from the four sets of findings in Chapter 5 describing standards and criteria are set out for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context. These conclusions are preceded by brief summaries of literature reviews done and research methods used in the empirical work in terms of the research questions. After the conclusions drawn from the empirical work, some recommendations are presented followed by reflections on limitations of the study, suggestions for further research in the field, and finally summarising the impact of this study on initial teacher education in a distance education context. A brief reflection on the researcher's personal journey concludes the study.

6.2 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

In Chapter 2, literature related to two central theoretical concepts, competence and assessment was overviewed. The chapter presented two conceptual frameworks: competence and assessment in an educational context. With regard to competence, the views of Delamare Le Deist and Winterton (2005) on a holistic approach to competence, Korthagen in Zwart et al. (2015) regarding competence within a complex set of personal traits, and SAQA (2012) on applied competence, laid a foundation for understanding competence. More focused views on assessor competence were discussed, in particular included INTO (2006), Ceana (2014) and McMahon et al. (2015) in terms the significance of a teacher education continuum. Referring to literature on assessment as capacity, literacy and competence the researcher clarified the contributions that these notions made to this study. (See Struyven and De Meyst, 2010, DeLuca et al., 2013, Popham 2018, Sakai 2014, Caena 2014, Van Schalkwyk and Wydeman, 2015, and Indiana Department of Education, 2018, amongst others.)

The literature overview related to assessment, including the views of Knight, 2002; Lau, 2016; Houston and Thompson, 2017; Black, 2013; Dreyer, 2014; and Edwards, 2017, resulted in a summary description of assessment in an educational context. This summary description included notions such as: assessment inextricably intertwined with learning and teaching, continuum of continuous assessment, assessment as, for, and of learning, evidence of competence, assessment criteria, assessment purposes, formative and summative assessments, learning outcomes, intentions or objectives; making credible judgements; feedback and feed-out, amongst others. (See Chapter 2, Section 2.3).

In Chapter 3, literature related to the context in which student teachers are assessed as assessors at UNISA College of Education was overviewed. The overview included several views related to the history of initial teacher education in South Africa (Placier et al., 2016, Abdi, 2003, and Msila, 2007), Africanisation, IKS and Ubuntu (See Le Grange, 2018, Mbembe, 2016, and Ngugiwa Thiong'o, 1986), global contextual influences on initial teacher education, (DoBE, 2012) including the impact of COVID-19. Within this context, two qualifications, the PGCE and the B Ed. offered by the UNISA Collage of Education were contextualised. Pertinent aspects in a distance education context such as essential elements of assessing student teachers as assessors (UNISA, 2019), teaching practice triad (Aspden, 2017), complexities of assessing teaching practice as well as the notion of assessing the measureables and the immeasurables of teaching practice (Higgs, 2014), were included.

The conceptual and contextual frameworks derived from literature informed the research design used in the empirical work in this study.

6.3 SUMMARY OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

The research problem emerging from the researcher's experience as well as literature, was *a lack of effective and clearly described standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context*. This problem was studied using a bespoke research design.

As an exploratory study (Creswell and Poth, 2018) this research was conducted within an interpretivist paradigm (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). Predominantly interpretive and pragmatic thinking was used to study the phenomenon through the implementation of qualitative evidence-based inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). The complexities embedded in assessing the competence of student teacher assessors, especially in a distance education context, informed the decision to follow a qualitative approach, deploying a hermeneutical phenomenological research strategy (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014). The focus was on describing what all participants, including authors of relevant documents in this context, have in common since they have experienced the phenomenon under scrutiny (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Their lived experiences were used to describe the universal essence of the phenomena, in this case, standards and criteria as understood here. As indicated by Adams and Van Manen (2017) phenomenological methods set out and interpret lived experiences or remembered moments, and their meanings in a rich and deep way. In this study two such methods were employed, namely Qualitative document analysis (QDA) and Hermeneutical phenomenological interviews (HPI) to gather and interpret data related to the lived experiences of authors of documents and participants in interviews and discern meaning from their experiences (Van Manen, 2016). This was done in an essence-seeking and meaning-deriving way describing standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context.

Two sets of documents were analysed in the QDA applied in the study. The first set described the context in which student teachers are assessed. The analysis of these documents revealed the complexity of the problem including the fact it is virtually impossible to assess student teachers' ability to do summative assessments in classroom contexts effectively. The second set of documents that were analysed contained standards and criteria used in various states and/or countries internationally to describe assessor competence. The analysis of these documents revealed eight themes, standards or core elements of competence of teachers as assessors, and in some cases, the competence of student teachers as assessors. The analysis revealed an extensive list of descriptions related to each of the eight core aspects, standards or essential elements. These descriptions were used later to describe the standards and criteria as envisaged in this study.

Two rounds of hermeneutical phenomenological interviews (HPI) were conducted with sixteen information rich participants in total, during data collection focused on participant experiences in both contextual and standards and criteria-related fields. The findings were described mostly in *verbatim* accounts of either document authors or interview participants. The research questions were answered by synthesising the findings of literature reviews and the findings from the empirical work done during this study. Such synthesis of findings is presented in the research conclusions.

6.4 RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

The findings answered the central research question: ***How should standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context be described?***

The answer to the central research question was synthesised from the answers to sub-questions as described in the research findings presented in Chapter 5, as indicated and answered below.

6.4.1 What does literature reveal about assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors and the standards and criteria used in this regard?

Literature was reviewed to contextualise two conceptual frameworks: competence and assessment. Standards and criteria as understood in this study should reflect the essential nature of both notions clearly in order to contribute to effective assessment of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context. As this was a hermeneutical phenomenological study, such standards and criteria were understood as phenomena-in-context. A summary of the findings from the overview of literature is provided above in section 6.2. The two conceptual frameworks in Chapter 2, as well as the contextual analysis in Chapter 3, underpinned this study.

6.4.2 a. How do documents describe the way student teachers are assessed, particularly with regard to their ability to assess learners?

The findings describing the way the context of assessing student teachers as assessors was experienced by authors of a wide variety of documents, illuminated the approach used by the UNISA College of Education. It was found that (i) assessment of student teachers' foundational competence as assessors is effective, yet limited; (ii) teaching practice module assignments have limited focus on competence as assessor; (iii) teaching practice module portfolios include assessments of competence as assessors (iv) subject methodology modules focus on the design of assessments as a core component rather than actual implementation and integrate assessment theory with the current CAPS curriculum and the National Protocol for Assessment; (v) assessment is done on all levels of cognition; (vi) three approaches to assessing student teachers as assessors are used, namely assignments, summative examinations and portfolios of evidence; and finally (vii) that standards and criteria for assessing the design of assessment tasks are adequate, yet standards and criteria used in teaching practice context for assessing applied competence are lacking in terms of clarity and efficiency (Refer to Annexures G for a full account, and Annexure H for a summary of findings related to context, as indicated in Chapter 5, sections 5.2 and 5.3).

6.4.2 b. How do documents describe standards and criteria related to the competence of student teachers, beginner teachers and experienced teachers as assessors?

A second set of documents was analysed and included detailed descriptions of teacher competence as assessors. The QDA found that: (i) only one document amongst fifteen documents analysed used a framework similar to SAQA's (2012) notions of foundational, practical, and reflexive competencies resulting in applied competence. (ii) documents used a variety of frames of reference to indicate levels of competence, yet only two documents refer to student teacher level, specifically; (iii) that documents revealed eight essential elements of applied assessor competence; and (iv) when these eight elements are interpreted as standards, such standards describe assessor competence at experienced teacher level as a useful benchmark for deriving assessor competence standards at student teacher and beginner teacher

levels. There was strong congruence among results in literature, participant views and document descriptions of competence as assessors in this regard. These descriptions were recorded in detail in Annexure I, as already indicated in Chapter 5, sections 5.2 and 5.3.

6.4.3 How do information-rich participants experience standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context?

The experiences of fifteen information-rich participants interviewed revealed a wide variety of findings which were recorded in Annexures G and I. These annexures contain the verbatim accounts of participants and limited interpretations by the researcher to focus on participant voices. The findings in both Annexures G (context related) and Annexure I (standards and criteria-related) were integrated with what participants contributed during interviews, as indicated in Chapter 5, sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4.

The findings reveal that: (i) there is a fracture between the ideal of competent student teachers as assessors and the reality of student teachers who are not as competent as described in the ideal, particularly regarding their ability to apply summative assessments effectively; (ii) several challenges are experienced in distance education context at the UNISA College of Education and other ITE providers in assessing student teachers as assessors. These challenges are contributing to the fracture; (iii) several measures are proposed by participants in this study to limit the effect of such challenges on the fracture between the ideal and reality. One such measure is to use clearly described standards and criteria to assess the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context and to facilitate other approaches suggested. There is, however, a lack of clearly described standards and criteria available to ITE providers including the UNISA College of Education. This study describes such standards and criteria.

The researcher synthesised three sets of standards and criteria within the context of this study as the ultimate answer to the central research question of this study. The findings emanating from such a synthesis of research data were presented in Chapter

5, and included standards and criteria related to assessing the foundational competence of student teachers as assessors (see 5.4.1), the applied competence of student teachers as assessors (see 5.4.2) and the reflexive competence of student teachers as assessors (see 5.4.3). These findings articulating the answer to the central research question led the researcher to draw seven major conclusions relevant to the exploratory nature of the study.

6.4.4 Conclusions drawn

- (i) The fracture between the ideal of student teacher competence as assessors and the reality that such competence is not achieved in ITE is inevitable, yet manageable.**

The fracture or disjunction between the ideal and the reality with regard to the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context in South Africa prior to entering the profession, is inevitable given the reasons for the fracture and challenges experienced in assessing student teachers in the current context. The fracture is not limited to a distance education context but is experienced in contact education contexts as well. In this regard Niklasson (2015) purports that there is a need for reorganising teaching practice in ITE universally. The fracture is not limited to the competence of student teachers as assessors only but also applies to the ability to teach effectively. The fracture is manageable provided appropriately measures and approaches are applied. This study identified such approaches.

- (i) Approaches to manage the fracture have varying potential to manage the fracture effectively**

Of the six approaches proposed in the findings of this study, three emerged as viable: (i) identifying what can be assessed effectively and assessing those aspects as effectively as possible, (ii) instilling a culture of reflection in student teachers to become reflective practitioners capable of self-development and (iii) using clearly described standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context. These have the best potential to manage the fracture effectively between the ideal and reality of student teacher competence as assessors.

All proposed approaches should, however, be utilised in an orchestrated manner to contribute to manage the fracture effectively, in spite of some having limited potential in this regard.

(iii) Curriculum issues impacting on assessment are significant and require urgent attention in ITE and in assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors

Concerns related to curriculum issues such as the fundamental shift from a social constructivist underpinned curriculum to an instructional transmission model, and issues around language such BICS, CALP and LOLT have a significant impact on assessment in an educational context that require urgent attention in teaching and assessing student teacher competence as assessors. Finding 5.2.2 (Challenge C) serves as a reminder that curriculum has a fundamental and permeating impact on assessment, in terms of how it is understood, and particularly on how it is practised. Although the relation between curriculum and assessment was not in specific focus in this study, as with quality assurance and moderation (refer to the conclusion (iv) below), standards and criteria describing assessor competence pre-suppose an in-depth understanding of the curriculum and its impact on assessment. (Refer to the notion of “What gets measured gets taught” in Chapter 3, section 3.2 regarding 21st century skills and the characteristics of the ideal learner in CAPS). Should a fundamental and in-depth understanding of curriculum and its impact on assessment, including the issues referred to above, not be assessed, the danger exists that student teachers may take notice of such concerns, yet would not appreciate the impact of these on their daily practice as teachers and as assessors. Student teachers are required to become reflexive practitioners, as is argued in this study. A lack of such an in-depth understanding and ability to respond appropriately in classroom contexts, is corrosive.

(iv) Quality assurance of assessment is critical in fostering reflective practitioners

Quality assurance of assessment in all contexts relevant to ITE and particularly with regard to assessing student teachers as assessors, is acknowledged as being

indispensable, yet moderation of assessments remains a concern. The literature overviewed in this study did not target moderation of assessment specifically. The experiences of participants in the interviews conducted, however, as well as a focus on moderation in some of the documents analysed raised awareness of the need for further research related to moderation as quality assurance of assessment. Another issue closely related to quality assurance is that teachers as assessors in particular have to be reflective practitioners. ITE can lay the foundations for student teachers becoming reflective practitioners. Reflection on infusing 21st Century skills as well as Africanisation, IKS and Ubuntu principles in teaching and assessment practice are of particular relevance in this context. This study showed that reflexive ability has to be encouraged, nurtured and “scaffolded” since it is an acquired trait. Particularly during the first years of teaching as beginners, moderation as quality assurance provides numerous opportunities for beginner teachers to grow as reflexive practitioners. This ability is pertinently aimed at in the purpose statements of both qualifications relevant to ITE, the PGCE and the B Ed degree. (UNISA Website, 2021).

(v) Achieving the standards and criteria related to the foundational competence of student teacher assessors is challenging yet critical

Meeting the standards set in the specific outcomes and related assessment criteria contained in 5.4.1 is challenging, particularly in a distance education context and demands commitment to high expectations on behalf of both the HEI institution as well as student teachers. In terms of Korthagen’s views (in Zwarts et al., 2015) core qualities such as caring, courage, enthusiasm, honesty, integrity, patience, trustworthiness; a clear and inspiring vision; strong identity as partners in the noble profession of teaching; and sound beliefs about teaching, learning and assessment are needed to bolster competence and appropriate behaviour or action. Commitment to standards and persistent work towards excellence is critical in this regard if competence as assessors is to be achieved, maintained and developed further once student teachers enter the profession. The need for reflective ability is evident again. The critical issue here is that being competent in assessment as a student teacher is only the platform for becoming a really astute teacher and assessor.

(vi) Assessing standards and criteria related to the applied competence of student teachers as assessors is more challenging yet even more critical

The seven standards and associated criteria described in Tables 5.11 to 5.17 are relatively easy to describe yet not easily achieved. A critical aspect to bear in mind is that in an essentially criterion-referenced assessment context, all criteria have to be met by a student teacher before s/he is judged to be competent. HEI's, including the UNISA College of Education, remains committed to a more norm-referenced approach. This belies the community-value-system frame of reference identified in this study in an Ubuntu and Africanisation context. If assessor competence is judged in terms of this traditional and valid frame of reference, achieving competence as an assessor, even at student teacher level, would be extremely difficult indeed. A community-value-system frame of reference implies that all criteria are met by student teachers, and met collectively in terms of community standards, that is to say teacher competence standards in this context. Using such community-value-system approaches may also address the concerns related to assessing student teachers during teaching practice and the so-called "central question" (Aspden, 2017). As was argued in the conclusion related to the foundational competencies in 6.4.4 (ii), this means that HEI's such as the UNISA College of Education as well as student teachers enrolled in the B Ed and PGCE qualifications at the college, have to be committed to competence as a minimum but non-negotiable goal or standard and excellence as an ultimate ideal, wilfully targeted.

(vii) Assessing standards and indicators related to the reflexive competence of student teacher assessors is most challenging yet most critical

Several participants in this study indicated that the most difficult aspect to assess in a student teacher assessment context, including their ability to assess, is reflexive competence. The reference to Korthagen's views (in Zwart et al, 2015) earlier, applies again. Unless competence (the ability to do) is underpinned by sound beliefs, vision and core personal qualities (all reflexive attributes), whatever is done, by the student teacher as assessor remains mundane and devoid of real meaning. (See Delamare Le Deist and Winterton, 2005 contending that mega-competencies, namely learning

to learn, the ability to reflect constructively as well as the the ability to cope with change are essential to real-life competence). The challenges emanating from the COVID-19 pandemic illustrate this well. Unless student teachers demonstrate competence in all indicators related to the reflexive assessor competencies described in detail in 5.4.3, there is little hope that they will be able to do so once they have entered the profession, simply because commitment to these values, attributes and dispositions is not achieved unless credible evidence in this regard is demonstrated repeatedly in authentic contexts. These values, attributes and dispositions, if not lived, will not be used or demonstrated when needed. Assessing these values, attitudes and dispositions remains one of the most urgent concerns in ITE. This research finds that because of the difficulty to assess these reflexive competencies, research in this regard remains nascent only.

The conclusions presented here encapsulate the key concerns and dispositions of this study. Limitations to the study are identified.

6.5 LIMITATIONS

After critical self-reflection by the researcher on the research conducted in this study, the following limitations of this study warrant consideration:

6.5.1 Conducting the research at one research site only

Although the use of the UNISA College of Education only as research site was justified and substantiated in the research design (refer to Creswell and Poth 2018), the danger existed that in the hermeneutical phenomenological interviews, the researcher heard insider voices mostly, particularly when the context of assessing student teachers as assessors was studied. In spite of the fact that this danger was accounted for by selecting some participants in the research who had substantial experience beyond distance education assessment of student teachers at the UNISA College of Education specifically, and by the researcher himself having had extensive experience in teacher education in distance education and other contexts, generalisations regarding practice at other HEI cannot be made. The purpose of the study was, however, to describe the essence of standards and criteria as phenomena-in-context as experienced by the

participants, and not to find standards and criteria that are universally applicable. This study found, however, that many of the challenges in assessing student teacher competence as assessors in a distance education context, are in fact universal and observed in other contexts as well.

6.5.2 Selecting participants in categories of expertise

The approach used by the researcher to selected participants in different categories of experience, enriched the fieldwork, in the sense that various perspectives on the phenomenon were considered. From a research methodology and sampling perspective, however, this approach led to including some participants on the basis of being part of a category, rather than being information rich individuals, as primary concern. Being a “stranger” to most participants (Creswell and Poth, 2018), the researcher realised during the first round of interviews only that information richness was limited to the category context, in two instances, whereas information richness in a wider and deeper sense would have yielded data of better quality. The researcher learnt from these experiences the real value of interviewing only truly information rich participants. The majority of participants in this study met this standard. The views of those that did not were noted but did not have a significant impact on findings.

6.5.3 Limited experience as hermeneutical phenomenological interviewer on the part of the researcher

In spite of piloting the interview procedures and interview schedule, and preparing well for every interview conducted, the researcher was mortified when the transcriptions of the first few interviews in the first round of interviews were read. The researcher realised that in some cases, he talked extensively as the interviewer, only to ask a question at the end of such a monologue that solicited, in some cases, a very short response from the participant. In the interviews in the second round, however, participants were allowed time to describe their experiences and views in detail while the interviewer prompted more responses using focused questions when this was required. In the second round of interviews and in using telephone interviews afterwards, the effect of researcher’s lack of experience as an interviewer in the first round was mitigated.

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Recommendations are presented by describing the essence of the recommendation in a caption followed by a very brief explanation.

6.6.1 Use of standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teacher assessors to facilitate approaches to manage the fracture between the ideal and reality

It is recommended that the standards and criteria discerned and described in this study be used by the UNISA College of Education and other HEI's to facilitate approaches to manage the fracture between the ideal and reality of student teacher competence as assessors. This recommendation has implications for several entities within ITE institutions in a distance education context such as the UNISA College of Education.

a. Recommendations for the assessment of the assessment theory module

The standards and criteria described in this study illuminate the first three stages in the teacher education continuum focused on the ability to assess. It is recommended that student teachers are well informed of the expectations implied by the standards and criteria at all three levels in which these were described in this study. They must be pertinently assessed in this regard, resulting in a three-tier vision (student teacher, beginner teacher and experienced teacher as assessor). Such a vision guides professional learning, growth and development as a teacher. The delivery of the assessment theory module is ideally placed to empower student teachers in this regard.

b. Recommendations for Teaching practice modules

It is recommended that those responsible for delivery of the teaching practice modules should use the standards and criteria described in this study in their efforts to provide student teachers with opportunities to learn through work integrated learning as practised in teaching practice placements. Although assessment is not the main focus in most of these modules currently, as illustrated in the limited number of standards and criteria devoted to assessment in the portfolios student teachers have to complete in these modules, this should not detract from a focus on these standards and criteria. Revising the assessment model used in the teaching practice modules, as is standard practice at the UNISA College of Education, should incorporate these standards and criteria for assessment-related components of teaching practice portfolios.

c. Recommendations for Subject methodology modules

It is recommended that those responsible for delivery of subject methodology modules embrace the standards and criteria described in this study, and incorporate these into the assessment models used. The sets of standards and criteria for reflecting on, and justifying, assessment planning decisions, and the template for planning assessments identified, used and described in this study (refer to finding 5.4.1) should be made available to all subject methodology lecturers for consideration, amendment and incorporation in their assessment models. Not only do these standards and criteria and templates assist in improving assessment of student teachers in these modules but student teachers benefit from having to apply the same basic templates and approaches in the subject methodology modules they are registered for, albeit these have to be adapted for the demands and context of the particular subject methodology.

d. Recommendations for the Teaching Practice Unit

It is recommended that the teaching practice unit at the UNISA College of Education or any such unit at ITE providing teaching practice, take cognisance of the standards and criteria described in this study. The unit should consider the standards and criteria described related to assessing applied and reflexive competence as assessors in particular and amend existing approaches and assessment instruments. At the time of this study, the unit was experiencing immense challenges given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and relied on receiving teachers to assess student teachers

during teaching practice placements in order for the unit to make summative assessment decisions regarding student teacher performance. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the unit use the standards and criteria described in this study to capacitate receiving teachers as gatekeeper assessors.

e. Recommendations for entities involved in ITE – a call to focus on reflection

It is recommended that all entities (such as those mentioned above in a. to d.) involved in teacher education at distance education institutions such as the UNISA College of Education make specific efforts to assist student teachers in building their capacity as reflective practitioners. The key to successful progression from being a competent student teacher as assessor, to developing through beginner teacher level of competence toward being an effective and competent teacher as assessor, and beyond, lies in being a reflective practitioner. Similar to all teachers being teacher educators, all role-players in ITE need to be reflective capacity builders. Creating reflective practitioners will only be achieved through a concerted effort by all entities.

6.6.2 Pilot an alternative approach to assessing the quality of student teachers' summative assessment

One of the most significant weaknesses in the current assessment model used is that student teachers are not all given the same opportunities to practise and be assessed in a credible manner in conducting summative assessments during teaching practice. It is recommended that an alternative approach to assessing student teachers' competence as summative assessors is piloted at the UNISA College of Education, and if proven to be significantly more effective than current practice, to be incorporated in the modus operandi used to assess student teachers during teaching practice placements. This approach is currently being piloted by a university in Australia. It requires that during teaching practice placements, when a summative assessment task is conducted by the receiving teacher (such as a term test for purpose of explanation), the student teacher would be given copies of three scripts from learners in a class to assess using the same assessment instrument such as a memorandum which the receiving teacher uses. After a receiving teacher has assessed all the scripts, including the three copied and given to the student teacher to assess, the two

assessors meet and discuss their judgements made on learner performances in the three scripts. Both justify their judgements and assessment decisions and an agreement has to be reached on the final result to be recorded for the three learners, should there be significant differences in judgements. A detailed account of this alternative approach is provided in Annexure J. Piloting, amending and incorporating such an approach in the UNISA College of Education context goes a long way improving the way the fracture between ideal and reality of student teacher competence as summative assessors is managed.

6.6.3 Attend to critical concerns related to curriculum

Conclusion 5.5.3 raised critical concerns about student-teachers' understanding of the current curriculum, namely the fundamental shift from a social constructivist underpinned curriculum to an instructional transmission model, and issues around language such as implications related to BICS, CALP and LOLT which do have a significant impact on assessment. It is recommended that the relation between curriculum and assessment as a general notion, as well as the two specific concerns mentioned above be included among issues, key ideas, theories and notions when students are required to reflect on, and evaluate, such themes in terms of Outcome 1 of the assessment theory module. This recommendation is focused upon delivery of the assessment theory module specifically. The relevant outcome requires that student teachers critically reflect on, compare and evaluate key ideas and debates on assessment theory, planning, practice and moderation in the school curriculum. This issue resonated throughout this study, sparking urgency in terms of addressing such concerns. Given these recommendations, suggestions for further research need consideration.

6.7 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

When the conclusions, recommendations as well as the limitations of the study are considered, the following suggestions for further research emanate:

6.7.1 Several references were made during the course of the fieldwork to the critical need for teachers to practise their trade as reflective practitioners and for student

teachers to develop reflexivity. The findings of this study indicate that assessing the ability to reflect is challenging, because of authenticity concerns on the one hand and the difficulty of assessing values, attitudes and dispositions, on the other. Research into models for developing reflective competence such as those proposed by Korthagen and Nuijten (2018) and other scholars in the field can make a contribution to bolster competence as assessors and enhance efforts by ITE providers such as the UNISA College of Education in delivering reflective practitioners to the profession.

6.7.2 It is suggested that quality assurance of assessment and moderation of assessment be considered for further research about developing the competence of student teachers as assessors. Contributions by participants in the UNISA College of Education context as well from an Australian university, clearly indicated that moderation in educational context remains a concern. Focused research on the relation between moderation and assessment in educational context warrants attention.

6.7.3 The fieldwork clearly indicated that effective assessment of student teachers' competence, not only as assessors, is fundamentally linked to the quality of guidance, assistance, exemplary conduct and expertise of the receiving teacher in teaching practice context. Given the context that almost 50% of student teachers are prepared for the teaching profession by the UNISA College of Education, and that many student teachers are placed at poorly functioning schools and with receiving teachers who do not exemplify competence as assessors, research related to these conditions warrants attention.

6.7.4 This study was underpinned by two constructs, namely assessment and competence. In a competence approach to assessment, criterion-referencing is preferred over norm referencing. This study identified community value-referencing as a notion embedded in Ubuntu philosophy. Several scholars argue that assessment at higher education, including the use of more suitable referencing models, deserves consideration. Sadler (2005) indicates that more and more universities have made explicit overtures towards criteria-based grading and reporting. Demonacos et al (2019) propose the use of peer assessment to

enhance quality of feedback. It is suggested that research in this regard is undertaken, to inform changes in the assessment model applied at the UNISA College of Education and other ITE institutions. The impact of this study needs consideration.

6.8 IMPACT OF THE RESEARCH

This study explored the assessment of student teacher assessors in ITE in a distance education context. While it is relatively easy to describe the standards for experienced teachers in classrooms, because it requires describing what effective and “good” teachers do when they assess learners, the same does not apply to student teachers. Given an understanding of the reality that student teachers are not yet at the same standard as experienced and competent teachers, and assuming that they will continue to develop to the standard of competent teachers and assessors during ITE and as beginner teachers before they reach the standard of experienced teachers, the question was:

How should standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context be described?

In essence, the impact of this study is that it clarifies student teacher levels of competence as assessors and distinguishes them from the level of competence of beginner and experienced teachers as assessors. All role players in ITE should embrace these standards and criteria. This in turn facilitates the learning, growth and development from starting as a student teacher assessor in an ITE programme and becoming a competent, and even an excellent teacher as assessor. It improves the credibility of entry qualifications as the level of competence certified to have been achieved by student teachers. These are critical notions, given the current dismal state of education in South Africa, almost three decades after the advent of a democratised and transformed education system. Applying the standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context results in beginner teachers being ready and able to grow their existing and profound competence as assessors at student teacher level to become effective and

professional assessors of learning and learners within the first years of entry into the profession.

6.9 CONCLUSION

This study contributes to a clear understanding of standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context. Applying such standards and criteria improves ITE in a distance education context, such as, but not limited to, the UNISA College of Education, in growing the competence of student teachers as assessors and assessing them more effectively, facilitating self-assessment and reflection, and guiding continued professional learning and development. The standards and criteria described in this study are critical in strengthening, supporting and monitoring teacher education.

6.10 REFLECTIVE SUMMARY

My fascination with assessment in education started in 1979 in my first year of teaching when I was embarrassed by a parent who exposed my inadequacies as an assessor. A very steep learning curve followed, resulting in a realisation that assessment to the teacher is in many ways similar to harvesting to the farmer. Many days and nights of hard work are rewarded when the results come in. I always enjoyed assessment, or tried to at least, in the same way farmers enjoy harvesting. Through decades of teacher education I relished teaching the assessment component of the ITE curriculum most, because in my experience assessment (referred to as measurement and evaluation in those days) is the catalyst that inextricably fuses learning and teaching. Later, when doing assessments for the UNISA College of Education in the assessment theory module, and in co-ordinating the module on contract basis, I learned from a dear friend and colleague that assessment should be thought of as the vehicle that takes teaching and learning towards the destination. Having completed my M Ed in 1995, I knew then that one day, I would run the last lap, and finish my post-graduate studies. I registered for this Ph D some 23 years later. Four years since then, I am still learning about assessment, grateful that I had the opportunity and grace to research a burning issue in my own experience and a nascent area in scholarly literature, and to share what I had learnt.

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ANNEXURES

The following Annexures are included:

- Annexure A. Clearance Certificate from UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee
- Annexure B. Permission letter from UNISA SCRIPCC
- Annexure C. Example of a data sheet created from original documents containing data related to standards and criteria
- Annexure D. Examples of invitation letters and consent forms related to HPI
- Annexure E. Examples of interview schedules to guide interacting with participants
- Annexure F. Confidentiality agreement and an example of a transcribed interview
- Annexure G. Record of a Qualitative Document Analysis (QDA) related to a Distance Education Context (UNISA College of Education)
- Annexure H. Summary of Findings in Annexure G
- Annexure I. Record of a Quality Document Analysis (QDA) related to Standards and Criteria for Assessing the Competence of Student Teachers as Assessors
- Annexure J: An Alternative Approach to Assessing Summative Assessments
- Annexure K: Language editor certificate

Annexure A

Clearance Certificate from UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee



UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2019/05/15

Ref: **2019/05/15/4493249/20/MC**

Dear Mr Van Schalkwyk

Name: Mr H Van Schalkwyk

Student: 4493249

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2019/05/15 to 2024/05/15

Researcher(s): Name: Mr H Van Schalkwyk
E-mail address: omnied@ymail.com
Telephone: +27 82 795 1035

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof JM Dreyer
E-mail address: drezejm1@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: +27 82 462 8464

Title of research:

Qualification-related criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in distance education.

Qualification: PhD in Curriculum Studies

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2019/05/15 to 2024/05/15.

The low risk application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2019/05/15 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



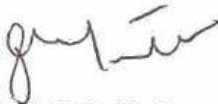
University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392, UNISA 0003, South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2024/05/17**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

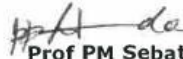
Note:

*The reference number **2019/05/15/4493249/20/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



Prof AT Motlhabane
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
motlhat@unisa.ac.za



Prof PM Sebate
ACTING EXECUTIVE DEAN
Sebatpm@unisa.ac.za

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

University of South Africa
Pretorius Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
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Annexure B

Permission Letter

From

RESEARCH PERMISSION SUB-COMMITTEE (RPSC)
OF THE SENATE
RESEARCH, INNOVATION, POST GRADUATE DEGREES
AND
COMMERSIALISATION COMMITTEE
(SCRIPPCC)

**RESEARCH PERMISSION SUB-COMMITTEE (RPSC) OF THE SENATE
RESEARCH, INNOVATION, POSTGRADUATE DEGREES AND
COMMERCIALISATION COMMITTEE (SRIPCC)**

27 August 2021

**Decision: Permission approval 27
August 2021 to 26 August 2022**

Ref #: 2021_RPSC_065
Mr. Hennart van Schalkwyk
Student #: 04493249
Employee #:

Principal Investigator:

Mr. Hennart van Schalkwyk
Department of Curriculum and Instructional studies
College of Education
4493249@mylife.ac.za; 0827951035

Supervisor: Prof Geesje van den Berg; vdberg@unisa.ac.za; 0829219771

**QUALIFICATION RELATED CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING THE COMPETENCE OF
STUDENT TEACHERS AS ASSESSORS IN A DISTANCE EDUCATION CONTEXT**

Your request for permission to involve UNISA employees, students and data regarding the above study has been received and was considered by the Research Permission Subcommittee (RPSC) of the UNISA Senate, Research, Innovation, Postgraduate Degrees and Commercialisation Committee (SRIPCC) on 17 August 2021.

It is my pleasure to inform you that permission has been granted for the study. You may include the following lecturers in the College of Education to take part in the study:

One (1) lecturer responsible for the modules EDAHOD 5 and AED3701 focused on assessment theory;

Six (6) lecturers responsible for teaching practice modules;

Two (2) lecturers responsible for teaching didactics modules in the PGCE and B.Ed programmes.

You may request the COD of the relevant departments for access to the lecturer's email addresses to invite them to participate in interviews and access the tutorial letters from them.

You may access tutorial Letters 101 for the following modules: EDAHOD 5; AED3701; TPS2601; TPS2602; TPS3703; TPS3704; TMS3713; TMN3701.

The personal information made available to the researcher(s)/gatekeeper(s) will only be used for the advancement of this research project as indicated and for the purpose as described in this permission letter. The researcher(s)/gatekeeper(s) must take all appropriate precautionary measures to protect the personal information given to him/her/them in good faith and it must not be passed on to third parties. The dissemination of research instruments through the use of electronic mail should strictly be through blind copying, so as to protect the participants' right of privacy. The researcher hereby indemnifies UNISA from any claim or action arising from or due to the researcher's breach of his/her information protection obligations.

You are requested to submit a report of the study to the Research Permission Subcommittee (RPSC@unisa.ac.za) within 3 months of completion of the study.

Note: The reference number 2021_RPSC_065 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants and the Research Permission Subcommittee.

Kind regards,



Dr Retha Visagie – Deputy Chairperson

Email: visagrg@unisa.ac.za, Tel: (012) 429-2478

Prof Lessing Labuschagne – Chairperson

Email: llabus@unisa.ac.za, Tel: (012) 429-6368

Annexure C.

Example of a data sheet created from original documents containing data related to standards and criteria

<i>Data Sheet Document Analysis Set A (Table 2.2 – New Zealand)</i>	
DOCUMENT (NZ)	Standards for the teaching profession – NZ (Education Council New Zealand. (ECNZ), 2015)
ASSESSMENT IN CONTEXT	Integrated in several existing standards, either as part of the standard or as part of the elaboration. Assessment ability is not described in a clearly formulated description.
CRITERIA	No levels are indicated – Standards apply for qualified and serving teachers in schools
STANDARDS Design for Learning <u>Design</u> learning based on curriculum and pedagogical knowledge, assessment information and an understanding of each learner’s strengths, interests, needs, identities, languages and cultures.	ELABORATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Select teaching approaches, resources, and learning and assessment activities based on a thorough knowledge of curriculum, content, pedagogy, progressions in learning and the learners.</i> • <i>Gather, analyse and use appropriate assessment information, identifying progress and needs of learners to design clear next steps in learning and to identify additional supports or adaptations that may be required.</i>

<p>Teaching</p> <p><u>Teach and respond</u> to learners in a knowledgeable and adaptive way to progress their learning at an appropriate depth and pace.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensure learners receive ongoing feedback and assessment information and support them to use this information to guide further learning.</i>
<p>Professional relations</p> <p><u>Establish and maintain</u> professional relations and behaviours focused on learning and well-being of each learner</p>	<p><i>Communicate clear and accurate assessment for learning and achievement information.</i></p>
<p>Comments: Assessment is integrated with teaching and learning and not seen as separate domain or entity.</p>	

Annexure D. Examples of invitation letters and consent forms related to HPI

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Date: 12 June 2019

Title :

Standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT

My name is Hennart van Schalkwyk. I am doing research under the supervision of Professor J.M Dreyer, a professor in the Department of Curriculum Studies towards a PhD at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled **Standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context**.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

This study is expected to collect important information that could assist in assessing student teachers as assessors more accurately and more credibly in future because the study aims at describing standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in distance education in South Africa.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You are invited because you are regarded to be an individual who is rich in information related to the study and may contribute to describing the criteria referred to in the title of the research.

I obtained your contact details from the UNISA College of Education where you completed your studies toward the PDCE in 2018.

You are one of a few student teachers participating in the study. Other participants include beginner teachers, experienced teachers, co-ordinators of Teaching Practice at schools, UNISA supervisors and lecturers as well as designers of criteria and standards at the Department of Higher Education (DHET), The Council for Higher Education (CHE) and the South African Council for Educators (SACE), in total 18 participants.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves audio recording the face-to-face interview you will participate in, during which I will ask about seven questions related to your experiences when you were assessed as a student teacher,

especially with regards to your role as an assessor. An interview of this nature will be no longer than two hours. There is no need to prepare for such an interview as I am interested in how you experienced the assessment of your competence during your studies, only.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

There are no real benefits to you for participating in this study, other than experiencing self-worth in the sense that you contributed to something more than what is expected of everyone.

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

Doing an interview of this nature may cause some inconvenience, namely that you have to give up some of your time and energy. You may even experience some level of discomfort as one-on-one interviews are experienced by most people as a bit stressful. Please bear in mind that you will be required to contribute something rather than being interrogated or assessed in any way. There is almost no risk of being regarded negatively in any way by others who may learn that you participated. Please be assured that provisions are made that you will be safe and secure during your participation in the research. Requirements in terms of the South African Occupational Health and Safety Act will apply in this regard.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

You have the right to insist that your name will not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher and identified members of the research team, will know about your involvement in this research. Your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

Should the research require that the supervisor, Prof JM Dreyer and/or the transcriber have access to the data of my research that may reveal your identity, these individuals will maintain confidentiality by signing a confidentiality agreement. Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

Please understand that any anonymous data information you provide under confidential protection (such as during the interview) may be used for other purposes, such as a research reports, journal articles and/or

conference proceedings. In these cases you will not be identifiable by any means at all. The same applies for my report on this research – even when published, participants’ identities will not be identifiable.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by me for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet/safe at my residence in Glencairn, Cape Town. For future research or academic purposes, electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. All hard copy data will be shredded and in case of electronic copies permanently deleted from computers through the use of a relevant software programme.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

No payment or reward is offered for your participation, financial or otherwise.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of UNISA. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.


HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact me at 0827951035 or via e-mail at omnied@ymail.com. The findings are accessible for two years.

Should you require any further information or want to contact me, the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact me at the contact details given above. Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Professor JM Dreyer at dreyejm1@unisa.ac.za.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.



Hennart van Schalkwyk

Please complete the reply below, should you agree to participate in this research.

CONSENT/ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (Please print) _____

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print) _____

Researcher's signature

Date

Annexure E.

Examples of interview schedules to guide interacting with participants

Interview Questions:

Standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context

1. To student teachers who completed their studies but are not appointed yet.

Introductory questions

- a. Please give an account of your experiences during the final/most recent session of teaching practice, referring to your role as assessor.

Core questions

- b. *What in your experience demonstrated your knowledge & understanding of assessment best when you were assessed during, and at the end of, your studies?*
- c. *What in your experience demonstrated your skills as an assessor best when you were assessed during, and at the end of, your studies?*
- d. *What in your experience demonstrated your values & attitudes as an assessor best when you were assessed during, and at the end of, your studies?*
- e. *What in your experience demonstrated your competence to do real-life assessment of learners best when you were assessed during, and at the end of, your studies?*

Possible follow-up and probing questions

- f. Is there a question that you expected that I did not ask? Please indicate such a question and respond to it.

2. To beginner teachers who have completed their studies and who have one or two years' experience.

Introductory questions

- a. Please give an account of your growth as an assessor since you qualified as a teacher.

Core questions

- b. *What in your experience would demonstrate your knowledge & understanding of assessment best should you be assessed or appraised currently.*
- c. *What in your experience would demonstrate your assessment skills best should you be assessed or appraised currently?*
- d. *What in your experience demonstrated your values & attitudes as an assessor best should you be assessed or appraised currently?*
- e. *What in your experience demonstrates your real-life competence as an assessor best should you be assessed or appraised currently?*
- f. *How is your competence as assessor assessed or appraised now that you are appointed?*

Possible follow-up and probing questions

- g. Is there a question that you expected that I did not ask? Please indicate such a question and respond to it.

3 To experienced teachers who received student teachers in their classrooms during teaching practice.

Introductory questions

- a. Please give an account of your growth as an assessor of student teachers' competence as assessors. Please respond to the following questions with regard to student teachers allocated to you during teaching practice.

Core questions

- b. *What in your experience demonstrates their foundational competence (knowledge & understanding) as assessors, best?*
- c. *What in your experience demonstrated their practical competence (skills) as assessors, best?*
- d. *What in your experience demonstrated their reflexive competence (values & attitudes) as assessors, best?*
- e. *What in your experience demonstrated applied competence as assessors (real-life assessment of learners), best?*
- f. *How did you assess their competence during teaching practice sessions?*

Possible follow-up and probing questions

- g. Is there a question that you expected that I did not ask? Please indicate such a question and respond to it.

4 To school teachers / HODs who co-ordinate teaching practice sessions on behalf of the school

Introductory questions

- a. Please give an account of your experience as teaching practice co-ordinator.
- b. Please give an account of the most recent group of student teachers' competence as teachers.

Core questions

- c. *What in your experience demonstrates student teachers' applied competence as assessors, best during teaching practice?*
- d. *Probing questions will be asked here to ensure all four domains of competence are accounted for.*
- e. *Probing questions will obtain a clear indication of what in the experience of the participant is "assessable" and what not, and for deeper understanding as well.*
- f. *In your experience how effective is distance education in developing student teachers' competence as assessors and assessing such competence?*
- g. *In your experience how is student teachers' competence as assessors linked to further staff development in school context?*

Possible follow-up and probing questions

- h. Is there a question that you expected that I did not ask? Please indicate such a question and respond to it.

5 To UNISA Supervisors during teaching practice sessions

Introductory questions

- a. Please give an account of your experience as a UNISA teaching practice supervisor with specific reference to student teachers' competence as assessors.

Core questions

- b. *What in your experience demonstrates a student teacher's applied competence as assessors, best during teaching practice?*
- c. *Probing questions will be asked here to ensure all four domains of competence are accounted for.*
- d. *Probing questions will obtain clear indications of what in the experience of the participant was "assessable" and what not, and for deeper understanding as well.*
- e. *In your experience how effective is distance education in developing student teachers' competence as assessors?*
- f. *In your experience how is student teachers' competence as assessors linked to further staff development in school context?*

Possible follow-up and probing questions

- g. *Is there a question that you expected that I did not ask? Please indicate such a question and respond to it.*

6a. To UNISA Lecturers who teach/taught the assessment theory module

Introductory questions

- a. *Please give an account of your experience as a UNISA lecturer preparing teachers in a distance education mode of delivery.*
- b. *How do you experience the effectiveness of distance education in developing student teachers' competence as assessors?*

Core questions

- a. *What in your experience demonstrates student teachers' applied competence as assessors best using the current model of assessment?*
- b. *Probing questions will be asked here to ensure all four domains of competence are accounted for.*
- c. *What criteria for assessing student teachers' competence as assessors are used?*
- d. *Probing questions will obtain clear indications of what in the experience of the participant was "assessable" and what not, and for deeper understanding as well.*
- e. *How does the module (study material and implementation processes including assessment arrangements) utilise existing criteria for assessing student teachers' competence as assessors?*

Possible follow-up and probing questions

- f. *Probe with regards to sufficiency of evidence or opportunities for displaying competence as assessors in the assessment model used.*
- g. *Is there a question that you expected that I did not ask? Please indicate such a question and respond to it.*

6b. To UNISA Lecturers who teach/taught subject didactics modules

Introductory questions

- a. *Please give an account of your experience as a UNISA lecturer preparing teachers as assessors in your field/phase/subject in a distance education mode of delivery.*

Core questions

- a. *What in your experience demonstrates student teachers' applied competence as assessors best using the current model of assessment?*

- b. *Probing questions will be asked here to ensure all four domains of competence are accounted for.*
- c. *Probing questions will obtain a clear indications of what in the experience of the participant was “assessable” and what not, and for deeper understanding as well.*
- d. *What criteria are used for assessing student teachers’ competence as assessors?*
- e. *What are your experiences with regard to student teachers being able to display all aspects of their competence as assessors during the implementation of the module?*

Possible follow-up and probing questions

- f. Probe with regards to sufficiency of evidence or opportunities for displaying competence as assessors in the assessment model used.
 - g. Is there a question that you expected that I did not ask? Please indicate such a question and respond to it.
7. To assessment designers who designed criteria or standards in teacher qualification contexts.

Introductory questions

- a. Please share some of your experiences related to assessment of student teachers’ competence as assessors in ITE context.
- b. What are your experiences with regard to accreditation and quality assurance of ITE programmes in distance education with reference to the assessment of student teachers’ competence as assessors, specifically?

Core questions

- c. *What in your experience demonstrates student teachers’ competence as assessors best using the current model for assessing student teachers?*
- d. *Please describe the challenges you experienced or perceived in assessing student teachers’ competence as assessors in distance education in South Africa (UNISA College of Education).*
- e. Probe with regards to sufficiency of evidence or opportunities for displaying competence as assessors in the assessment model used.

Possible follow-up and probing questions

- f. Is there a question that you expected that I did not ask? Please indicate such a question and respond to it.

Annexure F: Transcriber confidentiality agreement

TRANSCRIBER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I, [name of transcriber], agree to transcribe data for this study. I agree that I will:

1. Keep all research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) with anyone other than, the researcher on this study;
2. Keep all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) secure while it is in my possession. This includes:
 - using closed headphones when transcribing audio-taped interviews;
 - keeping all transcript documents and digitized interviews in computer password-protected files;
 - closing any transcription programs and documents when temporarily away from the computer;
 - keeping any printed transcripts in a secure location such as a locked file cabinet; and
 - permanently deleting any e-mail communication containing the data;
3. Give all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) to the researcher when I have completed the research tasks;
4. Erase or destroy all research information in any form or format that is not returnable to the researcher (e.g., information stored on my computer hard drive) upon completion of the research tasks.

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Annexure G.

Record of a Qualitative Document Analysis (QDA) related to a Distance Education Context (UNISA College of Education)

Compiled by Hennart van Schalkwyk

Background and introduction

This record gives a detailed account of a qualitative document analysis (QDA) done in relation to the study of standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context in South Africa. This analysis focused on the assessment of student teachers enrolled in either the Bachelor of Education (B Ed) or Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) qualifications at one institution, namely the College of Education of the University of South Africa (UNISA).

The documents analysed in this context are indicated in Table G1, below.

Table G1 Documents analysed to describe the assessment context

Documents related to Foundational competence in the Assessment Theory Module	Documents related to Applied competence during Teaching Practice	Documents related to Applied competence in Subject Methodologies (Two examples)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNISA Module Planning Grid for AED3701 (1) - Tutorial Letter 101 for Assessment Theory Module AED3701 (1) - The prescribed text for the module (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tutorial Letters 101 of Teaching practice modules (6) - Tutorial Letters 103 – Teaching Practice Portfolio requirements (6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tutorial Letters 101 for Geography Methodology and English Home Language Methodology (2) - Tutorial Letters 103 – Subject didactics Portfolio requirements (2) - UNISA Module Form for TMS3716 – Home Language Methodology (1) - Teaching Geography Only Guide for TMS3713 (1)
Documents relevant to an ODL context		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNISA Website - Tutorial Letter 301 - Preparation for Distance Education and Introduction to the B Ed Programme 		

Documents referred to the researcher during interviews

- UNISA College of Education Training Manual for Teaching Practice Supervisors and mentor teachers
- UNISA College of Education Guidelines for Teaching Practice Supervisors and mentor teachers

At the UNISA College of Education (UNISA, 2021a) student teachers studying modules towards the two qualifications indicated, are assessed formatively by means of assignments (usually at least two) that are completed by student teachers during the course of studying a particular module. These assignments are assessed by the lecturer and markers appointed for this purpose and feedback is given in terms of an assignment mark (%) and qualitative comments by the marker. The student teachers write a summative assessment (an examination) and a final promotion mark is calculated. In some cases, in fact, in most of the modules analysed in this study, an alternative summative assessment is used in place of the examination, namely assessment of a comprehensive portfolio containing evidence of the student teachers' competence in the outcomes of the module. These portfolios are assessed in the same way as examinations. The assignments, examinations and portfolios are assessed using a wide variety of assessment instruments, all applying assessment criteria to make judgements on student teachers' competencies, making the assessment of the relevant modules relevant to this study.

Given this background, the context in which student teachers are assessed at the UNISA College of Education is described with reference to the purpose statements of the two qualifications; module purposes; module outcomes; content; assessment tasks and assessment criteria of the modules that are more directly related to the assessment of the competence of student teachers as assessors.

Purpose statements of the qualifications

According to the UNISA website (2021) the B Ed (Senior Phase and Further Education and Training Teaching) is an ***initial comprehensive qualification for educators in schools*** (own emphasis) teaching grades 7 - 12 as it makes provision for integration of academic school related subjects and educational subjects for teacher preparation in both the Senior Phase Further Education and Training in its structure. The B Ed (Senior Phase and Further Education and Training Teaching) is aimed at preparing student teachers for a multitude of careers and/or further study. The PGCE qualification is a ***professional 'capping' qualification for educators in schools*** (own emphasis). Teachers are members of a profession whose definitive aim is to enable systematic learning. Both qualifications seek to: develop and consolidate in an integrated way appropriate disciplinary, pedagogical, practical and situational knowledge; cultivate a practical understanding of teaching and learning in a diverse range of South African schools, about educational theory, phase and subject specialisation, practice and policy; foster self-reflexivity and self-understanding among prospective teachers; nurture commitment to the ideals of the teaching profession and an understanding of teaching as a profession; develop the professional dispositions and self-identity of student teachers as teachers; develop student teachers as active citizens and enable them to develop the dispositions of citizenship in their learners; and promote and develop the dispositions and competencies to organise learning among a diverse range of learners in diverse contexts. The dispositions and competences referred to in the purpose statements of the two qualifications, include the competence of student teachers as assessors. Aligned with these purposes, the modules related to the competence of student teachers as assessors are considered crucial in the context of this study. The structure of the two qualifications reveal that several components (modules) of the qualifications are directly related to the assessment of the competence of student teachers as assessors. Table 1 contains the results of an analysis of the qualification structures in this regard.

Table G2: Components of UNISA teacher qualifications relevant to assessing assessor competence

Aspect relevant to assessment	BEd	PGCE
Subject matter expertise	Sixteen modules including three school subjects passed on 1st level and two school subjects passed up to 2nd level. Students should start with their school subjects first; the two school subjects taken up to 2nd level will be the principle teaching subjects for the FET Phase.	Already graduated in the relevant field according to school subjects and subject methodologies chosen.
Assessment theory as part of Educational themes (Compulsory modules)	AED3701 – Assessment in Education	AED3701 – Assessment in Education
Teaching practice modules	Four compulsory modules (Refer to a summary of these modules provided in par 5.?)	<u>Two compulsory modules - Teaching Practice Senior Phase and - Teaching Practice Further Education and Training</u>
Subject Methodology	Senior Phase - Two subject methodology modules according to the school subjects passed up to 1 st level FET Two modules according to the school subjects passed up to 2 nd level	One subject methodology module according to Senior Phase school subject chosen One subject methodology module according to FET phase school subject chosen
<i>Source: UNISA Website (2021)</i>		

From a qualitative document analyses of nine modules (one assessment theory module, six teaching practice modules and two subject methodology modules) done to describe the context in which student teachers are assessed at the UNISA College Education in modules relevant to their competence as assessors, it is clear that such a context includes two distinct areas. The first is an assessment context relevant to assessing student teachers' foundational competence in assessment, as contained in the assessment theory module for B Ed and PGCE students (Assessment in Education, Module AED3701). The second context is focused on practical and applied competence, namely in teaching practice modules generally, and particularly in the teaching practice component of subject methodology modules. All the modules focused on teaching practice were analysed. As all school subjects are included among the modules related to subject methodology, analysing all those modules was regarded as impractical since such a wide range of documents would yield similar data given the similarity in assessment of school subjects in reality. Only two modules focused on subject methodology were analysed because these were regarded as appropriate examples illustrating how applied competence as assessors are assessed in a distance education context. During the first round of interviews participants referred the researcher to several other documents they

deemed relevant. These included two documents used by the UNISA College of Education for training teaching practice supervisors and mentor-teachers, namely the training manual as well as the teaching practice guidelines. The researcher considered all such documents and analysed those that had particular relevance to this study. Refer to Chapter 4, Section 4.1, for a list of documents actually analysed in this regard.

The findings related to the two areas (foundational competence and applied competence) provide perspective on the way student teachers are assessed in a distance education context at the UNISA College of Education, including a focus on criteria used in assessing student teachers as assessors, specifically. The findings are presented by providing an overview of the documents analysed followed by a discussion reflecting the researcher's interpretations in terms of the study and the findings from the first round of interviews in particular. Three categories of findings are presented in this regard, namely findings related to the assessment theory module, findings related to the teaching practice modules, and findings related to two subject methodology modules. Findings are numbered as follows: QDA Context Finding G1 to QDA Context Finding X9, for reference purposes as some of these or parts of these are incorporated in the findings of the research thesis to which this record is attached.

The researcher used these findings, those found in the QDA of Standards and criteria-related documents conducted, as well as the analyses of hermeneutical phenomenological interviews (HPI), to formulate the findings presented in Chapter 5 of the thesis.

Findings related to the assessment theory module

Finding G1

Assessment of student teachers' foundational competence as assessors is effective yet limited

The assessment of student teachers' foundational competence is described in the Tutorial Letter 101 for the module: Assessment in Education (AED3701), (UNISA, 2021) and includes details pertaining to the purpose of the module, module outcomes student teachers have to achieve, distance education mode of delivery, practical work during teaching practice, as well as the assessment model used in assessing student teachers in this module. Several aspects of assessing student teachers' foundational competence need further clarification and would be addressed in the second round of interviews conducted with select participants after qualitative document analysis were completed. These aspects include more clarity with regard to the purpose statement of the module; clarity on practical work, namely regarding the link between, and co-operation among modules related to the assessment of student teachers' competence as assessors, specifically; and clarity on including the sixth outcome related to research and assessing all six specific outcomes in terms of the assessment criteria indicated in the module planning document. These aspects are discussed in more depth when the relevant sections of the module is considered.

A. PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose statement of the module is *to equip student teachers with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to assess learners in the specific CAPS subject / subjects they are preparing for* (own emphasis). The module is focused on how student teachers apply theory and implement the National Policy on Assessment (NPA), the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), and their role as an assessor in assessing learners.

The focus is clearly on the ability to apply relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes, rather than being informed or merely being knowledgeable only about theory, policy and curriculum. It is critical, however, particularly as this module builds the foundational and reflexive abilities of student teachers, to bear in mind what the qualifications seek to achieve, namely, among others, to foster *self-reflexivity and self-understanding* (own emphasis) among prospective

teachers. Findings 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 from the first round of interviews indicate that while it needs focus in assessment context, it is also challenging to assess reflexive ability in a distance education context. Qualification aims, as well as module purpose statements should be reflected in the module outcomes, as well.

B. MODULE OUTCOMES

In the Tutorial Letter 101 (UNISA, 2021), the following specific outcomes (SO's) are listed for the module:

- SO 1: Discuss, compare and evaluate key ideas and debates on assessment planning, practice, and moderation in the school curriculum.
- SO 2: Plan, implement, review and justify a variety of assessment strategies, instruments, and processes.
- SO 3: Identify and justify curriculum and assessment policy strategies for engaging with aspects of assessment planning, activities design, and review in ways that are appropriate for different purposes and contexts.
- SO 4: Use innovative ways to contribute to the development of aspects of assessment planning, practice, and review in ways that are informed by contextual realities, the nature of multi-cultural schools and classrooms, historical legacies, social diversity, and the integration of indigenous knowledge.
- SO 5: Application of assessment theories in assessment planning, activities design, recording and reporting, and the review of assessment in the specific CAPS subjects.

Three issues are considered when the set of specific outcomes are viewed against the qualification aims and findings from the first round of interviews.

1. There is a significant and consistent reference to assessment in school context used in all outcome statements above, in terms of three domains of assessment in school context, namely assessment *planning*, assessment *practice* and assessment *review*, as well as assessment *moderation*, (used only in SO1) (own emphasis). SO 5 also differentiates among *planning*, *design*, *recording*, *reporting* and *review*. Referring to assessment in more specific terms goes a long way in stating and illustrating that assessment in school context is a process that is inherently integrated with teaching and learning on the one hand, and, in the context of this study, focusing criteria for assessing competence as assessor on particular aspects in the assessment process, on the other.
2. When the specific outcomes above are compared to those in the module planning document one of the participants made available to the researcher after the first round of interviews, it is clear that the module planning document informed the tutorial letter containing the specific outcomes reflected above. The outcomes appear *verbatim* as presented in the module planning document, with two exceptions. A sixth specific outcome, listed in the module planning document is focused on the ability to conduct research using assessment data in school context, is omitted in the list in the tutorial letter. This issue was pursued in the second round of interviews. The second exception is related to assessment criteria associated with the specific outcomes listed above and expanded on, later in this record.
3. The criteria for assessing the specific outcomes were indicated in the module planning document, but were not included in the tutorial letter for the module. These are indicated here as reflected in the module planning document referred to above. (UNISA:s.a.i), in Table 4. These are most relevant to this study, and in fact describe the foundational competence of student teachers as assessors in detail.

Table G3: Specific Outcomes and Assessment Criteria for the Assessment Theory Module (AED3701) as per Module Planning Document

Specific Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
<p>Outcome 1: Discuss, compare and evaluate key ideas and debates on assessment planning, practice and moderation in the school curriculum.</p>	<p>AC 1 Discussions and evaluations of assessment planning, practice and moderation display a consideration for historical and current perspectives.</p> <p>AC 2 Discussions of assessment planning, practice and moderation take due cognisance of the diversity that exists in sites of practice.</p> <p>AC 3 Evaluations of assessment planning, practice and moderation take due cognisance of the diversity that exists in sites of practice.</p> <p>AC 4 Comparisons and evaluations of assessment planning, practice and moderation show a consideration for the conventions of academic debate including the ability to analyse published research reports and articles in this area.</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Plan, implement, review and justify a variety of assessment strategies, instruments and processes.</p>	<p>AC 1 Discussions and analyses of assessment planning, practice and review are based on a sound understanding of diverse learning and teaching needs and the level of readiness different stakeholders in diverse contexts of practice.</p> <p>AC 2 Discussions on the best ways of engaging with, and improving, aspects of assessment planning, practice and review take due cognisance of the diversity that exists in sites of practice.</p> <p>AC 3 Evaluations of ways of engaging with and improving aspects of aspects of assessment planning, practice and review take due cognisance of the diversity that exists in sites of practice.</p> <p>AC 4 Roles assumed and positions taken, with regard to ways of engaging with and improving aspects of assessment planning, practice and review are justified by appropriate reference to theory, policy, observed practice and personal experience and demonstrate the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Select, adapt and/or design assessment tasks and strategies appropriate to the specialisation and a range of learning contexts; ➤ Explain the link between the method of assessment, the overall assessment purpose and the learning intentions being assessed; ➤ Design and administer assessment tasks using clear language and instructions; ➤ Collect, from a variety of sources, sufficient confirmatory evidence of learner competence; ➤ Use a range of assessment strategies to accommodate differences in learning style, pace and context; ➤ Evaluate own and others' assessment strategies in terms of their validity, fairness, reliability and sensitivity to gender, culture, language and barriers to learning and development; ➤ Assess and record systematically the progress of individual learners; ➤ Use assessment results to provide feedback in educationally constructive ways on learner progress and achievement; ➤ Interpret and use assessment results to inform future teaching, learning and assessment strategies;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Justify choice and design of assessment strategies, methods and procedures in ways which show knowledge and understanding of the assumptions that underlie a range of assessment approaches and their particular strengths and weaknesses in relation to age and subject being assessed.
<p>Outcome 3: Identify and justify, varied strategies for engaging with aspects of assessment planning, practice and review in ways that are appropriate for different purposes and contexts.</p>	<p>AC 1 Discussions and evaluation of different strategies for engagement display a consideration for historical and current perspectives as well as a deep understanding of context.</p> <p>AC 2 Discussions of the efficacy of different strategies for engagement take due cognisance of the diversity that exists in sites of practice and the evolving nature of policy and practice.</p> <p>AC 3 Evaluations of the efficacy of different strategies for engagement take due cognisance of the diversity that exists in sites of practice and the evolving nature of policy and practice.</p> <p>AC 4 Selections of different strategies for engagement are justified by appropriate reference to theory, policy, observed practice and personal experience.</p>
<p>Outcome 4: Use innovative ways to contribute to the development of aspects of assessment planning, practice and review in ways that are informed by contextual realities, the nature of multi-cultural schools and classrooms, historical legacies, social diversity, and the integration of indigenous knowledge.</p>	<p>AC 1 Discussions and evaluation of aspects of assessment planning, practice and review display a consideration for historical and current social perspectives and the need to engage in collaborative meaning-making.</p> <p>AC 2 Discussions of aspects of assessment planning, practice and review take due cognisance of the diversity that exists in sites of practice, stakeholder preparedness and the evolving nature of policy and practice.</p> <p>AC 3 Evaluations of aspects of assessment planning, practice and review take due cognisance of the diversity that exists in sites of practice and the evolving nature of policy and practice.</p> <p>AC 4 Selections of different strategies for positive engagement are justified by appropriate reference to theory, including indigenous knowledge, observed practice and personal experience.</p>
<p>Outcome 5: Apply assessment planning, practice and review in the specific subjects they are going to teach by indicating how they are going to put assessment theory into practice</p>	<p>AC 1 Applications of knowledge on assessment planning, practice and review to design various assessments for their subjects.</p> <p>AC 2 Reflection on assessment designs by critically considering their decisions on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Who is going to do the assessment (teacher, self-assessment, peer assessment) and why? ➤ Where, when and how will assessment(s) take place (during lesson, after lesson, at home)? ➤ How did you take into account individual learning styles, aptitudes and interests? ➤ Are local values, content and standards reflected in your assessment(s) – ie is it authentic?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How did you make sure that assessment is an integral ongoing part of the learning process (where does it fit into your assessment plan and type of assessment – informal, formal assessment task or practical assessment task such as test, research project, etc)? ➤ Which assessment products and/or activities did you require (written work, oral, presentation, portfolio, etc) and why? ➤ How did you make sure that assessment(s) are accurate, objective, valid, fair, manageable and time efficient? ➤ How did you make sure that assessment(s) are appropriate to the developmental level of the learners? ➤ How did you make sure that assessment(s) are bias free and sensitive to gender, race, cultural background and abilities?
<p>Outcome 6:</p> <p>Undertake assessment research in the specific subjects they are going to teach to develop a better understanding of assessment that will underpin the assessment decisions they have to take when designing assessments.</p>	<p>AC 1 A problematic area of assessment that is a remaining learning need is identified by the student</p> <p>AC 2 As self-directed learner the student undertakes research through the use of a variety of relevant sources.</p> <p>AC 3 Data are analysed, synthesised and evaluated.</p> <p>AC 4 Decisions are made on contested knowledge areas of assessment such as the best way to assess a specific subject or a section of it.</p> <p>AC 5 Students motivate their choice or solution based on their exposure to theory, practice and other sources of information.</p>
<p>Source: UNISA (n.d. (ii))</p>	

The content of the table provides a comprehensive and clear description of six distinct abilities which student teachers have to develop in studying the module with regard to their foundational competence. An analysis of the specific outcomes when read in conjunction with the associated assessment criteria reveals the following:

- With regard to the concerns referred to in Finding 5.1.3 namely that aspects that are more assessable need to be identified and assessed thoroughly, it is evident that the outcomes for the assessment theory module are focused on what need to be assessed while the assessment criteria describe what can effectively be assessed and suggest how it may be assessed. SO 2 is a case in point. When read in isolation, the outcome suggests that student teachers need to actually plan for and *implement a variety of assessment tasks in reality* to show that they are competent in the outcome, while planning, reviewing and justifying can then be reflected upon referring to the actual assessment tasks implemented. When the ACs are read in conjunction with the SO, however, it is clear that the outcome require that student teachers *discuss, analyse, evaluate, assume roles and take positions* (own emphasis), all aspects that can be effectively assessed (for example, by means of written assignments in which a case study of a particular strategy with associated instruments and processes is described, and student teachers are required to respond to questions focused on discussing, evaluating, analysing, etc. the assessment implemented in the case study). The outcome would, however, allow for student teachers who do have the opportunity to actually plan, implement, and review an assessment in reality, during teaching practice, to do the same reflection, but on their own real-life assessment and not on a case study. AC 4 of SO 2 also clearly indicates that the emphasis is on *justifying practice* (own emphasis) in terms of policy, observed practice (e.g. during teaching practice and not own practice), and personal experience, and not on implementing practice per se. This means that student teachers are not required to implement assessment strategies in this module, but to discuss, analyse, evaluate and justify aspects of assessment practice that they have experienced or observed.

- An analysis of all the outcomes and assessment criteria reveals that predominantly higher order thinking skills are required to demonstrate competence in all of the six outcome statements. Even when lower order abilities are required, these are coupled with other higher order abilities; e.g. in SO 1 – Discuss (lower order) and compare and evaluate (higher order); in SO 3 – Identify (lower order) and justify (higher order); and SO 4 – Use (apply) (lower order) and develop (higher order). In addition, none of the outcomes require that theory, policy and/or curriculum content need to be regurgitated – obviously the set of outcomes are focused on cultivating a practical understanding of teaching and learning, including assessment, in South African schools, and on fostering in-depth self-reflexivity and self-understanding as envisaged in the purpose statements of the two qualifications analysed.

C. MODE OF DELIVERY

UNISA (2021) includes several aspects with regard to the distance education mode of delivery, such as the lecturers' contact details, resources [prescribed text, e-reserves, library, and Open Education Resources (OER)], student support, guidelines for drafting a study plan, and the use of written assignments for formative and summative assessment purposes. In Chapter 3, par 3.4.1 mention was made of the 500 series of Tutorial Letters used by the UNISA College of Education applying a study guide to assist students in studying the prescribed material relevant to a particular module. In Tutorial Letter 301 (UNISA (2018) the following approach is applied - the study guide introduces students to a wide variety of themes, topics, theories, constructs, ideas, frameworks and opinions relevant to assessment in education in general, and to assessment in South Africa in particular and, to assist them to reflect on assessment theory and practice, and to guide them in applying what is learnt from the prescribed text, the requirements of policy (NPA), and the current curriculum (CAPS), to assessment planning and practice. (Refer to par. B. above in this regard). Several of the activities students have to do in using the study guide are similar to assessment planning and practice required of qualified teachers in reality and are assessed formatively by the lecturer and e-tutors using the myUnisa student forum for interacting among students and with tutors. Similar activities are included in the examination for the theory module and in teaching practice modules' portfolio assessment tasks. This not only means that student teachers are given several opportunities to learn through doing, but they also develop a clear understanding of what to expect when they are assessed in the summative examination on the theory module, and in the teaching practice portfolio assessments. The topics, themes, theories, constructs, ideas and frameworks referred to in the study guide are contained in the content of the assessment theory module.

D CONTENT

The content for the module is contained in the textbook prescribed for the module, *Assessment in Education (AED3701)*. An analysis of the prescribed text reveals that the content is structured around the main topic of *assessment in education*, starting with generic assessment theory applicable to the educator as assessor, irrespective of the phase the student teacher is preparing for. This part of the textbook uses an apt analogy, namely that assessment is the vehicle that drives teaching and learning toward the destination (learning success). A wide variety of related themes and concepts are woven into the analogy to describe and explain what teachers should know and understand about assessment in educational (school) context. As such it contains detailed descriptions of the foundational competence of the student teacher as assessor, in the context of this study. This part of the content is followed by sections describing and explaining how assessment theory is applied in a particular phase of schooling, given the requirements of the CAPS curriculum and NPA policy. In the context of this study, only content related to the intermediate, senior and FET phases of schooling in South Africa is relevant. The content of the module is illustrated in Figure 5.1. Two major theoretical frameworks are used to ground assessment in school context, namely **assessment theory** and **assessment in education in Africanisation context**. A wide variety of theoretical themes are covered, including aspects such as: *What is assessment?; Assessment and curriculum; Planning assessment; Assessment criteria; Assessors and stakeholders; Assessment, teaching & learning; Continuous assessment including Baseline, Formative, Diagnostic, Summative assessment; Assessment of learning, assessment for and assessment as learning; Assessment principles and guidelines; Criterion-based assessment; Assessment evidence; Recording and Reporting; Challenges in assessment; Standardised assessment; High-stakes assessment; Recognition of excellence; as well as Promotion and Certification*. The second theoretical framework included is devoted to *Assessment and Africanisation, Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Ubuntu* philosophy. The final section is focused on how assessment is implemented in a particular phase of schooling and includes themes such as

Purpose & Principles; Documents used in assessment; Monitoring Administering Recording and Reporting Assessment (MARRA); Monitoring progress; Assessment Methods used in the phase; Recording & Reporting on assessment.

A comparison of the conceptual framework for understanding student teacher competence as assessors in Chapter 2, par 2.1.5 as illustrated in Figure 2.7, with the content of the assessment theory module analysed here, is reflected in Table 5.2.3. Applied competence was not included in the comparison as the module is not primarily focused on applied competence, but rather on foundational and reflexive competence.

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Table G4 **A comparison of concepts and content**

Competencies in the conceptual framework	Content of the assessment theory module
<p><i>Foundational competencies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being knowledgeable on assessment theory, methods, principles, etc. - Integrates a variety of assessment modes with teaching and learning - Integrates theory into practice 	<p><i>What is assessment?; Assessment and curriculum; Planning assessment; Assessment criteria; Assessors and stakeholders; Assessment, teaching & learning; Continuous assessment including Baseline, Formative, Diagnostic, Summative assessment; Assessment of learning, assessment for and assessment as learning; Assessment evidence; Recording and Reporting; Standardised assessment; High-stakes assessment; Recognition of excellence; as well as Promotion and Certification.</i></p>
<p><i>Practical competencies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan and prepare for assessment activities - Assess learner responses - Provide written and verbal feedback to learners - Keep records and communicate progress 	<p><i>Applied to planning for assessment in Intermediate, Senior and FET phases in schooling:</i></p> <p><i>Purpose & Principles; Documents used in assessment; Monitoring Administering Recording and Reporting Assessment (MARRA); Monitoring progress; Assessment Methods used in the phase; Recording & Reporting on assessment.</i></p>
<p><i>Reflexive / social competencies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrate awareness of policy and curriculum - Making credible assessment judgements - Reflect on improving learning, teaching and assessment 	<p><i>Assessment principles and guidelines;</i></p> <p><i>Criterion-based assessment;</i></p> <p><i>Challenges in assessment;</i></p>

From the comparison it is clear that the content of the assessment theory module corresponds closely with the competencies described in the conceptual framework derived from literature in Chapter 2, Section 2.7. The competencies described in the conceptual framework related to foundational competence is also congruent with the specific outcomes of the module analysed. This means that the module is not only aligned with the qualification purposes referred to earlier, but also to assessment theory in more general terms. In turn this implies that the content of the assessment theory module informs the specific outcomes of the module implying that student teachers have to demonstrate their mastery of the content when providing evidence in relation to the specific outcomes when their foundational competence as assessors is assessed. As indicated earlier, in this module, student teachers are required to display a deep and sound understanding of assessment theory as contained in literature in general and

the study material used in the module in particular. The prescribed material includes a relevant and current textbook, the content of which is analysed above, assessment related policy documents (NPA and CAPS) and examples taken from current curriculum documents and CAPS oriented school textbooks.

E. PRACTICAL WORK

UNISA (2021) indicates that student teachers are expected to be actively involved in the learners' assessment during their teaching practice sessions. This includes designing assessment activities, designing and selecting different assessment tools, reflect on how to assess learners, how to give learners feedback, how to record learners' work, how feedback is given to other stakeholders, and how assessment data is used to inform future learning, teaching and assessment. They are referred to the subject teacher at the placement school during teaching practice for assistance in this regard. Important to note, UNISA (2021) indicates that this module is not directly attached to teaching practice, in any way, however, students are referred to teaching practice modules in this regard.

The relation between the assessment theory module and teaching practice modules is not clear given this position, namely that there is no formal link between the two components of the qualification, yet students are referred to teaching practice with regard to practical work in the assessment theory module. Refer to Findings 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 regarding reasons why there is a fracture between the ideal and the real in this regard. This issue was pursued further in the second round of interviews.

F. ASSESSMENT

Assignments are seen as part of the learning material for the module. Student teachers are encouraged to study the reading texts using the study guide, consult other resources, discuss the work with fellow students, or e-tutors, module markers, and to do research prior to doing the assignments. They are required to engage in self-directed learning. The specific outcomes and the assessment criteria are provided for each assignment and those act as guidelines to understand what is required more clearly.

Assessment plan

UNISA (2021) indicates that student teachers are able to accumulate marks throughout the year. The promotion mark comprises a year mark of 20% and an examination mark of 80%. Every assignment contributes equally to the year mark - Assignment: 01 counting - 10% and Assignment 02 also - 10% of the final promotion mark.

Promotion mark:

Continuous Assessment (Assignment marks): 20%; Examination mark: 80%; and Final promotion mark: 100%. Student teachers are required to achieve a subminimum of 40% in the examination to benefit from their semester mark. Student teachers have to submit both assignments in order to obtain admission to the examination.

When the content of the tutorial letter is considered in relation to this study, the following emerge:

Assessment as an action – reflection cycle

Assessment in education is viewed as a process including three distinct processes, namely planning for assessment, implementing assessment in the classroom, and reviewing assessment after implementation. As indicated earlier, the verbs in the specific outcomes, e.g. compare, evaluate, justify, develop, design, all imply that student teachers are expected to become reflective practitioners rather than slavish implementers of policy. It also means that when thinking about and reflecting on assessment practice the focus is on improvement of their assessment practice continually throughout their careers, and not only at the start as student teachers and beginner teachers.

Grounded assessment practice

All outcome statements clearly focus on student teachers being required to have a deep and sound understanding of theory on the one hand and diversity of school contexts on the other. Cognisance of both theory and contexts require

of student teachers to think critically about their understanding and experiences of assessing learners in classroom context. In essence, their critical (higher order) thinking about assessment practice is assessed in the theory module, and not practice per se. The prescribed material includes a relevant prescribed textbook, assessment related policy documents and examples taken from current curriculum documents and school textbooks, and student teachers' deep understanding and ability to reflect on assessment practice in terms of these three areas are assessed in the module.

Limited ability to assess practice

The specific outcome statements, when read in conjunction with the assessment criteria from the module planning documents, explicitly and clearly reflect cognisance of the limited ability to which assessment can be implemented by student teachers in reality when studying the assessment theory module, and even during teaching practice. A critical reflection on how these outcomes are effectively assessed in this module reveals the following –

- SO 1 can be effectively assessed by means of written assignments and an examination as the outcome requires student teachers to demonstrate the abilities to identify, discuss, compare, justify and evaluate, all cognitive abilities.
- SO 2 would be assessed by means of considering the way student teachers discuss, analyse, evaluate and justify their own practice, and observed practice (that done by the receiving teacher during teaching practice) by asking them to write down such discussions, evaluations, etc. The outcome requires that a variety of assessment strategies, instruments and processes planned, implemented and reviewed, are considered when these are evaluated by student teachers. These abilities can be assessed by means of case studies, observations made during teaching practice and in terms of own experiences during own schooling and during teaching practice.
- SO 3 Student teachers are required to consider a variety of different assessment purposes and contexts and plan assessment for such purposes and contexts - such plans are assessable. However how these would be practiced (implemented) cannot be assessed unless actual implementation is observed by the receiving teacher or university supervisor/assessor.
- SO 4 This outcome requires of student teachers to consider specific contextual realities such as multi-cultural schools, historical realities, social diversity and integration of IKS in teaching and assessment. Again the focus is on how these issues would be incorporated in their planning (an assessable aspect), yet actual implementation would not be easily assessable if at all.
- SO 5 requires that student teachers apply planning of assessments to the particular subjects they prepare to teach once appointed. Again, their critical thinking on how they would apply theory in practice can be assessed by means of assessing various written tasks.

Finally, to be able to assess the reviews student teachers conduct on implemented assessments requires that the assessor (lecturer or marker) have detailed accounts of the contexts in which such assessments were implemented. This seems to be unmanageable in the view of this researcher, given that the tutorial letter does not include the assessment criteria related to the specific outcomes. The criteria for assessing assignments are referred to in the section on assessment, but are not specifically listed in the instructions for doing assignments, either. The researcher engaged the lecturer involved in this regard, when second round phenomenological interviews were conducted with participants in this study.

This concludes the discussion on QDA Context Finding G1, the only finding made in the QDA of the assessment theory module.

Findings related to the assessment of student teachers in Teaching Practice Modules

Introduction

Teaching practice during the years of studying the B Ed and the PGCE is focused on much more than assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors. An analysis of the purpose statements and content of Tutorial Letter

101s of the four modules relevant to the B Ed and two modules relevant to the PGCE in this regard reveals that competence as assessors is only assessed in a general sense in some of these modules. This is understandable given the focus of every teaching practice module analysed. In the teaching practice portfolios (summative assessment) of these modules, however, assessment features as an integrated part of every module. This context is described here by: a. giving an overview of the teaching practice modules; b. indicating how assessment features in the modules' assignments; c. how assessment features in the teaching practice portfolios submitted as evidence for summative assessment of every module; and d. the extent to which the competence as assessor is assessed; including e. criteria used to assess student teachers as assessors.

a. An overview of teaching practice modules in the B Ed and PGCE qualifications

The assessment of student teachers' performances in teaching practice is spread over four years of study and attending to teaching practice for the B Ed, and two years for the PGCE. When viewed holistically as a teaching practice model, the four modules are designed to develop student teacher competence through observation, co-teaching, semi-independent teaching and independent teaching, practising their skills and abilities progressively during the teaching practice placements, to become prepared for a teaching post in a school. For the BEd student teachers four five-week placements are scheduled for this purpose and for the PGCE two five-week placements.

A summary of the modules in this design is given below and indicates the purpose, focus, approach, activity and portfolio work designed for every module in the model. This model is illustrated and described in Table 5.2 a. and b. Note that the second placement for PGCE incorporates aspects of Modules 3 and 4 of the model.

Table G5 A Summary of Teaching Practice Modules (B Ed)

Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Module 4
<p>Purpose: Support students in their initial teaching experiences – education is context-specific and context-dependent</p> <p>Focus: Guided observation</p> <p>Activity: Observe practice and make connections between what they have learnt, what they have observed, and what they experienced</p> <p>Approach: Orientation to teaching</p>	<p>Purpose: Provide guidelines for a 5-week placement at a school</p> <p>Focus: Team teaching</p> <p>Activity: Co-plan a series of lessons – With a school-based mentor, team-teach lessons and reflect critically on planning and practice with both their school-based mentor and their supervisor</p> <p>Approach: Whole school approach – Roles and responsibilities of the teacher in the school environment under</p>	<p>Purpose: Provide guidelines for a 5-week placement at a school</p> <p>Focus: Semi-independent teaching</p> <p>Activity: Plan a series of lessons – With a school-based mentor, teach lessons while being observed and reflect critically on their plan and practice in consultation with their school-based mentor and their supervisor</p> <p>Approach: Classroom perspective - Roles and responsibilities of the teacher in the school</p>	<p>Purpose: Provide guidelines for a 5-week placement at a school</p> <p>Focus: Teach the subjects of choice independently</p> <p>Activity: Culmination of theory, practice and experience</p> <p>Approach: Classroom perspective</p> <p>Roles and responsibilities of the subject teacher under guidance of a trained school-based mentor</p> <p>Portfolio 4 is focused on teaching the subject of</p>

<i>Portfolio 1 is focused on observation and is not subject bound ensuring a broad whole school experience.</i>	<i>guidance of a trained school-based mentor</i> <i>Portfolio 2 is focused on team teaching and is aligned with a specific teaching subject and methodology</i>	<i>environment under guidance of a trained school-based mentor</i> <i>Portfolio 3 is focused on semi-independent teaching and is aligned with a specific teaching subject and methodology</i>	<i>choice independently and is aligned with a specific teaching subject and methodology</i>
Source: UNISA Tutorial Letter TPS2602 of 2021; UNISA Supervisor Training Manual (2012)			

Table G6 A Summary of Teaching Practice Modules (PGCE)

PGCE Module 1	PGCE Module 2
<p>The purpose of this module is to provide guidelines for a 10-week placement in a school focusing on semi-independent teaching. Students will plan a series of lessons for approval by their school-based mentor, teach the revised lessons (sometimes while being observed) and reflect critically on their plan and practice in consultation with both their school-based mentor and their supervisor. Student-teachers will focus on teaching in the Senior Phase in their chosen subject. Activities and approaches are similar to those in modules 3 and 4 of the B Ed programme.</p> <p><i>Portfolio 1 is focused on semi-independent teaching and is aligned with a specific teaching subject and methodology</i></p>	<p>The purpose of the module is to provide guidelines for the 2nd teaching practice which is seen as the culmination of the programme in which theory, practice and experience culminate in qualified teacher status as a probationary teacher. It requires a minimum 5 week placement in a school able to teach independently the subjects of choice. Student-teachers will focus on teaching in the FET phase for their chosen subject. Activities and approaches are similar to those in modules 3 and 4 of the B Ed programme.</p> <p><i>Portfolio 2 is focused on teaching the subject of choice independently and is aligned with a specific teaching subject and methodology</i></p>
Source: UNISA Final Teaching Practice Guidelines (2021)	

Given this overview of teaching practice purposes, focuses, activities, approaches and portfolios as a background against which the assessment of student teachers' competence as assessors should be understood, the way assessor competence is assessed in every module is considered.

Assessment of student teachers in teaching practice modules

An analysis of the four teaching practice modules for B Ed and the two for PGCE reveal that the assignments in these modules only address the competence of student teachers as assessors in a limited and indirect way. This is

illustrated in Tables G6.1 – G6.12. The purpose of the module as well as way assessor competence is assessed are indicated in these tables.

Table G6.1 Teaching Practice Module TPS2601 (BEd)

Module	Purpose	Assessment of assessor competence
TP2601 Teaching Practice I B Ed	Support students in their initial teaching experiences. The focus of this module is guided observation , helping students to observe practice and make connections between what they have learned, what they have observed and what they have experienced. They may become involved in assisting the teacher under instruction. The placement will require 5 weeks in a school. As an “orientation to school teaching”, the approach for SP & FET students will focus on observation in their two specialist areas (3 subjects). Services learning (community) activities will also take place.	Student teachers observe the teacher in all roles of teaching, and as assessor in this context, also. Five weeks of teaching practice in this approach provide many opportunities to observe how assessment is done in reality. What is learnt would be dependent on the competence as assessors, of the teachers they observe. The student teachers are required to observe the learners in a teaching-learning-assessment context. No specific criteria for assessing their competence as assessors are included in the assessment instruments to assess teaching practice tasks.

Table G6.2 Teaching Practice Module TPS2602 (BEd)

Module	Purpose	Assessment of assessor competence
TPS2602 Teaching Practice II B Ed	The focus on this 5 week placement is on team teaching . Students will co-plan a series of lessons with their school-based mentor, team-teach their lessons and reflect critically on their planning and practice in consultation with both their school-based mentor and their supervisor. It will focus on one subject methodology associated with an FET subject they are doing.	The student teacher’s competence as an assessor should develop and grow substantially during the five weeks of this teaching practice opportunity. The student teacher as assessor should share experiences with the receiving teacher, and learn from these, but would also be appraised and assessed by the receiving teacher in terms of teaching qualities, including the student teacher’s competence as an assessor. No specific criteria for assessing their competence as assessors are included in the assessment instruments to assess portfolio tasks.

Table G6.3 Teaching Practice Module TPS3703 (BEd)

Module	Purpose	Assessment of assessor competence
TPS3703 Teaching Practice III B Ed	The focus is on semi-independent teaching . Students will plan a series of lessons with their school-based mentor, teach these lessons (while being observed) and reflect critically on their plan and practice in consultation with both their school-based mentor and their supervisor. This module also focuses on a whole school approach, i.e. roles and responsibilities of the teacher in the school environment (obviously including assessment), under the guidance of a qualified school-based mentor. SP & FET students will focus on their senior phase subject methodology.	The relevance of this module to this study lies in the student teacher being given the opportunity to teach (and assess) learners in an authentic context. The formative nature of the assessment of the student teacher by the mentors (receiving teacher and supervisor) is crucial in this regard, in the opinion of the researcher. Refer to the complexities of assessing student practice in Chapter 3 in this regard. No specific criteria for assessing their competence as assessors are included in the assessment instruments to assess portfolio tasks. Student teachers are, however, required to comment on assessment activities done during lessons.

Table G6.4 Teaching Practice Module TP3704 (BEd)

Module	Purpose	Assessment of assessor competence
TPS3704 Teaching Practice IV B Ed	Provide guidelines for the 4th teaching practice placement focused on independent teaching . After this teaching practice experience the student teacher should be able to teach the subjects of choice independently. The experience will be structured from a classroom perspective (roles and responsibilities of the subject teacher) under the guidance of a qualified school-based mentor. SP & FET students will focus on their FET subject methodology.	During this placement, students are required to present at least five lessons independently which are assessed by the mentor-teacher and or university supervisor. The criteria related to assessment require the assessor to indicate how well formative and summative assessment was done during the lesson observed.

Table G6.5 Teaching Practice Module TPS3705 (PGCE)

Module	Purpose	Assessment of assessor competence
Module 1	The purpose of this module is to provide guidelines for a 5-week placement in a school focusing on semi-independent teaching . Students will plan a series of lessons for approval by their school-based mentor, teach the revised lessons (sometimes while being observed) and reflect critically on their plan and practice in consultation with both their school-based mentor and their supervisor. Student-teachers will focus on teaching in the Senior Phase in their chosen subject.	Two assignments are used to assess student teachers. In Assignment one, no aspects focused on assessment per se. In Assignment two, lessons presented by the mentor-teacher are observed and several aspects are responded to in this regard. Three aspects refer to assessment specifically. (Were aims and objectives of the lesson achieved at the end of the lesson? Questions posed to learners (level of difficulty, did they vary, learners response's, teacher's responses. Assessment activities conducted (classroom exercise, group or individual assessments?)

Table G6.6 Teaching Practice Module TPS3706 (PGCE)

Module	Purpose	Assessment of assessor competence
Module 2	The purpose of this module is to give you the opportunity to become acquainted with formal teaching in a practical school situation and to apply the theoretical knowledge you have gained in all the modules of this programme. This module therefore focuses on the practical application of the various teaching and learning strategies.	Two assignments are used to assess student teachers on teaching practice issues and on co-teaching or team-teaching. No specific criteria for assessing their competence as assessors are included in the assessment instruments to assess assignments.

Finding G2: Teaching practice module assignments have limited focus on competence as assessor

Assignments in these modules only address the competence of student teachers as assessors in a limited and indirect way. Only in two of the six modules analysed was the ability to assess specifically mentioned, namely when individual classroom activities and group assessments were mentioned or referred to indirectly, and when students were requested to reflect on assessment during a lesson in general terms. None of the module assignments included assessment criteria directly focused on assessing learners.

This tendency not to focus on assessment specifically is completely understandable when the approach in general to refer to teaching and learning without mentioning assessment (refer to Chapter 2, par.2.1.3 and par. 2.2.5 in this

regard), as well as the purposes of teaching practice modules, are considered. The modules generally focus on wider and more general notions such as observing teachers and learners (teaching and learning, rather than assessment) in classroom contexts; team teaching; and whole school approaches. Only in the fourth module of the B Ed and the second of the PGCE, is assessment part of the focus. When the assessments done in the teaching practice portfolios are considered, however, the focus on student teacher competence as assessors is frequently mentioned and assessed.

An overview of teaching practice portfolios focused on assessing assessor competence

Table G6.7: Assessing assessor competence in Module 1 of the B Ed Teaching Practice programme

Module	Criteria used in assessing the competence as assessor
<p>Module 1 TPS2601 Portfolio</p>	<p>In the portfolio several sections require student teachers to include evidence related to assessment in education.</p> <p>In 3.2 on an African philosophy of education, they are required to reflect on various assessment methods making education more accessible, as informed by Africanisation.</p> <p>In Section 4.3 in the observation tool for contextual analysis, assessment is included with lesson planning, teaching and other school activities when student teachers have to respond to “How do teachers adapt teaching and learning to context?”</p> <p>In Section 4.4.2.2 Observing different stages of a lesson, indirect references are made to assessment – How is the previous day’s homework dealt with?; How does the teacher praise or reward learners?; How does the teacher handle a question he/she cannot answer?; How does the teacher facilitate a discussion or feedback at the end?</p> <p>In section 4.4.4 Observe lessons by an experienced teacher, the following aspects related to assessment are included: activities learners were involved in, the questions the teacher asked during the lesson. Critically, they have to attach a copy of the lesson plan, learning material and the assessment activity done during the lesson to the observation schedule.</p> <p>Section 4 4.6.6 is devoted to observing assessment as part of teaching and learning specifically. Students have to respond to the following: Give three examples of formative assessment you observed in lessons taught by the mentor; What could the teacher learn from these?; Give two examples of formative assessment in this teaching practice module; How did these examples prepare you for the summative assessment (this portfolio)? Name two examples of summative assessments you observed at the school; and, With regard to assessment, why is lesson planning such an important part of your teaching practice?</p> <p>In Section 4.4.6.10 student teachers are required to peruse the mentor teacher’s files and respond to several aspects of the Annual Teaching Plan. Two of these are relevant to assessment – Mention three content areas covered in CAPS and included in the ATP; and Identify assessment activities related to these areas.</p> <p>In Section 6 a template is provided for lesson planning. It includes a section on assessment activities – student teachers have to indicate who will assess the activity, describe the activity and attach an assessment instrument appropriate to the context.</p> <p>In the Portfolio Assessment Grid, however, there is one criterion included that is directly related to assessor competence, namely for assessment as part of classroom management strategies. Other aspects of assessment as those indicated above are included as part of other criteria in the grid.</p>

Table G6.8: Assessing assessor competence in Module 2 of the B Ed Teaching Practice programme

Module 2 TPS2602 Portfolio	<p>In Section 4 student teachers have to submit at least five lesson plans demonstrating that they can plan and present their own lessons. The template for these lesson plans includes planning to assess learners using an assessment activity and assessment instrument which have to be attached. These lessons are assessed by the mentor teacher – the assessment tool includes a criterion related to assessment, namely – Assessment/ homework/reflection/summary and scores between 1 and 5 are to be awarded.</p>
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Table G6.9: Assessing assessor competence in Module 3 of the B Ed Teaching Practice programme

Module 3 TPS3703 Portfolio	<p>Student teachers are required to include evidence of their competence as assessors in several sections of the portfolio.</p> <p>In Section 2.9 portfolio is focused on evidence of a school assessment plan – student teachers have to describe the main aspects of the assessment plan, indicate whether it was aligned with CAPS, which aspects such as invigilation and marking they were involved with, reflect on the assessment practice in relation the assessment module, and attach evidence of all of the above to this section of the portfolio.</p> <p>In Section 3.3 evidence of observing at least 20 lessons presented by experienced teachers includes observations related to aspects of assessment as part of the lessons.</p> <p>In Section 4 they have to submit at least five lesson plans demonstrating that they can plan and present their own lessons. The template for these lesson plans includes planning to assess learners using an assessment activity and assessment instrument which has to be attached. These lessons are assessed by the mentor teacher – the assessment tool includes a criterion related to assessment, namely – Assessment/homework/reflection/summary and scores between 1 and 5 are to be awarded.</p> <p>In Section 5 they are required to identify good practices at the school – specific mention is made of quality teaching and assessment practices in this regard.</p> <p>The assessment grid used to assess the portfolio by the lecturer or marker includes several criteria related to competence as assessors. These include criteria directly and indirectly related to the sections indicated above. The guidelines and criteria provided to markers and university supervisors indicate the following with regard to assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors - they have to indicate how well student teachers applied formative assessments during the lessons observed and assessed. They also have to indicate how well the student teacher applied summative assessments during or after the lesson.</p>
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Table G6.10: Assessing assessor competence in Module 1 of the B Ed Teaching Practice programme

<p>Module 4</p> <p>TPS3704</p> <p>Portfolio</p>	<p>In the Teaching Practice portfolio in Section 4, a reflection activity (contextual questionnaire), student teachers are asked to indicate how information about the school, classroom and learners impacted on planning for teaching and assessment.</p> <p>Section 11 of the portfolio is focused on evidence of a subject assessment plan – student teachers have to describe the main aspects of the assessment plan, indicate whether it was aligned with CAPS, which aspects such as invigilation and marking they were involved with, reflect on the assessment practice in relation the assessment module, and attached evidence of all of the above to this section of the portfolio.</p> <p>Section 12 requires that evidence be attached of any actual assessment tasks conducted by the student teachers. At least one assessment task, a copy of a marked / assessed response and the memorandum/instrument have to be attached.</p> <p>Section 13 is focused on recording assessments – it requires that they attach records of assessment done – the number of learners who completed the assessment task, the number that passed, the number that failed.</p> <p>In Section 24 (Independent Teaching Lesson Plans), the template includes several reference to evidence related to assessment during the lesson – such as questions they will ask during the introduction, main part and at the end, as well as a section in which an assessment activity and an explanation thereof have to be attached.</p> <p>In Section 26 (Assessment of independently taught lessons), the mentor-teacher is required to assess the effectiveness of formative assessment done during the lesson, as well as homework or summative assessment relevant to the lesson</p> <p>In Section 27 (Reflective self-assessment on independently taught lessons) student teachers are required to respond to several questions, most of which imply that the effectiveness of informal and formative assessment during their lessons have to be considered and commented on.</p> <p>In Section 28, they are required to observe at least one lesson per day spent a school – the template for recording observations include that they comment on aspects of assessment as part of the lessons and are asked to reflect on what they learnt form the lesson observed.</p> <p>In Section 30 they are required to identify good practices at the school – specific mention is made of quality teaching and assessment practices in this regard</p> <p>The assessment grid used to assess the portfolio by the lecturer or marker includes several criteria related to competence as assessors. These include criteria directly and indirectly related to the sections indicated above.</p>
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Table G6.11 Assessing assessor competence in Module 1 of the PGCE Teaching Practice programme

Module 1	The section on lesson plans includes the following assessment related aspects and guidelines / instructions:
TPS2601	8.4 Monitoring the understanding of new subject matter during the lesson... "How will you assess the understanding of new content? Use this as an informal assessment strategy. This is about the understanding of what was learned."
Teaching Practice I	8.5 Functionalization / assessment (Indicate which assignment / task / activity is given to learners). "The assessment task must be fully developed and must be attached here. This is about the application of what was learned."
PGCE	8.6 Extension tasks (alternative activities for learners with barriers to learning; additional activities for fast learners - compulsory).

Table G6.12 Assessing assessor competence in Module 2 of the PGCE Teaching Practice programme

Module 2	The importance of assessment is clearly indicated in the orientation to teaching practice. Several other sections in the portfolio require student teachers to provide evidence related to assessment in education.
TPS3706	
Portfolio	In Section 11 evidence of a subject assessment plan has to be included – student teachers have to describe the main aspects of the assessment plan, indicate whether it was aligned with CAPS, which aspects such as invigilation and marking they were involved with, reflect on the assessment practice in relation the assessment module, and attached evidence of all of the above to this section of the portfolio.
PGCE	In Section 12 evidence of an assessment task has to be included – one assessment task such as a test or examination question paper, a marked answer sheet and the memorandum or assessment instrument have to be attached
	Section 13 requires student teachers to attach record sheets of assessed tasks and basic data such as the number of learner who wrote, how many passed and how many failed. Student teachers have to respond to the following: What is the purpose of record sheets and analysis?
	In Section 24 five (5) Independent Teaching Lesson Plans have to be included. The template for these plans include questions to be asked during introduction, main part, and at the end of the lesson; as well as a section on the assessment activity planned for the lesson as well as an explanation of such, namely, How will you know if your outcomes/objectives/aims were achieved? A section of the lesson plan also focuses on homework.
	In Section 26, When the mentor-teacher is required to assess the five lessons, the effectiveness of formative assessment done during the lesson, as well as homework or summative assessment relevant to the lesson is included in the assessment tool. The criterion reads: "Concluding discussion and formative/summative assessment, Homework (attainable and relevant)"
	In Section 27 (Reflective self-assessment on the five independently taught lessons) student teachers are required to respond to several questions, most of which imply that the

	<p>effectiveness of informal and formative assessment during their lessons has to be considered and commented on.</p> <p>In Section 28 student teachers are required to observe at least one lesson per day spent a school – the template for recording observations include that they comment on aspects of assessment as part of the lessons and are asked to reflect on what they learnt from the lesson observed. Student teachers are also required to reflect on every lesson observed – in the template for this purpose they are required to reflect on aspects of assessment as part of the lesson and comment of that.</p> <p>In Section 30 they are required to identify good practices at the school – specific mention is made of quality teaching and assessment practices in this regard.</p> <p>In the Co-teaching Lessons Lecturer / Marker Rubric for assessing co-taught lessons, the following criterion (Assessment and homework) is regarded as Excellent, when - <i>Assessments meet the proficient criteria and reflect a variety of assessment types and/or methods.</i></p> <p>Achieved, when <i>the assessment reflects the objectives and is appropriate to the topic and grade level</i></p> <p>Developing, when <i>at least one assessment tool is included, but the assessment may not reflect the objectives or may not be appropriate to the topic or grade level</i></p> <p>Not achieved, when <i>assessment may be described, but the assessment tool and/or evaluation instrument are not included</i></p> <p>The assessment grid used to assess the portfolio by the lecturer or marker includes several criteria related to competence as assessors. These include criteria directly and indirectly related to the sections indicated above.</p>
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Finding G3 Teaching practice module portfolios include assessments of competence as assessors

Teaching practice portfolios focus on competence as assessors frequently and specifically and include a variety of ways in which student teachers demonstrate their understanding of, and ability to apply assessment in classroom and school contexts. These include observing experienced mentor teachers presenting lessons in which formative and summative assessments are done; school assessment plans have to be accessed, included, analysed and commented on in terms of theory, policy and curriculum; evidence of an assessment task/tasks designed and developed by the student teacher has to be included; record sheets and reflective responses on assessment recording and reporting have to be included; five lesson plans including assessment tasks planned and part of the lessons have to be included; self-reflection exercises on lessons taught by student teachers are required in which specific mention has to be made on formative and summative assessments during and after these lessons; one lesson per day has to be observed and reflected on, including reflection responses directly related to assessment issues; student teachers have to identify good practices in the school including good assessment practices, which include specific criteria related to assessment, e.g. **Excellent**, when *assessments meet the proficient criteria and reflect a variety of assessment types and/or methods*; and finally, the assessment grids used to assess the portfolios by the lecturer or marker include several criteria related to competence as assessors. All criteria directly and indirectly related to the sections indicated above were recorded and used in drafting the criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in the final section of this chapter.

Finding G4

Subject methodology modules focus the design of assessments as a core component rather than actual implementation

The analysis of both examples of subject methodology modules (TMS3713 – Teaching Geography, and TMS3716 – Teaching English Home Language) revealed a focus on assessment design rather than actual implementation to demonstrate their applied competence as assessors. In TMS3716 Module Document, Outcome 6 reads: Plan and design lessons and assessment activities in a Home Language and reflect on own teaching practices. The following assessment criteria are listed, (These are numbered here for reference purposes and those with specific reference to assessment are emphasised by means of italics):

1. Apply appropriate learning strategies, teaching methods and teaching media in the planning of teaching;
2. Integrate the subject content of the curriculum, relevant pedagogical knowledge and contextual realities to plan and present lessons in their subject;
3. *Evaluate assessment principles to design suitable assessments at appropriate cognitive levels that will assess learners' Home Language proficiency effectively and objectively;*
4. *Provide useful/meaningful feedback on formative assessments to improve learning and record assessments in accordance with curriculum requirements;*
5. *Reflect on own teaching practice and improve/change/adapt where needed.*

Similarly, in TMS3713 (Teaching Geography) Specific Outcome 4 and related assessment criteria read as follows: Locate, conduct and reflect on assessment in their subject.

Assessment criteria

We will know that qualifying student teachers are competent when they can:

1. *Apply assessment principles to design assessments;*
2. *Use learning intentions and assessment criteria to design assessments; instruments that can be used to assess learners effectively and objectively;*
3. *Apply the requirements for assessment in the curriculum to design appropriate assessments for the school environment;*
4. *Apply the requirements for assessment in the curriculum to design assessments at appropriate cognitive levels;*
5. *Make assessment decisions from scenarios/case studies/practical examples.*
6. *Give useful/meaningful feedback on formative assessments to improve learning;*
7. *Record assessments in accordance with curriculum requirements using scenarios/case studies/practical examples; and*
8. *Reflect on assessments and improve/change/adapt where needed.*

Two important notions are derived from the analysis of the two sets of outcomes and related assessment criteria. The first is to note that in both examples the focus is on the design of assessments, rather than actual implementation, suggesting that the challenges of assessing actual implementation as identified in this study earlier (refer to Chapter 1, par 1.2 and 1.4, Chapter 3, par. 3.2.2 and the findings in the first round of interviews), are accounted for. It is clear from both lists of assessment criteria that the competence of student teachers as assessors is limited to designing assessment, rather than expecting them to implement all aspects of such designs. Both sets of assessment criteria limit feedback to formative assessments only, suggesting that feedback on summative assessments would be challenging or unmanageable. This does not mean that actual implementation is excluded completely in these modules. The focus is on design, yet aspects such as providing feedback on assessments and reflecting on assessments done, clearly indicate that implementation of assessment (AC 1 and 2 for TMS3716) are included, in spite of the fact that such implementation may be challenging given the context indicated already. It was interesting to note that TMS 3713 (Teaching Geography) none of the criteria referred to actual implementation in spite of the fact that "conduct ... assessment" is specifically included in the outcome statement.

The second notion derived from the analysis, is that *scenarios / case studies / practical examples* (own emphasis) are used as alternatives for actual implementation of assessments by student teachers. Refer to assessment criteria 5 and 7 for Teaching Geography in this regard. Although the ideal would be to require student teachers to implement assessment tasks they have designed in reality during teaching practice and then make decisions on those (AC 5) and record the results of such assessments (AC 7) and (AC 4 of TMS 3716), such expectations are unrealistic and

can be assessed alternatively by using scenarios, case studies and practical examples, given in the study material. The lecturers responsible for these two example modules were participants in the first round of interviews. Refer to the views of Joey ([Student teachers] ... *can't be competent as assessors when they start teaching.*) and Jessie (... *they've got a survival kit available just ... to get them going*) in Findings 5.1.1, 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 in this regard. Practical examples referred to earlier in this regard may include examples observed during teaching practice, either when own experiences are referred to, or when the receiving teacher is observed by the student teacher.

This finding suggests that student teachers may realistically be expected to demonstrate their ability to design appropriate assessments as suggested by Leslie and Gorman (2016), but they would not be expected to implement such assessments prior to entering the profession. In fact, if some student teachers have opportunities to implement assessments in reality during teaching practice, it would stand them in good stead, yet when it comes to assessing their competence, such assessments can be limited to their ability to design assessments. This position as well as the two notions referred to above were researched a more deeply during the second round of interviews.

Finding G5: Subject methodology modules integrate assessment theory with the current CAPS curriculum and the National Protocol for Assessment

In both example modules, there is considerable overlap with the assessment theory module in terms of assessment theory, the assessment requirements in the NPA and the CAPS. The focus in the methodology modules is on integrating and applying the three domains in the particular subject methodology. In both modules assessment issues in the particular subject are addressed in an entire section of the module devoted to this end. These sections include examples of how themes, topics or abilities are assessed in particular subjects in practice.

Finding G6 Assessment at all levels of cognition

Student teachers' foundational competencies relevant to teaching the subjects they prepare for during ITE are assessed at predominantly middle and higher levels of cognition in both subject methodology modules analysed. Student teachers themselves are also required to design their own assessments using appropriate taxonomies when assessing learners at school.

The UNISA College of Education uses quality assurance measures such as the *Analysis Tool for Quality Assessments aligned to NQF Levels* (UNISA: n.d.) to ensure that student teachers are assessed at appropriate levels, in terms of both cognitive and NQF levels. In terms of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy, the tool requires that 40% of assessment tasks are at middle order levels of complexity (applying and analysing), 40% of tasks at higher order (evaluating and synthesising) and only 20% at lower order of cognition (knowing and understanding). The tool is used to ensure that the overall standard of assessment is at NQF level 7 of the South African qualifications framework. (Refer to the analysis of SAQA level descriptors in this regard).

With regard to student teachers designing their own assessments in the subjects they prepare to teach at school, both modules analysed refer to CAPS requirements with regard to assessing learners at all levels of thinking. Both Bloom's Revised Taxonomy and Barrett's Taxonomy for Assessment (CAPS 2011) are applied in requiring student teachers to design assessments that assess learners thinking at all levels. The weighting of cognitive levels is clearly indicated as required in CAPS. Both modules provide examples to illustrate how questioning at all levels of thinking is applied in teaching the particular subjects in a CAPS context at school.

Finding G7 Three approaches to assessing student teachers as assessors

Student teachers are assessed in three distinct ways at the UNISA College of Education. These are summative examinations, a continuous assessment approach and a comprehensive portfolio of evidence on teaching and assessing learners in a particular school subject. The module purposes and ways in which assessor competence are assessed in the two example modules are indicated in Tables 5.2.7a and 5.2.7b.

Table G7: Subject methodology TMS3716 Teaching English Home Language in the Senior Phase

Module	Purpose	Assessment of assessor competence
TMS3716 Teaching English Home Language in the Senior Phase	The purpose of this module is to ensure that qualifying student teachers: - acquire and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that will enable them to teach a Home Language, which includes all the official languages, namely ... English ... in the senior phase; - to integrate knowledge and skills acquired from other modules in the qualification such as ... Assessment, and the disciplinary knowledge in the subject to develop and enhance their teaching ability, preparing them to fulfil their roles as a classroom teacher in the varying contexts of South African classrooms; and to - acquire and demonstrate an ability to integrate and practice their foundational, practical and reflexive competences to prepare them to facilitate the teaching and learning of Languages on a beginner teacher's level.	<p>Student teachers are assessed by means of assignments (formative) and an examination or continuous assessment approach (summative). One of the assignments requires student teachers to design a formative or summative assessment for a two-week cycle in line with CAPS requirements. Student teachers are not allowed to copy existing assessment tasks, but have to design their own original tasks.</p> <p>The module is being assessed by means of a continuous assessment approach since 2021. The examinations before that year included a variety of questions and tasks related to applying CAPS when designing school-based assessments as well as summative assessments such as tests and examinations. These aspects were assessed in the various assignments and those included in the continuous assessment approach. In the final two assignments, assessment specific tasks are included, such as drafting lesson plans including assessment tasks and homework, and a series of questions on assessment theory CAPS and NPA policies are applied to teaching and assessing learners in English Home language.</p>

Table G8: Subject methodology TMS3713 Teaching Geography

Module	Purpose	Assessment of assessor competence
TMS3713 Teaching Geography	The purpose of this module is to ensure that qualifying student teachers: acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that will enable them to teach Geography in FET; to integrate knowledge and skills acquired from other modules in the qualification such as ... Assessment, ... and the disciplinary knowledge in the subject to develop and enhance their teaching ability, preparing them to fulfil their roles as a classroom teacher in the varying contexts of South African classrooms; and to acquire, integrate and practice their foundational, practical and reflexive competences to prepare them to facilitate the teaching and learning of Geography on a beginner teacher's level.	The student teacher's competence as an assessor is contained in Section 4 of the module learner guide and includes themes such as Why do we assess?; Forms of assessment; What is formal assessment?; What is informal assessment?; How to set a test / exam using Bloom's Taxonomy; Moderation of assessment before and after being done by learners; and Record keeping. The section also includes the structure for assessment related files the student teachers have to prepare, namely the School-based Assessment (SBA) File and the Educator's own Assessment File.

		<p>Student teachers are assessed in the module by means of assignments and a comprehensive Teaching Geography Subject Methodology Portfolio, as an alternative for a formal examination. The assignments and portfolio tasks include aspects such as designing five lesson plans including associated assessment task including assessment instruments to be used;</p>
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The two examples illustrate how the three summative assessment approaches are used in assessing student teachers as assessors by the UNISA College of Education. Since 2021 Module TMS3716 is being assessed summatively using the continuous assessment approach rather than by means of an examination. It became clear in the analysis that in the theory module (AED3701), all teaching practice modules analysed as well as the subject methodology modules, a considerable amount of repetition occurs in assessing student teachers' assessor competence. All modules require student teachers to understand assessment theory and curriculum and assessment policies (CAPS and the NPA) and apply such understanding to teaching and assessing learners in particular school subjects.

Finding G8 BICS, CALP, LOLT and assessor competence

Although basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) are interrelated notions particularly relevant to teaching and assessing learners in home and additional languages as school subjects, the multicultural context and challenges related to moving from mother tongue instruction to English as language of learning and teaching in all school subjects remains an area of concern in ITE and in assessing student teachers as assessors.

Criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors have to include measures to help address the challenges learners face with regard to language development and the progressing from mother tongue instruction to English as language of learning and teaching in a multicultural context in South African education. Student teachers preparing for teaching in the intermediate phase particularly have to be prepared for assessing learners in this context. At the very least student teachers should demonstrate a sound understanding of the complexities of these notions (BICS, CALP, mother tongue instruction and English as LOLT), as argued by Lucy in the first round of interviews.

In one of the assignments, student teachers have to complete in TMS3716, the notion that student teachers' understanding of BICS and CALP in teaching English was pertinently addressed, indicating that Lucy's views expressed during the first round of interviews in this regard remain relevant. In a follow-up telephone conversation with Jessie who is one of the lecturers who were responsible for Module 3716 revealed that student teachers need to understand both notions very well indeed as teaching and assessing learners in both BICS and CALP are most relevant in South Africa's multicultural context with particular reference to English as language of learning and teaching for non-English home language users in the intermediate and senior phases of schooling. Jessie indicated that student teachers who are non-English home language users are in a particularly difficult situation in South African schools currently as neither the home language (refer to mother tongue instruction prior to the intermediate phase) nor English as LOLT have developed adequately (both in terms of BICS and CALP) by the time they reach senior phase. Jessie was of the opinion that the impact of the complexities of moving from mother tongue education to English as CALP and LOLT may even render relying on TIMMS and PIRLLS international measures for comparing education systems' effectiveness as a questionable practice. This issue was revisited during the second round of interviews.

Finding G9 Criteria for assessing the design of assessment tasks

The example modules analysed include detailed criteria for assessing the assessment tasks designed by student teachers for implementation during teaching practice or when they start teaching once appointed as beginner teachers. The criteria are similar to those identified in the analysis of the assessment theory module earlier (refer to Table 5.2.2) and include the following from Tutorial Letter 101 – SDGEOGM (UNISA: 2021). The criteria are numbered here for reference purposes:

1. Who is going to do the assessment (teacher, self-assessment, peer assessment) and why?
2. Where (during lesson, after lesson, at home), when (submission date) and how (group/individual) will assessment(s) take place?
3. How will you take into account individual learning styles, aptitudes and interests (e.g. different ways of presenting it or inclusion of pictures, graphs/environment, etc)?
4. Are local values, content and/or standards reflected in your assessment(s) – i.e. is it authentic?
5. How will you make sure that assessment is an integral ongoing part of the learning process (where does it fit into your assessment plan [CAPS] and type of assessment - informal, formal assessment task or practical assessment task such as test, research project, etc)?
6. Which assessment products and/or activities will be required (written work, oral presentation, poster, model, etc) and why?
7. How will you make sure that assessment(s) are credible (accurate, objective, valid, fair, manageable) and time efficient?
8. How will you make sure that assessment(s) are appropriate to the developmental level of the learners?
9. How will you make sure that assessment(s) are bias free and sensitive to gender, race, cultural background and abilities?
10. Which assessment instrument will you use? (Attach the complete instrument including descriptive assessment criteria to your assessment task)?

The detailed descriptions of assessment tasks that emerge from an assessment designed using the criteria referred to above, are very useful for student teachers to demonstrate their understanding of their subject, assessment and learning theories and practical ability to plan and design assessment tasks as well as associated assessment instruments. The criteria listed, however, do not include criteria for assessing the assessment instruments such as memoranda, checklists, assessment grids and assessment rubrics, designed by student teachers. It needs to be borne in mind that the emphasis in both example modules analysed was on student teachers' ability on designing their own instruments, rather than copying or using existing instruments from textbooks or school resources. (Refer to Velasco-Martinez and Hurtado, 2018, regarding rubric design an essential skill). Assessing student teachers in this regard is always prone to authenticity concerns as lecturers and markers find it difficult to ensure authenticity in a distance education context such as used at the UNISA College of Education. Refer to concerns raised by Jessie and Ellie in the first round of interviews in this regard. In the second round of interviews these concerns were researched more deeply.

Conclusion – findings from analysing subject methodology modules

The findings from the QDA of two example subject methodology modules used in the UNISA College of Education context include several approaches that are regarded as examples of good practice in assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context in South Africa. These include:

- Applying three alternative approaches for assessing student teachers summatively, namely examinations, portfolios of evidence and continuous assessment approaches. Subject methodology and UNISA College of Education contexts need to be borne in mind in choosing an appropriate approach in this regard
- Although basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) are interrelated notions particularly relevant to teaching and assessing learners in home and additional languages as school subjects, the multicultural context and challenges related to moving from mother tongue instruction to English as language of learning and teaching in all school subjects remains an area of concern in ITE and in assessing student teachers as assessors. Assessing student teachers' ability to apply an in-depth understanding of the impact of language development on assessment in any assessing learners in any school subject is regarded as good practice.

- Both Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956 and 2001 and Newton et al 2020) and Barrett's Taxonomy for Assessment (CAPS 2011) are applied in requiring student teachers to design assessments that would assess learners thinking at all levels. The weighting of cognitive levels is clearly indicated as required in CAPS. Both modules also provide examples to illustrate how questioning at all levels of thinking is applied in teaching the particular subjects in a CAPS context at school.
- Using detailed criteria for assessing the assessment tasks designed by student teachers for implementation during teaching practice or when they start teaching once appointed as beginner teachers, assisting them to consider all relevant issues when designing and implementing properly designed assessments.

Conclusion to this record

This record contains the first round analyses done by the researcher to describe the context in which student teachers are assessed generally, and specifically with regard to the way their competence as assessors is assessed. The researcher regarded the findings recorded in this record to be rather fragmented and not adequately focused on the purpose of this study. Consequently these findings were used as a basis for reflection and as a source for data when a second analysis was done. The results of the second round analysis are presented in the thesis as findings in Chapter 5, specifically focused on context. (Refer to Chapter 5, Section 5.2.1, *Findings related to the distance education context in which student teachers are assessed at the UNISA College of Education*)

List of References

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- UNISA Department Curriculum and Instructional Studies. (2018e). Tutorial Letter 103/0/2018 Teaching Practice for FET. PTEAC1X. Year Module PORTFOLIO TEMPLATE. *UNISA Pretoria*.
- UNISA Department Curriculum and Instructional Studies. (2018f). Tutorial Letter 101/0/2018. SUBJECT DIDACTICS GEOGRAPHY. SDGOGM. Year module. *UNISA Pretoria*
- UNISA Department Curriculum and Instructional Studies. (2018g). Tutorial Letter 103/0/2018. Teaching Practice Teaching Senior Phase (Grades 7 - 9). PTEAC2Y. Assignment 50 Year module. PORTFOLIO TEMPLATE. *UNISA Pretoria*.

ANNEXURE H: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS IN ANNEXURE G

Introduction

This is a summary of the findings resulting from the QDA conducted as presented in Annexure G - Record of Qualitative Document Analysis (QDA) related to a Distance Education Context (UNISA College of Education).

Finding G1 Assessment of student teachers' foundational competence as assessors is effective yet limited

The assessment of student teachers' foundational competence includes details pertaining to the purpose of the module, module outcomes student teachers have to achieve, distance education mode of delivery, practical work during teaching practice, as well as the assessment model used in assessing student teachers in this module. Several aspects of assessing student teachers' foundational competence need further clarification. These aspects include more clarity with regard to the purpose statement of the module; clarity on practical work, namely regarding the link between, and co-operation among modules related to the assessment of student teachers' competence as assessors, specifically; and clarity on including the sixth outcome related to research and assessing all six specific outcomes in terms of the assessment criteria indicated in the module planning document.

Finding G2 Teaching practice module assignments have limited focus on competence as assessor

Assignments in these modules only address the competence of student teachers as assessors in a limited and indirect way. Only in two of the six modules analysed was the ability to assess specifically mentioned, namely when individual classroom activities and group assessments were mentioned or referred to indirectly, and when students were requested to reflect on assessment during a lesson in general terms. The modules generally focus on wider and more general notions such as observing teachers and learners (teaching and learning, rather than assessment) in classroom contexts; team teaching; and whole school approaches. Only in the fourth module of the B Ed and the second of the PGCE, is assessment part of the focus.

Finding G3 Teaching practice module portfolios include assessments of competence as assessors

Teaching practice portfolios focus on competence as assessors frequently and specifically and include a variety of ways in which student teachers demonstrate their understanding of, and ability to, apply assessment in classroom and school contexts. These include observing experienced mentor teachers presenting lessons in which formative and summative assessments are done; school assessment plans have to be accessed, included, analysed and commented on in terms of theory, policy and curriculum; evidence of an assessment task/tasks designed and developed by the student teacher has to be included; record sheets and reflective responses on assessment recording and reporting have to be included; five lesson plans including assessment tasks planned and part of the lessons have to be included; self-reflection exercises on lessons taught by student teachers are required in which specific mention has to be made on formative and summative assessments during and after these lessons; one lesson per day has to be observed and reflected on, including reflection responses directly related to assessment issues; student teachers have to identify good practices in the school including good assessment practices, which include specific criteria related to assessment.

Finding G4 *Subject methodology modules focus the design of assessments as a core component rather than actual implementation*

The analysis of both examples of subject methodology modules revealed a focus on assessment design rather than actual implementation to demonstrate their applied competence as assessors. The following assessment criteria are listed:

- *Evaluate assessment principles to design suitable assessments at appropriate cognitive levels that will assess learners' Home Language proficiency effectively and objectively;*
- *Provide useful/meaningful feedback on formative assessments to improve learning and record assessments in accordance with curriculum requirements;*
- *Reflect on own teaching practice and improve/change/adapt where needed.*
- *Locate, conduct and reflect on assessment in their subject.*

Assessment criteria

We will know that qualifying student teachers are competent when they can:

1. *Apply assessment principles to design assessments;*
2. *Use learning intentions and assessment criteria to design assessments; instruments that can be used to assess learners effectively and objectively;*
3. *Apply the requirements for assessment in the curriculum to design appropriate assessments for the school environment;*
4. *Apply the requirements for assessment in the curriculum to design assessments at appropriate cognitive levels;*
5. *Make assessment decisions from scenarios/case studies/practical examples.*
6. *Give useful/meaningful feedback on formative assessments to improve learning;*
7. *Record assessments in accordance with curriculum requirements using scenarios/case studies/practical examples; and*
8. *Reflect on assessments and improve/change/adapt where needed.*

Finding G5 *Subject methodology modules integrate assessment theory with the current CAPS curriculum and the National Protocol for Assessment*

In both example modules, there is considerable overlap with the assessment theory module in terms of assessment theory, the assessment requirements in the NPA and the CAPS. The focus in the methodology modules is on integrating and applying the three domains in the particular subject methodology. In both modules assessment issues in the particular subject are addressed in an entire section of the module devoted to this end. These sections include examples of how themes, topics or abilities are assessed in particular subjects in practice.

Finding G6 *Assessment at all levels of cognition*

Student teachers' foundational competencies relevant to teaching the subjects they prepare for during ITE are assessed at predominantly middle and higher levels of cognition in both subject methodology modules analysed. Student teachers themselves are required to design their own assessments using appropriate taxonomies when assessing learners at school.

Finding G7 *Three approaches to assessing student teachers as assessors*

Student teachers are assessed in three distinct ways at the UNISA College of Education. These are summative examinations, a continuous assessment approach and a comprehensive portfolio of evidence on teaching and assessing learners in a particular school subject.

Finding G8 *BICS, CALP, LOLT and assessor competence*

Although basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) are interrelated notions particularly relevant to teaching and assessing learners in home and additional languages as school subjects, the multicultural context and challenges related to moving from mother tongue instruction to English as language of learning and teaching in all school subjects remains an area of concern in ITE and in assessing student teachers as assessors.

Finding G9 Criteria for assessing the design of assessment tasks

The example modules analysed include detailed criteria for assessing the assessment tasks designed by student teachers for implementation during teaching practice or when they start teaching once appointed as beginner teachers. The criteria are:

1. Who is going to do the assessment (teacher, self-assessment, peer assessment) and why?
2. Where (during lesson, after lesson, at home), when (submission date) and how (group/individual) will assessment(s) take place?
3. How will you take into account individual learning styles, aptitudes and interests (e.g. different ways of presenting it or inclusion of pictures, graphs/environment, etc.?)
4. Are local values, content and/or standards reflected in your assessment(s) – i.e. is it authentic?
5. How will you make sure that assessment is an integral ongoing part of the learning process (where does it fit into your assessment plan [CAPS] and type of assessment - informal, formal assessment task or practical assessment task such as test, research project, etc.)?
6. Which assessment products and/or activities will be required (written work, oral presentation, poster, model, etc.) and why?
7. How will you make sure that assessment(s) are credible (accurate, objective, valid, fair, manageable and time efficient)?
8. How will you make sure that assessment(s) are appropriate to the developmental level of the learners?
9. How will you make sure that assessment(s) are bias free and sensitive to gender, race, cultural background and abilities?
10. Which assessment instrument will you use? (Attach the complete instrument including descriptive assessment criteria to your assessment task)?

Conclusion

This concludes the summary of findings of the QDA done with regard to the context in which student teachers are assessed at the UNISA College of Education. For a detailed account of these findings, refer to ANNEXURE G.

ANNEXURE I

Record of QDA – Standards and Criteria for Assessing the Competence of Student Teachers as Assessors

Compiled by Hennart van Schalkwyk

Introduction

This record contains an account of qualitative document analysis (QDA) done in the empirical work related to the study, *Standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context*. Every document was read to identify aspects and sections that made specific reference to assessor competence. Only aspects that were directly related to describing assessor competence was selected and copied into a table create for this purpose. To this end, the researcher created a template in table format into which data from documents were copied verbatim, resulting in a table for every document analysed. Where standards or criteria were listed, the researcher amended the verbatim descriptions by underlining the verb describing what an assessor does with regard to the element described, to facilitate the analysis in terms of criteria indicating how competence would be demonstrated by student teachers in order to be assessed effectively.

The results of QDA of documents related to criteria for assessing assessor competence are presented here in a series of tables:

<i>TABLE 1 Documents Analysed In Two Categories</i>
<i>TABLE 2 RECORD OF STANDARDS AND CRITERIA DESCRIBING ASSESSOR COMPETENCE</i>
<i>TABLE 2.1 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN GHANA</i>
<i>TABLE 2.2 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN NEW ZEALAND</i>
<i>TABLE 2.3 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN SA (SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR EDUCATORS)</i>
<i>TABLE 2.4 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN GERMANY</i>
<i>TABLE 2.5 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN THE USA – (CALIFORNIA)</i>
<i>TABLE 2.6 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN AUSTRALIA</i>
<i>TABLE 2.7 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA USED BY UNISA (UNISA STUDENT TEACHER STANDARDS DOCUMENT)</i>
<i>TABLE 2.8 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN SA (INTEGRATED QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM)(IQMS)</i>
<i>TABLE 2.9 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN JAPAN</i>
<i>TABLE 2.10 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN UNITED KINGDOM</i>
<i>TABLE 2.11 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN SALRUBRIC (SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT LITERACY RUBRIC)</i>
<i>TABLE 2.12 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN THE USA – INTERSTATE ASSESSMENT STANDARDS CONSORTIUM (USA2)</i>
<i>TABLE 2.13 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN TH USA (MASSACHUSETTS)</i>
<i>TABLE 2.14 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN THE USA – (CALIFORNIA STANDARDS FOR TEACHING PROFESSIONALS)</i>
<i>TABLE 2.15 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN UNISA MODULE PLANNING GRID - WORKING DOCUMENT</i>
<i>TABLE 3 Descriptions of Assessment</i>
<i>TABLE 4 Levels of Competence</i>
<i>TABLE 5 Number of criteria and Summary of Criteria in Lists</i>
<i>TABLE 6 First Synthesis – Standards and Criteria for assessing the competence as assessors</i>
<i>TABLE 6.1 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA - Foundational, Practical, and Reflexive Competences</i>
<i>TABLE 6.2 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA - Applied Competence of the Teacher as Assessor</i>

The findings of the QDA related to standards and criteria are presented here in a series of tables. Tables 2.1 to 2.15 are data sets extracted from the original documents sourced for the purpose of this QDA. These data sets were analysed for the purposes of this study, and not the full document in cases where other competencies were described (Refer to USA2 for example – document in this regard). Obviously, when the actual analysis of a particular documents was done, the original full document was available for further analysis or obtaining clarity. Documents (Data sets containing assessment related data only) were printed out read, themes were identified and colour coded. Themes identified are presented in TABLES 6.1 and 6.2.

NB. All verbatim copies of document content is indicated in *Italics* to hear the voices of the authors of documents.

Finding I1 Two categories of documents describe assessor competence - those that do not show progression of competence, and those that do

TABLE 1 - QDA - CRITERIA - DOCUMENTS ANALYSED IN TWO CATEGORIES

The data presented here was derived from several documents containing lists of standards and/or criteria/descriptors of elements of the competence of teachers or student teachers as assessors. The data is listed in three sections, Section A contains data from documents describing the competence of student teachers or teacher in a list of related abilities only (no progression of competence is indicated). Section B includes documents that indicate progression of competence over a number of phases or levels of competence / proficiency. Thirdly, the authors of the documents are indicated in the middle column, as well as a quick-reference code in right-hand column.

Section A No grading	Author/s	Code
Ghana	Ministry of Education (Ghana). 2017. <i>National Teachers' Standards for Ghana: Guidelines - Updated version, November 2017.</i>	GHA
New Zealand	Education Council New Zealand. (2015). <i>Practising teacher criteria</i>	NZ
SACE	South African Council for Educators Standards Development Working Group. 2020. <i>SACE Professional Teaching Standards.</i>	SA1
Germany	Schneider, C. and Bodensohn, R. 2017. <i>Student teachers' appraisal of the importance of assessment in teacher education and self-reports on the development of assessment competence</i>	GER
California USA	Commission on Teacher Credentialing 2016. <i>California Teacher Practice Expectations (TPE)</i>	USA1
Section B Grading	Author/s	
Australia	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL): 2011. <i>Australian Professional Standards for Teachers</i>	AUS
UNISA (1)	UNISA (n.d.) <i>Working document – Student Teacher standards</i>	UN1
UNISA (2)	UNISA (n.d.) <i>Working Document - Module Planning Document</i>	UN2
USA2 USA (2)	Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) 2013. <i>Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (USA2) Model of Core Teaching Standards and Learning Progressions for Teachers 1.0: A Resource for Ongoing Teacher Development.</i>	USA2
Japan	JACET SIG (2013) <i>J-POSTL</i> and Sakai, S. 2014. <i>Toward Setting Professional Standards for Teacher Development in Japan</i>	JAP
United Kingdom	Department for Education U.K. (2013) <i>Teachers' Standards and Descriptors</i>	UK
SALRubric	Edwards, F. 2017. <i>A rubric to track the development of secondary pre-service and novice teachers' summative assessment literacy.</i>	SR
USA (3) Massachusetts	<i>Massachusetts - Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, (DESE, 2019)</i>	USA3
USA (4)	Continuum of Teaching Practice (California Department of Education, Commission on Teacher Credentialing and New Teacher Centre, 2016), namely <i>Standard CSTP 5: Assessing Students for Learning.</i>	USA4

Finding I2 **Documents describe standards and criteria related to assessor competence in unique yet similar ways**

TABLE 2 **STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN THE DOCUMENTS ANALYSED**

The researcher included verbatim accounts of standards and criteria or descriptions as presented in the documents analysed. This is indicated in *italics*. To facilitate analysis and focus on competence, the researcher underlined do- words, verbs and phrases indicating the specific competence or element of competence described in the documents.

TABLE 2.1 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN GHANA (Ministry of Education (Ghana). 2017)

DOCUMENT - <i>Ghana Assessor Standards (GHA)</i> Excerpt from Draft thesis
ASSESSMENT IN CONTEXT: In Ghana, according to the Ministry of Education (2017) the National Teachers' Standards for Ghana define the minimum levels of practice expected of student teachers and teachers in order to be licensed, and adds that during the training and the period of induction, the standards continue to define the level of practice at which all qualified teachers are expected to perform. The standards are related to Professional Practice, namely managing the learning environment; teaching and learning; and assessment. Assessment ability is described as: "As assessor the teacher": followed by the criteria below.
CRITERIA - As assessor the teacher:
<i><u>Integrates</u> a variety of assessment modes.</i>
<i><u>Listens</u> to learners and <u>gives</u> constructive feedback.</i>
<i><u>Identifies and remediates</u> learners' weaknesses or difficulties</i>
<i><u>Keeps</u> meaningful records</i>
<i><u>Demonstrates</u> awareness of national and school learning outcomes of learners.</i>
<i><u>Uses</u> objective criterion-referencing to assess learners</i>
Comments:

Data Sheet Document Analysis Set A

DOCUMENT (NZ)	Standards for the teaching profession – NZ (Education Council New Zealand. (ECNZ), 2015) and
ASSESSMENT IN CONTEXT	Integrated in several existing standards, either as part of the standard or as part of the elaboration. Assessment ability is not described in a clearly formulated description.
CRITERIA	No levels are indicated – Standards apply for qualified and serving teachers in schools
STANDARDS Design for Learning <i>Design learning based on curriculum and pedagogical knowledge, assessment information and an understanding of each learner’s strengths, interests, needs, identities, languages and cultures.</i>	ELABORATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Select teaching approaches, resources, and learning and assessment activities based on a thorough knowledge of curriculum, content, pedagogy, progressions in learning and the learners.</i> • <i>Gather, analyse and use appropriate assessment information, identifying progress and needs of learners to design clear next steps in learning and to identify additional supports or adaptations that may be required.</i>
Teaching <i>Teach and respond to learners in a knowledgeable and adaptive way to progress their learning at an appropriate depth and pace.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ensure learners receive ongoing feedback and assessment information and support them to use this information to guide further learning.</i>
Professional relations <i>Establish and maintain professional relations and behaviours focused on learning and well-being of each learner</i>	<i>Communicate clear and accurate assessment for learning and achievement information.</i>

TABLE 2.2 - STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN NEW ZEALAND

TABLE 2.3 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN SOUTH AFRICA – (SACE)

Data Sheet Document Analysis Set A
DOCUMENT (SA1): SACE Professional Teacher Standards (South African Council for Educators Standards Development Working Group. 2020)
ASSESSMENT IN CONTEXT: The tenth in a list of ten abilities. Described as - Teaching involves monitoring and assessing learning.
CRITERIA
1. Teachers <u>use</u> assessment tasks that give learners opportunities to show what they have learnt, and what they can do with that knowledge.
2. Teachers <u>provide</u> learners with constructive feedback that helps them understand how they can improve their learning.
3. Teachers <u>analyse</u> learner contributions, their questions and their errors as important data that shows what the learners do and do not yet understand to inform future planning.
4. Teachers <u>keep</u> accurate records of assessments that track learner achievements and can report to stakeholders on the progress of learners
Comments: These criteria are for practicing teachers, not student teachers. No indication of progression.
Data Sheet Document Analysis Set A

TABLE 2.4 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN GERMANY

DOCUMENT (GER)	Assessment competence within the KMK's standards (Schneider & Bodensohn, 2017)			
ASSESSMENT IN CONTEXT	<p>Seen as one of 11 domains of teacher competence</p> <p>C7 - Teachers <u>diagnose</u> pupils' prerequisites for learning and learning processes; they support individual pupils and counsel learners and their parents</p> <p>C8: Teachers <u>assess</u> pupils' learning outcomes by means of transparent evaluation criteria Competence domain 'Innovation'</p>			
CRITERIA	Level 1: None	Level 2: None	Level 3: None	Level 4: None
<p><i>C7: Teachers <u>diagnose</u> pupils' prerequisites for learning and learning processes; they support individual pupils and counsel learners and their parents</i></p>	<p><i>Teachers <u>diagnose</u> pupils' prerequisites for learning and learning processes; they support individual pupils and counsel learners and their parents. Teacher graduates ... <u>are familiar</u> with concepts of heterogeneity and diversity and know how to <u>handle</u> individual learning prerequisites in teaching in diverse classrooms. ... <u>recognise</u> pupils' learning potentials, learning obstacles and learning progress. ... <u>know</u> the principles of formative assessment in the classroom and are capable of <u>harmonising</u> (pupils') learning prerequisites and (the curriculums') desired learning outcomes. ... <u>know</u> principles and approaches in counselling pupils and parents and adequately apply these approaches in practice.</i></p>			
<p><i>C8: Teachers <u>assess</u> pupils' learning outcomes by means of transparent evaluation criteria - Competence domain 'Innovation'</i></p>	<p><i>... <u>know</u> different approaches in educational assessment, including their advantages and disadvantages, and apply them adequately in constructing tasks. ... <u>are familiar</u> with different frames of reference [social, criterion-related and ipsative] in appraising pupils' achievement and apply them appropriately.</i></p> <p><i>... <u>know about</u> the charged relationship of supportive vs. selective functions of educational assessment.</i></p> <p><i>... adequately <u>apply</u> scoring techniques.</i></p> <p><i>... <u>give</u> feedback and <u>substantiate</u> evaluation and assessment outcomes in addressee's language while providing perspectives for future learning.</i></p> <p><i>... <u>utilise</u> assessment outcomes as a source of feedback in teaching.</i></p>			
<p><i>C10: Teachers <u>understand</u> their profession as a perpetual learning task Teacher graduates ...</i></p>	<p><i>... <u>know and make use</u> methods of internal and external evaluation for purposes of developing and ensuring instructional quality.</i></p> <p><i>... <u>receive and appraise</u> findings from educational research and <u>integrate</u> these into professional action. 132</i></p>			

TABLE 2.5 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN CALIFORNIA USA

Data Sheet Document Analysis Set A	
DOCUMENT (USA1): <i>California Teacher Practice Expectations (TPE) Standards for Beginning teachers (Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2016)</i>	
ASSESSMENT IN CONTEXT: <i>One of seven standards - TPE 5: Teacher practice expectation 5 Assessing Student Learning</i>	
CRITERIA	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 	<p><i><u>Apply</u> knowledge of the purposes, characteristics, and appropriate uses of different types of assessments (e.g., diagnostic, informal, formal, progress-monitoring, formative, summative, and performance) to <u>design and administer</u> classroom assessments, including use of scoring rubrics.</i></p> <p><i><u>Collect and analyze</u> assessment data from multiple measures and sources to <u>plan and modify</u> instruction and document students' learning overtime.</i></p> <p><i><u>Involve</u> all students in self-assessment and reflection on their learning goals and progress, and <u>provide</u> students with opportunities to revise or re-frame work based on assessment feedback.</i></p> <p><i><u>Use technology</u> as appropriate to <u>support</u> assessment administration, <u>conduct</u> data analysis, and <u>communicate</u> learning outcomes to students and families.</i></p> <p><i><u>Use assessment information</u> in a timely manner <u>to assist</u> students and families understand student progress in meeting learning goals.</i></p> <p><i>Work with specialists to <u>interpret</u> assessment results from formative and summative assessments to distinguish between students whose first language is English, English learners, Standard English learners, and students with language or other disability</i></p> <p><i><u>Interpret</u> English learners' assessment data to identify their level of academic in English as well as in their primary language, as applicable, and use this information in planning instruction.</i></p> <p><i><u>Use</u> assessment data, including information from students' IEP, IFSP, ITP, and 504 plans, to establish learning goals and to plan, differentiate, make accommodations and/or modify instruction.</i></p>

TABLE 2.6 - STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN AUSTRALIA

Data Sheet Document Analysis Set A				
DOCUMENT (AUS)	Australia Teaching Standards (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), 2011)			
ASSESSMENT IN CONTEXT	Standard 5 is one of seven standards Standard 5: Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning			
CRITERIA Focus Areas	Level 1: Graduate	Level 2: Proficient	Level 3: Highly accomplished	Level 4: Lead
1. <u>Assess student learning</u>	Demonstrate <u>understanding</u> of assessment strategies, including informal and formal, diagnostic, formative and summative approaches to assess student learning	Develop, select and use informal and formal, diagnostic, formative and summative assessment strategies to assess student learning.	Develop and apply a comprehensive range of assessment strategies to diagnose learning needs, comply with curriculum requirements and support colleagues to evaluate the effectiveness of their approaches to assessment.	Evaluate school assessment policies and strategies to support colleagues to use assessment data to diagnose learning needs, complying with curriculum, system and/or school assessment requirements and using a range of assessment strategies.
2. <u>Provide feedback to students on their learning</u>	Demonstrate an <u>understanding</u> of the purpose of providing timely and appropriate feedback to students about their learning.	Provide timely, effective and appropriate feedback to students about their achievement relative to their learning goals.	Select from an effective range of strategies to provide targeted feedback based on informed and timely judgements of each student's current needs in order to progress learning.	Model exemplary practice and initiate programs to support colleagues in applying a range of timely, effective and appropriate feedback strategies.
3. <u>Make consistent and comparable judgements</u>	Demonstrate understanding of assessment moderation and its application to support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning.	Understand and participate in assessment moderation activities to support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning.	Organise assessment moderation activities that support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning.	Lead and evaluate moderation activities that ensure consistent and comparable judgements of student learning to meet curriculum and school or system requirements.

<p>4. <i>Interpret student data</i></p>	<p><i>Demonstrate the capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practice.</i></p>	<p><i>Use student assessment data to analyse and evaluate student understanding of subject/content, identifying interventions and modifying teaching practice.</i></p>	<p><i>Work with colleagues to use data from internal and external student assessments for evaluating learning and teaching, identifying interventions and modifying teaching practice.</i></p>	<p><i>Co-ordinate student performance and program evaluation using internal and external student assessment data to improve teaching practice.</i></p>
<p>5. <i>Report on student achievement</i></p>	<p><i>Demonstrate <u>understanding</u> of a range of strategies for reporting to students and parents/carers and the purpose of keeping accurate and reliable records of student achievement.</i></p>	<p><i>Report clearly, accurately and respectfully to students and parents/carers about student achievement, making use of accurate and reliable records.</i></p>	<p><i>Work with colleagues to construct accurate, informative and timely reports to students and parents/carers about student learning and achievement.</i></p>	<p><i>Evaluate and revise reporting and accountability mechanisms in the school to meet the needs of students, parents/carers and colleagues.</i></p>

Source: AITSL (2011)

TABLE 2.7 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA USED BY UNISA (STUDENT TEACHER STANDARDS)

Data Sheet Document Analysis Set A				
DOCUMENT (UN1)	UNISA Student Teacher Standards (UNISA, n.d.)			
ASSESSMENT IN CONTEXT	One of 11 abilities. Assess learners in reliable and varied ways; use the results of assessment to improve teaching and learning. (Disciplinary and Pedagogical learning)			
CRITERIA	Level 1: Still developing	Level 2: Satisfies minimum expectations	Level 3: Transcends minimum requirements	Level 4: Exemplary performance.
1. <i>Use knowledge of assessment policies and guidelines to develop assessment strategies suitable to their phase(s) and subject(s).</i>	<i>Does not demonstrate an understanding of different types of assessment, e.g. only uses tests</i>	<i>Demonstrates basic understanding of different types of assessment. Tends to use the same one over and over.</i>	<i>A variety of assessment techniques is used, allowing learners to demonstrate their abilities and assisting them to overcome learning barriers.</i>	<i>Different assessment techniques used to cater for learners from diverse backgrounds, with multiple intelligences and preferred learning styles while using alternative assessments to accommodate learners with barriers to learning.</i>
2. <i>Giving meaningful assessment feedback.</i>	<i>No evidence of meaningful feedback to learners, or feedback irregular and inconsistent.</i>	<i>Some evidence of feedback.</i>	<i>Feedback is regular, consistent and timeously provided.</i>	<i>Feedback is insightful, regular, consistent, timeous, and integrated as part of learning.</i>

TABLE 2.8 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN SA (IQMS)

IQMS Data Sheet Document Analysis Set A				
DOCUMENT (SA2)	<i>IQMS Performance Standard 4 From IQMS Manual 2003 - Department of Basic Education (2006)</i>			
ASSESSMENT IN CONTEXT	Performance Standard: 4. LEARNER ASSESSMENT/ACHIEVEMENT Expectation: <i>The educator demonstrates competence in monitoring and assessing learner progress and achievement. Question: Is assessment used in order to promote teaching and learning?</i>			
CRITERIA	<i>Level 1: Unacceptable</i>	<i>Level 2: Satisfies minimum requirements</i>	<i>Level 3: Good</i>	<i>Level 4: Outstanding</i>
<i>(a) Feedback to learners,</i>	<i>No evidence of meaningful feedback to learners, or feedback irregular and inconsistent.</i>	<i>Some evidence of feedback</i>	<i>Feedback is regular, consistent and timeously provided.</i>	<i>Feedback is insightful, regular, consistent, timeous, and built into lesson design</i>
<i>(b) Knowledge of assessment techniques,</i>	<i>Does not demonstrate an understanding of different types of assessment, e.g. only uses tests</i>	<i>Has a basic understanding of different types of assessment.</i>	<i>A variety of assessment techniques is used, allowing learners to demonstrate their talents.</i>	<i>Different assessment techniques used to cater for learners from diverse backgrounds, with multiple intelligences and learning styles.</i>
<i>(c) Application of techniques,</i>	<i>Assessment results do not influence teaching strategies.</i>	<i>Some evidence of corrective measures and remedial activity based on assessment results.</i>	<i>Lessons are appropriately tailored to address learners' strengths and areas of weakness</i>	<i>Assessment informs multiple intervention strategies to address specific needs of all learners, and motivates them.</i>
<i>(d) Record keeping Levels of Performance Strengths Recommendations for Development Contextual factors</i>	<i>No evidence of records, or records are incomplete and irregular.</i>	<i>Maintains essential records.</i>	<i>Records are systematically, efficiently and regularly maintained.</i>	<i>Records are easily accessed and provide insights into individual learners' progress.</i>

TABLE 2.9 - STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN JAPAN

Data Sheet Document Analysis Set A	
DOCUMENT (JAP)	<i>Sakai (2014) - Teacher Competence in Japan</i>
ASSESSMENT IN CONTEXT	Descriptors related to assessment of learning
CRITERIA Level 1: Student teachers	CRITERIA Level 2: Apprentice teachers General assessment ability – not categorised
<i>Design assessment tools - I can <u>select and evaluate</u> valid assessment procedures (written test, performance tests, etc.) appropriate to learning aims and objectives.</i>	<i>I can use a valid institutional/national/international grading system in my assessment of a learner's performance.</i>
<i>Design assessment tools: I can <u>use</u> in-class activities to monitor and assess a student's participation and performance.</i>	<i>I can assign grades for tests and examinations using procedures that are reliable and transparent.</i>
<i>Evaluation: I can <u>identify</u> strengths and areas for improvement in a student's performance.</i>	<i>I can help learners to set personal targets and assess their own performance.</i>
<i>Evaluation: I can <u>present</u> my assessment of a student's performance and progress in the form of a descriptive evaluation, which is transparent and comprehensible to the student, parents and others.</i>	<i>I can help learners to engage in peer assessment.</i>
<i>Evaluation: I can <u>use</u> appropriate assessment procedures to chart and monitor a student's progress (reports, checklists, grades, etc.)</i>	<i>I can deal with errors that occur in spoken and written language in ways that support learning processes and do not undermine confidence and communication.</i>
<i>Language performance: I can <u>assess</u> a student's ability to engage in spoken and written interactions.</i>	
<i>Culture: I can <u>analyse</u> students' errors and provide constructive feedback to them.</i>	
<i>Error analysis: I can <u>analyse</u> students' errors and provide constructive feedback to them.</i>	
Comment - CRITERIA Level 3: Veteran teachers - Although several descriptors are given in the original document, these are for teachers with 5 - 9 years of experience. Regarded too advanced in the context of this study.	

TABLE 2.10 - STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Data Sheet Document Analysis Set A			
DOCUMENT (UK)	<i>UK Appendix 1: Teachers' Standards and Descriptors Initial Teacher Education: Guidance to support assessment for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) Department of Education (2013)</i>		
CRITERIA	Level 1: Developing (Standard met)	Level 2: Secure	Level 3: Excellent

1. - <u>know and understand</u> how to assess the relevant content	<p><i>All trainees to be awarded QTS will have demonstrated as a minimum that: They have a secure understanding of the statutory assessment requirements for the subject/curriculum in the age phases they are preparing to teach and are able to make broadly accurate assessments against national benchmarks. Their planning is characterised by the use of a range of formative and summative assessment strategies, designed to support pupils in making progress. They deploy these strategies effectively in lessons, both to evaluate the impact of teaching on the progress of learners and as a basis for modifying their teaching and classroom practice when necessary. They understand how school- and pupil-level summative data are used to set targets for groups and individuals, and they use that knowledge to monitor progress in the groups they teach. With guidance from experienced teachers, they monitor pupil progress and maintain accurate records, setting new targets for individuals and groups. They mark pupils' work constructively and provide appropriate oral feedback to pupils to help them to make progress.</i></p>	<p><i>They are able to assess pupils' attainment accurately against national benchmarks. They employ a range of appropriate formative assessment strategies effectively and can adapt their teaching within lessons in light of pupils' responses. They maintain accurate records of pupils' progress and use these to set appropriately challenging targets. They assess learners' progress regularly and accurately and discuss assessments with them so that learners know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.</i></p>	<p><i>They can confidently and accurately assess pupils' attainment against national benchmarks. They use a range of assessment strategies very effectively in their day-to-day practice to monitor progress and to inform future planning. They systematically and effectively check learners' understanding throughout lessons, anticipating where intervention may be needed and do so with notable impact on the quality of learning. They assess learners' progress regularly and work with them to accurately target further improvement and secure rapid progress.</i></p>
2. - <u>make use</u> of formative and summative assessment to secure pupils' progress			
3. - <u>use</u> relevant data to monitor progress, set targets, and plan subsequent lessons			
4. - <u>give</u> pupils regular feedback, both orally and through accurate marking, and encourage pupils to respond to the feedback.			

TABLE 2.11 - STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN SALRUBRIC

Data Sheet Document Analysis Set A		
DOCUMENT (SR)	SAL RUBRIC – (Edwards 2017)	
ASSESSMENT IN CONTEXT: Assessment defined as assessment literacy – focus on summative assessment literacy. Rubric is the focus – not part of a standards document - Two parts 1. Knowledge of assessment and 2. Understanding the context of assessment - Thus two tables in this document - 5 levels in the rubric, Novice, Advanced beginner, Competent; Proficient, Expert - Only the first three are included		
a. Knowledge of assessment		
CRITERIA Level 1 Novice	Level 2: Advanced beginner	Level 3: Competent
<p>1. Ability to describe assessment - can describe assessment in very broad terms based on own experience</p> <p>2. Knowledge of purposes of summative assessment - can describe assessment purposes and their effects and uses in a more integrated way, understanding that teachers' ethical decision-making is required</p> <p>3. Knowledge of what to assess - considers assessment as a generic activity and does not yet link assessment to the specifics of what has been taught</p> <p>4. Knowledge of assessment strategies and design - describes generic forms of assessment</p> <p>5. Knowledge of assessment interpretation - considers the use of a marking scheme directly to give a grade</p>	<p>can describe summative assessment, formative assessment, diagnostic assessment and their purposes using simple descriptions</p>	<p>can describe assessment purposes and their effects and uses in a more integrated way, understanding that teachers' ethical decision-making is required</p>
	<p>considers specific purpose/s for summative assessment such as accountability, qualifications, schools uses or formative functions</p>	<p>considers a range of specific purposes for summative assessment including reporting progress, formative uses, qualifications, school uses. understands that the same assessment task can serve a range of purposes</p>
	<p>considers that some subject knowledge is important to assess or that what is taught needs to be assessed. understands that NCEA provides levels that must be assessed against, and that NCEA standards provide specific assessment criteria</p>	<p>considers specific subject knowledge and skills that are important to assess, and is comfortable in critiquing assessments for this content. Links assessment to what has been taught. considers the importance of linking assessment to standards criteria</p>
	<p>considers assessment types and uses prepared materials to assess students. considers the need to use own ideas and a range of task types but is not yet confident designing own tasks</p>	<p>considers the need for assessment tasks to match specific learning objectives (SLO's), and considers the need to adjust/adapt materials to suit context and students. considers reliability and validity in task construction</p>
	<p>considers importance of using marking scheme accurately and making judgements based on this</p>	<p>considers importance of using marking scheme accurately and making judgements based on interpretation of evidence</p>

b. Understanding the context of assessment		
CRITERIA Level 1 Novice	Level 2: Advanced beginner	Level 3: Competent
6. Understanding NCEA assessment: - <u>understands</u> basics of NCEA with- out knowledge of particular standards, or teachers' specific roles in NCEA assessment	considers and uses pre-written assessments tasks for NCEA standards but not comfortable in writing own tasks. Has some confidence in marking and moderation, but still needs guidance	considers the need for alignment between teaching, NCEA standards and assessment tasks, and understands the marking and moderation of NCEA tasks. Adjusts/adapts assessment tasks to suit class/students
7. Preparing students for standards-based assessment - does not <u>consider</u> the teachers' role in developing students' assessment literacy or preparing students for assessment tasks	considers the needs students have to understand assessment processes and procedures. considers sharing assessment criteria with students	considers the teacher's role in preparing students for assessment. considers sharing assessment criteria with students, using practice tasks, marking these and providing feedback
8. Using summative assessments formatively - <u>taking action</u> as a result of summative assessment is not considered	considers teachers can learn from NCEA summative assessment in general terms, and that action may result	considers NCEA summative assessment evidence as an important source of information for teachers, for feedback on their teaching, for feed forward for further teaching, planning
c. Recognising the impact of assessment		
9. Understanding assessment consequences - does not <u>consider</u> that assessment really affects people or has consequences for them	considers the effects of assessment on students (e.g. emotional, motivational), or that assessment has effects for teachers	considers effects of assessment on students and uses them to students' advantage /mitigates harm, and considers the effects of summative assessment results on teachers and schools.
10 Fairness - <u>considers</u> that fairness means treating all students identically	considers fairness as an important issue in assessment (or the assessment system), but does not feel able to adapt assessment materials for individuals. considers it is more important that all students are treated the same or did not mention need for differentiation in assessment	considers fairness when assessing students. Considers the need to identify ways that would enable students to provide evidence of their learning. Willing to investigate different modes to assess students against the same SLO standards, but with a limited range of skills

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>prepares</u> all learners for the demands of particular assessment formats and makes appropriate accommodations in assessment or testing, especially for learners with disabilities and language learning needs - continually <u>seeks</u> appropriate ways to employ technology to support assessment practice both to engage learners more fully and to assess and address learner needs
<p>Critical dispositions</p> <p>The teacher is committed to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>engaging</u> learners actively in assessment processes and to develop each learner's capacity to review and communicate about their own progress and learning - <u>aligning</u> instruction and assessment with learning goals - <u>providing</u> timely and effective descriptive feedback to learners on their progress. - <u>using</u> multiple types of assessment processes to support, verify, and document learning. - <u>making</u> accommodations in assessment and testing, especially for learners with disabilities and language learning needs - <u>ethical</u> use of various assessments and assessment data to identify learner strengths and needs to promote learner growth.

TABLE 2.12.2 USA2 - Progression of Standard 6: Assessment

Standard#6: Assessment reads as follows: *The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision making.*

1. The teacher uses, designs or adapts multiple methods of assessment to document, monitor, and support learner progress appropriate for learning goals and objectives.

1	2	3
<p>The teacher <u>uses, designs or adapts</u> a variety of classroom formative assessments, matching the method with the type of learning objective.</p> <p>The teacher <u>uses</u> data from multiple types of assessments to draw conclusions about learner progress toward learning objectives that lead to standards and uses this analysis to guide instruction to meet learner needs. S/he keeps digital and/or other records to support his/her analysis and reporting of learner progress.</p> <p>The teacher <u>participates</u> in collegial conversations to improve individual and collective instructional practice</p>	<p>And...</p> <p>The teacher provides learners with multiple ways to demonstrate performance using contemporary tools and resources</p> <p>The teacher uses data to guide the design of differentiated individual learning experiences and assessments</p> <p>The teacher collaborates with colleagues to analyse performance on formative and summative assessments across groups of learners and engages in joint development of strategies for</p>	<p>And...</p> <p>The teacher uses formative classroom assessments to maximise the development of knowledge, critical thinking, and problem solving skills embedded in learning objectives</p> <p>The teacher works individually, and with colleagues, to gather additional data needed to better understand what is affecting learner progress and to advocate the necessary change. S/he works with colleagues to analyse progress against standards</p>

<p><i>based on formative and summative assessment data</i></p>	<p><i>improving instruction and support to meet standards</i></p>	<p><i>and expand the range of supports for learners with varied learning needs</i></p> <p><i>The teacher collaborates with others to use summative assessment information to evaluate the effect of the curriculum and instruction on the learner</i></p>
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Shift to increased ability to ... Use assessment flexibly to expand and deepen understanding of learner performance and determine best supports for continued learner growth.... and also to align assessment techniques to information needed to maximise individual student learning and improve school curriculum and instruction.

Source CCSSO (2013)

**TABLE 2.13 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN THE USA (Massachusetts Standards – Assessor)
(Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, (DESE, 2019)**

DOCUMENT (USA3)

Uses a variety of informal and formal methods of assessments to measure student learning, growth, and understanding to develop differentiated and enhanced learning experiences and improve future instruction.

Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement Proficient Exemplary I-B-1. Variety of Assessment Methods

Criteria	Unsatisfactory	Needs improvement
<i>Assessment - Variety of assessment methods</i>	<i>Administers only the assessments required by the school and/or measures only point-in-time student achievement.</i>	<i>May administer some informal and/or formal assessments to measure student learning but rarely measures student progress toward achieving state/local standards.</i>
<i>Assessment - Adjustment to practice</i>	<i>Makes few adjustments to practice based on formal and informal assessments.</i>	<i>May analyze some assessment results but only occasionally adjusts practice or modifies future instruction based on the findings.</i>
<i>Analysis – analysis & conclusions</i>	<i>Does not <u>draw</u> conclusions from student data beyond completing minimal requirements such as grading for report cards.</i>	<i>Draws conclusions from a limited analysis of student data to inform student grading and promotion decisions.</i>
<i>Sharing Conclusions With Colleagues</i>	<i>Rarely <u>shares</u> with colleagues conclusions about student progress and/or rarely seeks feedback.</i>	<i>Only occasionally shares with colleagues conclusions about student progress and/or only occasionally seeks feedback from them about practices that will support improved student learning.</i>
<i>Sharing Conclusions With Students</i>	<i>Provides little or no feedback to students about their performance except through grades or report of task completion, or provides inappropriate feedback that does not support students to improve their performance.</i>	<i>Provides some feedback to students about performance beyond grades but rarely shares strategies or solicits feedback from students on how to improve their performance toward objectives.</i>

TABLE 2.14 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA IN THE USA - Continuum of Teaching Practice (CSTP) DOCUMENT (USA1)

This table contains an excerpt from the Continuum of Teaching Practice (California Department of Education, Commission on Teacher Credentialing and New Teacher Centre, 2016), namely **Standard CSTP 5: Assessing Students for Learning**. NB. Only the first three of 5 levels of progression are included as the study is focused on the competence of student, beginner and experienced teachers.

Element	Emerging	Exploring	Applying
<p>5.1 <u>Applying knowledge of the purposes, characteristics, and uses of different types of assessments</u></p>	<p><i>Is aware of the purposes and characteristics of formative and summative assessments.</i></p>	<p><i>Explores the use of different types of pre-assessment, formative and summative assessments.</i></p> <p><i>Begins to identify specific characteristics of assessments that yield different types of information about student preparedness, progress, and proficiency.</i></p>	<p><i>Decides on the purpose for assessment and skills to be assessed to select appropriately matched pre-, formative, and summative assessments.</i></p> <p><i>Selects assessments based on a clear understanding of the purposes and characteristics of assessments to support student learning.</i></p>
<p>5.2 <u>Collecting and analysing assessment data from a variety of sources to inform instruction</u></p>	<p><i>Uses data from required assessments to assess student learning.</i></p> <p><i>Follows required processes for data analysis and draws conclusions about student learning.</i></p>	<p><i>Explores collecting additional data using supplemental assessments.</i></p> <p><i>Makes adjustments in planning for single lessons or sequence of lessons based on analysis of assessment data.</i></p>	<p><i>Collects a variety of formal and informal assessment data on student learning.</i></p> <p><i>Uses analysis of a variety of data to inform planning and differentiation of instruction.</i></p>
<p>5.3 <u>Reviewing data, both individually and with colleagues, to monitor student learning</u></p>	<p><i>Reviews and monitors available assessment data as required by site and district processes.</i></p>	<p><i>Reviews and monitors additional assessment data individually and with colleagues and identifies learning needs of individual students.</i></p>	<p><i>Reviews and monitors a variety of data on student learning individually and with colleagues to identify trends and patterns among groups of students.</i></p>
<p>5.4 <u>Using assessment data to establish learning goals and to plan, differentiate, and modify instruction</u></p>	<p><i>Uses data from assessments provided by site and district to set learning goals for the class.</i></p> <p><i>Plans instruction using available curriculum guidelines.</i></p>	<p><i>Uses data from available assessments to establish content-based learning goals for class and individual students in single lessons or sequence of lessons.</i></p> <p><i>Plans adjustments in instruction to address</i></p>	<p><i>Uses a variety of assessment data to set student learning goals for content and academic language.</i></p> <p><i>Plans differentiated lessons and modifications to instruction to meet</i></p>

		<i>learning needs of individual students.</i>	<i>students' diverse learning needs.</i>
5.5 <i>Involving all students in self-assessment, goal setting*, and monitoring progress</i>	<i>Informs students about lesson objectives, outcomes, and summative assessment results. Recognizes the need for individual learning goals.</i> <i>Monitors progress using available tools for recording.</i>	<i>Begins to encourage students to establish learning goals through single lessons or sequence of lessons that include goal setting exercises.</i> <i>Provides students with opportunities in single lessons or sequence of lessons to monitor their own progress toward class or individual goals.</i>	<i>Models and scaffolds student self-assessment and goal setting processes for learning content and academic language development.</i> <i>Guides students to monitor and reflect on progress on a regular basis.</i>
5.6 <i>Using available technologies to assist in assessment, analysis and communication of student learning</i>	<i>Uses available technology to record assessments, determine proficiency levels, and make required communications about student learning.</i>	<i>Explores use of additional technologies to implement individual assessments, record results, and communicate with administration, colleagues, and families about student learning.</i>	<i>Uses technology to design and implement assessments, record and analyse results, and communicate about student learning with administration, colleagues, families, and students. Ensures that communications are received by those who lack access to technology.</i>
5.7 <i>Using assessment information to share timely and comprehensible feedback with students and their families</i>	<i>Provides students with feedback through assessed work and required summative assessments.</i> <i>Notifies families of student proficiencies, challenges, and behaviour issues through school mandated procedures</i>	<i>Provides students with additional feedback based on formative assessments from single lessons or sequence of lessons. Seeks to provide feedback in ways that students understand.</i> <i>Communicates with families about student progress, strengths, and needs at reporting periods. Contacts families as needs arise regarding struggling students or behavioural issues.</i>	<i>Provides students with clear and timely information about strengths, needs, and strategies for improving academic achievement.</i> <i>Provides opportunities for comprehensible and timely two-way communications with families to share student assessments, progress, raise issues and/or concerns, and guide family support.</i>

The CSTP document is most useful as it provides a detailed description of assessor competence in the list of seven elements in the first column. The progression stages are also useful. The researcher regarded the third level (Applying) as descriptive of what may be expected of an experienced and competent teacher. The second level of competence (Exploring) was interpreted as what may be expected of a beginner teacher and descriptions at Emerging level as what may be expected of a student teacher.

TABLE 2.16 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA USED BY UNISA (MODULE PLANNING GRID)

DOCUMENT: (UN2)

This table contains an excerpt from the UNISA Module Planning Grid, a working document used by the UNISA College of Education in planning modules for qualifications, namely the **Specific outcomes and associated assessment criteria related to the assessment theory module AED3701 Assessment in Education**. NB. Only the specific outcomes and ac's indicated in the document are presented here as these describe the foundational competence of student teachers in detail focused on what may be realistically achieved in a distance education context at the UNISA College of Education.

Specific Outcomes and criteria of the Theory Module (AED3701) as per Module Planning Document

Specific Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
<p>Outcome 1: <u>Discuss, compare and evaluate key ideas and debates on assessment planning, practice and moderation in the school curriculum.</u></p>	<p>AC 1 <i>Discussions and evaluations of assessment planning, practice and moderation display a consideration for historical and current perspectives.</i></p> <p>AC 2 <i>Discussions of assessment planning, practice and moderation take due cognisance of the diversity that exists in sites of practice.</i></p> <p>AC 3 <i>Evaluations of assessment planning, practice and moderation take due cognisance of the diversity that exists in sites of practice.</i></p> <p>AC 4 <i>Comparisons and evaluations of assessment planning, practice and moderation show a consideration for the conventions of academic debate including the ability to analyse published research reports and articles in this area.</i></p>
<p>Outcome 2: <u>Plan, implement, review and justify a variety of assessment strategies, instruments and processes.</u></p>	<p>AC 1 <i>Discussions and analyses of assessment planning, practice and review are based on a sound understanding of diverse learning and teaching needs and the level of readiness of different stakeholders in diverse contexts of practice.</i></p> <p>AC 2 <i>Discussions on the best ways of engaging with, and improving, aspects of assessment planning, practice and review take due cognisance of the diversity that exists in sites of practice.</i></p> <p>AC 3 <i>Evaluations of ways of engaging with, and improving, aspects of assessment planning, practice and review take due cognisance of the diversity that exists in sites of practice.</i></p> <p>AC 4 <i>Roles assumed and positions taken with, regard to ways of engaging with and improving aspects of assessment planning, practice and review are justified by appropriate reference to theory, policy, observed practice and personal experience and demonstrate the ability to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Select, adapt and/or design assessment tasks and strategies appropriate to the specialisation and a range of learning contexts;</i> ➤ <i>Explain the link between the method of assessment, the overall assessment purpose and the learning intentions being assessed;</i> ➤ <i>Design and administer assessment tasks using clear language and instructions;</i> ➤ <i>Collect, from a variety of sources, sufficient confirming evidence of learner competence;</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use a range of assessment strategies to accommodate differences in learning style, pace and context; ➤ Evaluate own and others' assessment strategies in terms of their validity, fairness, reliability and sensitivity to gender, culture, language and barriers to learning and development; ➤ Assess and record systematically the progress of individual learners; ➤ Use assessment results to provide feedback in educationally constructive ways on learner progress and achievement; ➤ Interpret and use assessment results to inform future teaching, learning and assessment strategies; ➤ Justify choice and design of assessment strategies, methods and procedures in ways which show knowledge and understanding of the assumptions that underlie a range of assessment approaches and their particular strengths and weaknesses in relation to age and subject being assessed.
<p>Outcome 3: <u>Identify and justify, varied strategies for engaging with aspects of assessment planning, practice and review in ways that are appropriate for different purposes and contexts.</u></p>	<p>AC 1 Discussions and evaluation of different strategies for engagement display a consideration for historical and current perspectives as well as a deep understanding of context.</p> <p>AC 2 Discussions of the efficacy of different strategies for engagement take due cognisance of the diversity that exists in sites of practice and the evolving nature of policy and practice.</p> <p>AC 3 Evaluations of the efficacy of different strategies for engagement take due cognisance of the diversity that exists in sites of practice and the evolving nature of policy and practice.</p> <p>AC 4 Selections of different strategies for engagement are justified by appropriate reference to theory, policy, observed practice and personal experience.</p>

<p>Outcome 4: <u>Use innovative ways to contribute to the development of aspects of assessment planning, practice and review in ways that are informed by contextual realities, the nature of multi-cultural schools and classrooms, historical legacies, social diversity, and the integration of indigenous knowledge.</u></p>	<p>AC 1 Discussions and evaluation of aspects of assessment planning, practice and review display a consideration for historical and current social perspectives and the need to engage in collaborative meaning-making.</p> <p>AC 2 Discussions of aspects of assessment planning, practice and review take due cognisance of the diversity that exists in sites of practice, stakeholder preparedness and the evolving nature of policy and practice.</p> <p>AC 3 Evaluations of aspects of assessment planning, practice and review take due cognisance of the diversity that exists in sites of practice and the evolving nature of policy and practice.</p> <p>AC 4 Selections of different strategies for positive engagement are justified by appropriate reference to theory, including indigenous knowledge, observed practice and personal experience.</p>
<p>Outcome 5: <u>Apply assessment planning, practice and review in the specific subjects they are going to teach by indicating how they are going to put assessment theory into practice</u></p>	<p>AC 1 Applications of knowledge on assessment planning, practice and review to design various assessments for their subjects.</p> <p>AC 2 Reflection on assessment designs by critically considering their decisions on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Who is going to do the assessment (teacher, self-assessment, peer assessment) and why? ➤ Where, when and how will assessment(s) take place (during lesson, after lesson, at home)?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>How did you take into account individual learning styles, aptitudes and interests?</i> ➤ <i>Are local values, content and standards reflected in your assessment(s) – ie is it authentic?</i> ➤ <i>How did you make sure that assessment is an integral ongoing part of the learning process (where does it fit into your assessment plan and type of assessment – informal, formal assessment task or practical assessment task such as test, research project, etc.)?</i> ➤ <i>Which assessment products and/or activities did you require (written work, oral, presentation, portfolio, etc.) and why?</i> ➤ <i>How did you make sure that assessment(s) are accurate, objective, valid, fair, manageable and time efficient?</i> ➤ <i>How did you make sure that assessment(s) are appropriate to the developmental level of the learners?</i> ➤ <i>How did you make sure that assessment(s) are bias free and sensitive to gender, race, cultural background and abilities?</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">Outcome 6:</p> <p><i>Undertake assessment research in the specific subjects they are going to teach to develop a better understanding of assessment that will underpin the assessment decisions they have to take when designing assessments.</i></p>	<p>AC 1 <i>A problematic area of assessment that is a remaining learning need is identified by the student</i></p> <p>AC 2 <i>As self-directed learner, the student teacher undertakes research through the use of a variety of relevant sources.</i></p> <p>AC 3 <i>Data are analysed, synthesised and evaluated.</i></p> <p>AC 4 <i>Decisions are made on contested knowledge areas of assessment such as the best way to assess a specific subject or a section of it.</i></p> <p>AC 5 <i>Students motivate their choice or solution based on their exposure to theory, practice and other sources of information.</i></p>
<p>Source: UNISA (n.d.(ii))</p>	

Finding 13 Documents describe assessment in unique yet similar ways

TABLE 3 - DESCRIPTIONS OF ASSESSMENT

Documents were analysed in terms of *the way competence as an assessor is described* in general terms – summarised in the table below:

Standards in Ghana	"As assessor the teacher": followed by the criteria in the document.
Standards in New Zealand	Integrated in several existing standards, either as part of the standard or as part of the elaboration. Assessment ability is not described in a clearly formulated description.
Standards in the UK	Make accurate and productive use of assessment
Standards in SA (SACE)	Teaching involves monitoring and assessing learning.
Standards in Germany	Teachers diagnose pupils' prerequisites for learning and learning processes; they support individual pupils and counsel learners and their parents; and teachers assess pupils' learning outcomes by means of transparent evaluation criteria Competence domain - 'Innovation'
Standards in California	Assessing student learning - Teacher practice expectation 5 Assessing Student Learning
Standards in Australia	Standard 5: Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning
Standards by UNISA	Assess learners in reliable and varied ways and use the results of assessment to improve teaching and learning. (Disciplinary and Pedagogical learning)
Standards in SA IQMS	The educator demonstrates competence in monitoring and assessing learner progress and achievement. Question: Is assessment used in order to promote teaching and learning?
Standards in Japan	Descriptors related to assessment of learning, as well as assessment in general practice
Standards in UK (2)	Make accurate and productive use of assessment
Standards in SALRubric	Assessment defined as assessment literacy – focus on summative assessment literacy.
USA2 (USA)	The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision-making
Massachusetts (USA)	Uses a variety of informal and formal methods of assessments to measure student learning, growth, and understanding to develop differentiated and enhanced learning experiences and improve future instruction.

Some documents of this nature allow the set of criteria to describe competence as an assessor in terms of standards expected. (Refer to Ghana, South Africa (SACE), Japan, and California), while others give brief descriptions, verbatim as one of the standards in the list of teacher competencies. (Refer to UK, Australia, and South Africa (IQMS)). Only UNISA and USA2 provide definitions that are the introductory statements of these two documents. The document describing standards in Germany does the same, but within the criteria themselves, and not as an introductory statement. All documents have one common denominator. The criteria provided describe the way competence as assessors is understood in a more detailed way, beyond the notion that it is one of several competencies teachers should have. The voices of the authors of these documents proclaim the following qualities of competence as an assessor in educational context – *competence as an assessor includes monitoring; assessment should be accurate, reliable and productive; it is part of, and should promote teaching and learning; it is understood as literacy and as competence; involves multiple and varied methods, it also involves learners in their own growth, and guides teachers' and learners' decision-making.*

These qualities describing assessment correspond closely with the framework for understanding assessment in educational context in Chapter 2, Section 2.7)

Finding 14 Levels of competence and progression of competence are indicated in diverse ways

TABLE 4 - LEVELS OF COMPETENCE

An analysis of the way documents reflect *levels of competence*

	Number of levels	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	
Standards in Ghana	ONE					
Standards in New Zealand	ONE					
Standards in SA (SACE)	ONE					
Standards in Germany	ONE					
UNISA Planning Grid	ONE					
Standards in California	ONE	Beginning teacher				
Standards in Australia	FOUR	Graduate	Proficient	Highly accomplished	Lead	
Standards by UNISA	FOUR	Still developing	Satisfactory Meets minimum requirements	Transcend minimum requirements	Exemplary performance	
Standards in SA IQMS	FOUR	Unacceptable	Satisfy minimum requirements	Good	Outstanding	
Standards in Japan	FOUR	Student teacher	Apprentice teacher	Practicing teacher	Veteran teacher	
Standards in UK	THREE	Developing – Standard met	Secure	Excellent	- -	
Standards in SALRubric	FIVE	Novice	Advanced beginner	Competent	Proficient	Expert
USA2 (USA)	THREE	The three levels are unlabelled, illustrating that competence is continually developing and abilities per level are accumulated rather than categorised in three distinct levels – the word ‘and...’ is inserted at the beginning of the second and third levels to indicate this understanding. Nonetheless three levels are described in terms of what teachers do – no references to what is expected of student teachers are provided.				
Massachusetts	FOUR	Unsatisfactory	Needs improvement	Proficient	Exemplary	

The table above reflects the voices of the authors of the documents analysed, with regard to levels of competence as an assessor, a notion most relevant to this study. Only four documents (UNISA, IQMS, Japan and SALRubric) include references to levels of competence at student teacher level, or understood as at a level lower than that of a beginner teacher. The authors providing different levels in their documents, use

frameworks other than “*student teacher – beginner teacher, - experienced teacher, and - expert teacher*”, to describe and link the levels. This means that inferences have to be made with regard to what is expected of student teachers, in terms of their distinctions, or more relevant data has to be obtained during interviews with information rich participants. All other documents either do not indicate levels, or regard the first level as that of a recently graduated beginner teacher. In the context of this study, these two levels, that of student teacher and that of beginner teacher, are most relevant. The most comprehensive document, namely that provided by USA2, is useful in this study, because a deep, thick and rich description of teacher competence, including assessor competence is provided, and allows for well justified positions with regard to the development of competence as an assessor, including rich descriptions of practical, knowledge and value (dispositions) components of competence. Significant, in the USA2 document, is the notion that assessment “precedes” instructional planning, being competence 5, while instructional planning is competence 6, suggesting that instructional planning should be informed by assessment results. The document by California describes the competence of beginner teachers as assessors in the opinion of the authors. A deeper analysis of the expectations in the document, however, in the opinion of this author represent a “wish-list” rather than a realistic set of standards or expectations.

Finding 15 *The number of criteria used to describe assessor competence as well as the format vary considerably*

TABLE 5 – THE NUMBER OF CRITERIA AND SUMMARY OF CRITERIA IN LISTS

The number of criteria relevant to competence as assessor as provided in the document analysed, is indicated in the table.

Document	Number	Description of the format of describing assessor competence
Standards in Ghana	6	Concise statements only. E.g. Integrates a variety of assessment modes; Listens to learners and gives constructive feedback; and Keeps accurate records....
Standards in New Zealand	3	Broad categories within which the role of assessment is indicated, namely: Design for learning; Teaching; and Professional relationships
Standards in the UK	2	Know and understand how to assess the relevant subject and curriculum areas, including statutory assessment requirements; and make use of formative and summative assessment to secure pupils' progress
Standards in SA (SACE)	4	Criteria are related to using assessment tasks, constructive feedback, analysing assessment data and keeping accurate records
Standards in Germany	9	These criteria are related to three domains. Teachers diagnose pupils' prerequisites for learning and learning processes; they support individual pupils and counsel learners and their parents; and they assess learners using transparent criteria.
Standards in California	8	Well formulated criteria or statements describing “teacher practice expectations”, e.g. TPE 1 - Apply knowledge of the purposes, characteristics, and appropriate uses of different types of assessments (e.g., diagnostic, informal, formal, progress-monitoring, formative, summative, and performance) to design and administer classroom assessments, including use of scoring rubrics.
Standards in Australia	5	Five focus areas, namely, assess learning; provide feedback; make consistent judgements; interpret data; and report on achievements
Standards by UNISA	2	These are: Use knowledge of assessment policies and guidelines to develop assessment strategies suitable to their phase(s) and subject(s); and giving meaningful assessment feedback.

Standards in SA IQMS	4	<i>These are: Feedback to learners, Knowledge of assessment techniques, Application of techniques, and Record keeping</i>
Standards in Japan	8	These criteria cover several areas such as design assessments, evaluation, etc., listed in a series of "I can..." – statements – student teachers and teachers may use these to reflect on their competence.
Standards in UK (2)	4	These include - know and understand how to assess; use of formative and summative assessment; use relevant data to monitor progress, set targets, and plan subsequent lessons; and give regular feedback
Standards in SALRubric	10	Detailed descriptions related to knowledge of assessment (5), understanding the context of assessment (3) and recognising the impact of assessment (2)
USA2 (USA)	9	Carefully formulated and detailed descriptions, related to using, designing & adapting a variety of assessment methods (3), engaging learners (2), and implementing assessment in an ethical manner (4)
Massachusetts	5	Variety of assessments; Adjustments to practice; Analysis and conclusions; Sharing conclusions with colleagues; and sharing conclusions with learners
CSTP Standards	7	Types of assessment; Inform instruction; Monitor learner learning; Modify instruction; Involving learners in self-assessment; Use technology; and provide feedback to learners.
UNISA Module grid	6	Specific outcome statements describing the foundational competence of student assessors
Broad themes identified in this analysis are – use a variety of assessment methods, use assessment for planning teaching and learning, providing feedback, and keeping record of assessment results. The range of criteria varies between 2 and 10 criteria; some sets are categorised, others not. Strong congruence with the framework for understanding assessment in Chapter 2, section 2.7 was expected and noted.		

The sets of criteria contained in the documents were analysed to find out how assessment is described in terms of such criteria so that these descriptions can be used in describing criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors specifically. This was done by printing out all documents and using high-lighters, to identify common criteria in the documents. The analysis resulted in sets of criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers and or beginning teachers. To this end, criteria in the documents that did not show progression, were regarded as criteria relevant to beginner and advanced beginner teachers. Criteria in documents that do show progression, were carefully analysed and placed in the list. All criteria with similar meaning were coded by means of high-lighter colour codes. At first analysis, the list was not categorised. Terminology and formulation in the documents were used verbatim, collating the authors' views rather than allowing the researcher's own views to unduly influence the analysis.

Finding 16 The standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors revealed three themes congruent with SAQA's notion of foundational, practical and reflexive competencies, and eight themes or standards describing competence as assessors as an applied competence.

TABLES 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 - FIRST SYNTHESIS - STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING COMPETENCE AS ASSESSORS

The researcher's first synthesis of standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context is presented here in three tables. The first synthesised standards and criteria related to the three domains, foundational, practical and reflexive competencies. The second synthesised eight applied competencies or standards describing assessor competence as studied in the QDA done in this study. The third indicates references in documents to the eight standards revealed in the analyses to reflect contributions from documents to this finding.

Table 6.1 below presents the first synthesis of criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers and beginner teachers as revealed in selected documents in terms of foundational, practical and reflexive competencies. The researcher used the two conceptual frameworks in Chapter 2, namely that for understanding competence and that for assessment as point of departure and identified three major themes describing the competence as assessor in general theoretical terms: Theme A – knowledge and understanding or foundational competence; Theme B practical competence refers to what competent teachers do, and Theme C values, attitudes and dispositions competent teachers hold and exemplify. Table Y6.1 illustrates this understanding. The applied competence where such knowledge, practical abilities and values, attitudes and dispositions are applied, was described in terms of eight themes emerging from documents analysed. (Refer to the second part of the analysis (Themes 1 – 8) in this regard, presented in Table I6.2).

The analysis is presented in a series of tables with the following sub-headings in columns. In the first column an aspect of competence as an assessor is indicated by means of a clear description, taken verbatim from one of the documents analysed, describing experienced teacher competence. In the second column criteria emerging from documents that correspond with what may be expected of beginner teachers, are indicated. In the third column criteria emerging from documents that corresponds with what may be expected of student teachers, are indicated. The researcher placed all descriptions from documents with no progressions in the beginner teacher column, in spite of the fact that these descriptions in many cases describe the ability of an experienced teacher rather than that of a beginner or student teacher. It is important to note that only one document provided detailed descriptions of foundational, practical and reflexive competencies, albeit using different terminology, namely the USA2 standards, whereas the SALRubric gave detailed descriptions of the knowledge and understanding of competent assessors of summative assessments in this regard. All 15 documents provided descriptions of several aspects of teachers' competence as assessor

TABLE 6.1 FOUNDATIONAL, PRACTICAL, AND REFLEXIVE COMPETENCES in documents analysed

Foundational Competences of the teacher as assessor (Theme A)

Ability described in clear terms – Experienced teacher	Beginner teacher competence	Student teacher competence
<p>Essential knowledge (USA2) (Theme A) The teacher-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understands the differences between formative and summative assessment approaches and knows how and when to use each. 2. Understands the range of types and multiple purposes of assessment and knows how to design, adapt or select appropriate assessment to address specific learning goals and individual differences, and to minimize sources of bias. 3. Knows how to analyse assessment data to understand patterns and gaps in learning, to guide planning and instruction, and to provide meaningful feedback to all learners 4. Knows when and how to engage learners in analysing their own assessment results and in helping to set goals for own learning. 5. Understands the positive impact of effective descriptive feedback for learners and knows a variety of strategies for communicating this feedback. 6. Knows when and how to report learner progress against standards 7. Understands how to prepare learners for assessments and how to make accommodations in assessment and teaching conditions, especially for learners with disabilities and language learning needs. 	<p>SAL Rubric – L2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can describe summative assessment, formative assessment, diagnostic assessment and their purposes using simple descriptions 2. Considers specific purpose/s for summative assessment such as accountability, qualifications, school uses or formative functions 3. Considers that some subject knowledge is important to assess or that what is taught needs to be assessed. understands that New Zealand Curriculum provides levels that must be assessed against, and that NCEA standards provide specific assessment criteria 4. Considers assessment types and uses prepared materials to assess students. considers the need to use own ideas and a range of task types, but is not yet confident in designing own tasks 5. considers importance of using marking schemes accurately and making judgements based on these 	<p>SAL Rubric L1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to describe assessment- can describe assessment in broad terms based on own experience 2. Knowledge of purposes of summative assessment - can describe assessment purposes and their effects and uses in a more integrated way, understanding that teachers' ethical decision-making is required 3. Knowledge of what to assess - considers assessment as a generic activity and does not yet link assessment to the specifics of what has been taught 4. Knowledge of assessment strategies and design - describes generic forms of assessment 5. Knowledge of assessment interpretation - considers the use of a marking scheme directly to give a grade

Practical competencies of the teacher as assessor (Theme B)

Ability described in clear terms – Experienced teacher	Beginner teacher competence	Student teacher competence
<p>Performances (USA2) (Theme B)</p> <p>The teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Balances the use of formative and summative assessments as appropriate to support, verify, and document learning</i> - <i>Designs assessments that match learning objectives with assessment methods and minimizes sources of bias that can distort assessment results</i> - <i>Engages learners in understanding and identifying quality work and provides them with effective descriptive feedback to guide their progress towards that work.</i> - <i>Engages learners in multiple ways of demonstrating knowledge and skill as part of the assessment process.</i> - <i>Models and structures processes that guide learners in examining their own thinking and learning as well as the performance of others.</i> - <i>Effectively uses multiple and appropriate types of assessment data to identify each learner’s learning needs and to develop differentiated learning experiences.</i> - <i>prepares all learners for the demands of particular assessment formats and makes appropriate accommodations in assessment or testing, especially for learners with disabilities and language learning needs</i> - <i>continually seeks appropriate ways to employ technology to support assessment practice both to engage learners more fully and to assess and address learner needs</i> 		

Reflexive Competencies of the teacher as assessor (Theme C)

Ability described in clear terms – Experienced teacher	Beginner teacher competence	Student teacher competence
<p>Critical dispositions (USA2) (Theme C)</p> <p>The teacher is committed to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Engaging learners actively in assessment processes and to develop each learner’s capacity to review and communicate about their own progress and learning</i> - <i>Aligning instruction and assessment with learning goals</i> - <i>Providing timely and effective descriptive feedback to learners on their progress.</i> - <i>Using multiple types of assessment processes to support, verify, and document learning.</i> - <i>Making accommodations in assessment and testing, especially for learners with disabilities and language learning needs</i> - <i>Ethical use of various assessments and assessment data to identify learner strengths and needs to promote learner growth.</i> 		

TABLE 6.2 *Applied competence of the teacher as assessor (Themes 1 – 8)*

As a guide to identify themes, the researcher used the list of abilities describing applied competence derived from literature in Chapter 2 (Table 2.2, Section 2.5, and Figure 2.7) as a frame of reference, expecting the documents analysed in this QDA to reflect similar abilities as elements of assessor competence. The abilities in the framework correspond with the elements (Themes 1 – 8) as indicated in Table 6.2. The framework abilities are coded and numbered for reference purposes. The coded number/s of the appropriate ability/abilities are given in brackets in the "Key Phrase" column to show congruence between what was found in literature overviews and in QDA related to standards and criteria.

- F1 Select procedures, implement activities, monitor performances, assess abilities, analyse errors.
- F2 Use assessment tasks that give learners opportunities to show what they have learnt, and what they can do with that knowledge.
- F3 Guide one's own and learners' decision-making using assessment data.
- F4 Listen to learners and give feedback.
- F5 Identify and remediate learners' difficulties identified during assessment

The table describes the competence of teachers as assessors at three levels using the data from the QDA conducted. In the first column, using a key phrase in every instance, the themes emerging from the QDA are indicated. The researcher selected the description of one or two of the documents to indicate the key phrase and **standard. These describe teacher competence as assessors at experienced teacher level as the standard required. In the second column competence at beginner teacher level is presented in lists of criteria which authors of the documents used to describe the theme or standard in detail and at beginner teacher level. In the third column criteria or descriptions used to describe student teacher competence are presented.** The researcher had to make several inferences in this regard because most documents do not use "student teacher" as a level in their descriptions. Verbatim copies of phrases, criteria, and descriptions were included.

<p>Key phrase (Standard) (Experienced teacher)</p>	<p>Criterion as formulated by authors of documents at acceptable / minimum requirement level (Beginner teacher)</p>	<p>Criterion as formulated by author of document at lower level of competence (Student teacher)</p>
<p>(Theme 1) and (F1 and F2)</p> <p>Use a variety of assessment methods</p> <p>Apply knowledge of the purposes, characteristics, and use of different types of assessments (USA1)</p>	<p>USA2 – The teacher uses, designs or adapts multiple methods of assessment to document, monitor, and support learner progress appropriate for learning goals and objectives.</p> <p>UK - They have a secure understanding of the statutory assessment requirements for the subject/curriculum in the age phases they are preparing to teach and are able to make broadly accurate assessments against national benchmarks.</p> <p>Their planning is characterised by the use of a range of formative and summative assessment strategies, designed to support pupils in making progress. They deploy these strategies effectively in lessons, both to evaluate the impact of teaching on the progress of learners and as a basis for modifying their teaching and classroom practice when necessary.</p> <p>UN1 - L3 A variety of assessment techniques are used, allowing learners to demonstrate their abilities and assisting them to overcome learning barriers.</p> <p>UN1 - L2 - Develop, select and use informal and formal, diagnostic, formative and summative assessment strategies to assess student learning.</p> <p>USA1 - Apply knowledge of the purposes, characteristics, and appropriate uses of different types of assessments (e.g. diagnostic, informal, formal, progress-monitoring, formative, summative, and performance) to <u>design and administer</u> classroom assessments, including use of scoring rubrics.</p>	<p>UN1 – L2 Demonstrates basic understanding of different types of assessment. Tends to use the same one over and over.</p> <p>AUS – L1 - Demonstrate <u>understanding</u> of assessment strategies, including <i>informal and formal, diagnostic, formative and summative approaches</i> to assess student learning</p>

Key phrase (Standard) (Experienced teacher)	Criterion as formulated by authors of documents at acceptable / minimum requirement level (Beginner teacher)	Criterion as formulated by author of document at lower level of competence (Student teacher)
<p>(Theme2) and (F4) Provide feedback on assessments</p> <p>Using assessment information to share timely and comprehensible feedback with students and their families (US1)</p>	<p>USA3 – L2 Provides some feedback to students about performance beyond grades but rarely shares strategies or solicits feedback from students on how to improve their performance toward objectives. NZ – Ensures learners receive ongoing feedback and assessment information and supports them to use this information to guide further learning.</p> <p>UN1 - L2 – Some evidence of feedback</p> <p>SA1 - Teachers <u>provide</u> learners with constructive feedback that helps them understand how they can improve their learning.</p> <p>Germany - Give feedback and substantiate evaluation and assessment outcomes in addressee's language while providing perspectives for future learning.</p> <p>US2 – The teacher understands the impact of effective and descriptive feedback for learners and knows a variety of strategies for communicating this feedback. AND the teacher engages learners in understanding and identifying quality work and provides them with effective descriptive feedback to guide their progress toward that work. AND the teacher provides learners with criteria for the assignment to guide performance. Using these criteria, she points out strengths in performance and offers concrete suggestions to improve their work</p> <p>USA1 - <u>Use assessment information</u> in a timely manner to <u>assist</u> students and families in understanding student progress in meeting learning goals.</p> <p>NZ - Communicate clear and accurate assessment for learning and achievement information.</p>	<p>USA3 – L1. Provides little or no feedback to students about their performance except through grades or report of task completion, or provides inappropriate feedback that does not support students to improve their performance.</p> <p>UN1 – L1 No feedback to learners, or feedback is irregular and inconsistent</p>

Key phrase (Standard) (Experienced teacher)	Criterion as formulated by authors of documents at acceptable / minimum requirement level (Beginner teacher)	Criterion as formulated by author of document at lower level of competence (Student teacher)
<p>(Theme 3) and (F5)</p>	<p>AUS – L2 Use student assessment data to analyse and evaluate student understanding of subject/content, identifying interventions and modifying teaching practice.</p>	<p>AUS – L1 Demonstrate the capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practice.</p>

<p><i>Identifies and remediates learners' weaknesses and difficulties (GHA)</i></p> <p><i>(Theme 3) and (F5)</i></p>	<p><i>SA2 – L2 - Some evidence of corrective measures and remedial activity based on assessment results.</i></p> <p><i>USA3 – L2 Draws conclusions from a limited analysis of student data to inform student grading and promotion decisions.</i></p> <p><i>SA1 - Teachers <u>analyse</u> learner contributions, their questions and their errors as important data that shows what the learners do and do not yet understand to inform future planning.</i></p> <p><i>GER - ... recognise pupils' learning potentials, learning obstacles and learning progress.</i></p> <p><i>USA1 - <u>Involves</u> all students in self-assessment and reflection on their learning goals and progress and <u>provides students</u> with opportunities to revise or re-frame work based on assessment feedback.</i></p> <p><i>USA2 – The teacher effectively uses multiple and appropriate types of assessment data to identify each student's learning needs to develop differentiated learning experiences AND The teacher knows how to analyse data to understand patterns and gaps in learning, to guide planning and instruction, and to provide meaningful feedback to all learners.</i></p>	<p><i>SA2 – L1 - Assessment results do not influence teaching strategies.</i></p> <p><i>USA3 – L1 Does not draw conclusions from student data beyond completing minimal requirements such as grading for report cards.</i></p>
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<p>Key phrase (Standard) (Experienced teacher)</p>	<p>Criterion as formulated by authors of documents at acceptable / minimum requirement level (Beginner teacher)</p>	<p>Criterion as formulated by author of document at lower level of competence (Student teacher)</p>
<p><i>(Theme 4) and (F3)</i></p> <p><i>Keep meaningful records and report on learner achievement (SA2)</i></p>	<p><i>AUS – Demonstrates <u>understanding</u> of a range of strategies for reporting to students and parents/carers and the purpose of keeping accurate and reliable records of student achievement.</i></p> <p><i>SA2 – L1 - No evidence of records, or records are incomplete and irregular.</i></p> <p><i>UK - With guidance from experienced teachers, they monitor pupil progress and maintain accurate records, setting new targets for individuals and groups.</i></p> <p><i>USA2 – L1 – the teacher makes digital and / or other records of learner performances, so that s/he can monitor each learner's progress.</i></p>	<p><i>AUS - Reports clearly, accurately and respectfully to students and parents/ carers about student achievement, making use of accurate and reliable records.</i></p> <p><i>SA2 – L2 - Maintains essential records.</i></p> <p><i>UK - They maintain accurate records of pupils' progress and use these to set appropriately challenging targets.</i></p> <p><i>USA2 – L2 – The teacher makes digital and/or other records of learner performances available to learners so that they can monitor their progress</i></p>

		<p>and identify areas where they need additional practice and support.</p> <p>GHA– Keeps meaningful records</p> <p>SA1 - Teachers <u>keep</u> accurate records of assessments that track learner achievements and can report to stakeholders on the progress of learners</p>
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<p>Key phrase (Standard) (Experienced teacher)</p>	<p>Criterion as formulated by authors of documents at acceptable / minimum requirement level (Beginner teacher)</p>	<p>Criterion as formulated by author of document at lower level of competence (Student teacher)</p>
<p>(Theme 5) and (F1 and F2)</p> <p><u>Know and understand</u> how to assess the relevant subject and curriculum areas, including statutory assessment requirements (UK)</p> <p>(Theme 5) and (F1 and F2)</p>	<p>UK - They are able to assess pupils' attainment accurately against national benchmarks.</p> <p>SR – L2 - considers and uses pre-written assessments tasks for NCEA international standards but not comfortable in writing own tasks. Has some confidence in marking and moderation, but still needs guidance.</p> <p>UK - <u>Knows and understands</u> how to assess the relevant subject and curriculum areas, including statutory assessment requirements</p> <p>USA1 - <u>Uses assessment data</u>, including information from students' IEP, IFSP, ITP, and 504 plans, to establish learning goals and to plan, differentiate, make accommodations and/or modify instruction.</p> <p>NZ - Selects teaching approaches, resources, and learning and assessment activities based on a thorough knowledge of curriculum, content, pedagogy, progressions in learning and the learners.</p> <p>JAP – I can assign a valid institutional/national/international grading system in my assessment of a learner's performance</p>	<p>UK - L1 - They have a secure understanding of the statutory assessment requirements for the subject/curriculum in the age phases they are preparing to teach and are able to make broadly accurate assessments against national benchmarks.</p> <p>SR – L1 - Understanding NCEA assessment: - understands basics of NCEA with- out knowledge of particular standards, or teachers' specific roles in NCEA assessment</p>

Key phrase (Standard) (Experienced teacher)	Criterion as formulated by authors of documents at acceptable / minimum requirement level (Beginner teacher)	Criterion as formulated by author of document at lower level of competence (Student teacher)
<p>(Theme 6) and (F1 and F2)</p> <p>Make consistent, substantiated and comparable judgements (UK)</p>	<p>AUS – L2 Understands and participates in assessment moderation activities to support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning.</p> <p>GER – Graduates are familiar with different frames of reference [social, criterion-related and ipsative] in appraising pupils' achievement and apply them appropriately. AND know and make use of methods of internal and external evaluation for purposes of developing and ensuring instructional quality.</p> <p>GHA – Uses objective criterion-referencing to assess learners</p> <p>USA2 – The teacher engages in ethical practice of formal and informal implementing various kinds of assessments in the ways they are intended to be used and accurately interpreting the results.</p>	<p>AUS – L1 Demonstrates understanding of assessment moderation and its application to support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning.</p>

Key phrase (Standard) (Experienced teacher)	Criterion as formulated by authors of documents at acceptable / minimum requirement level (Beginner teacher)	Criterion as formulated by author of document at lower level of competence (Student teacher)
<p>(Theme 7) and (F3)</p> <p>Assessment data is used for adjustment to practice (USA2)</p>	<p>USA3 – L2 - May analyse some assessment results but only occasionally adjusts practice or modifies future instruction based on the findings.</p> <p>USA2 – Essential knowledge. - The teacher knows how to analyse assessment data to understand patterns and gaps in learning, to guide planning and instruction, and to provide meaningful feedback to all learners</p>	<p>USA3 – L1 Makes few adjustments to practice based on formal and informal assessments.</p>

<p align="center">Key phrase (Standard) (Experienced teacher)</p>	<p align="center">Criterion as formulated by authors of documents at acceptable / minimum requirement level (Beginner teacher)</p>	<p align="center">Criterion as formulated by author of document at lower level of competence (Student teacher)</p>
<p><i>(Theme 8) and (F1)</i></p> <p><i>Prepare learners for standards-based assessment (SR)</i></p> <p><i>The teacher prepares all learners for the demands of particular assessment formats and makes appropriate accommodations in assessment or testing, especially for learners with disabilities and language learning needs. (USA2)</i></p>	<p><i>SR – L2 - considers the needs students have to understand assessment processes and procedures. considers sharing assessment criteria with students</i></p>	<p><i>SAL Rubric – L1 - does not consider the teachers' role in developing students' assessment literacy or preparing students for assessment tasks</i></p>

Researcher's interpretation:

- a. The notion of competence as applied competence, namely when knowledge and understanding of assessment, practical assessment tasks, as well as values, attitudes and dispositions are applied to real-life teaching-learning-assessment context, was validated in the analysis.
- b. Eight themes emerged in the analysis of the documents in terms of the essential nature of the phenomenon (assessment as applied competence). These are regarded as the eight most essential elements of the competence of the teacher, and student teacher as assessor as described in the documents analysed. These may be regarded as abilities, focus areas, components, or even criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors. In the documents indicating progression, these themes correspond with the abilities of experienced teachers (Level 3) in those documents. In the context of this study, these themes are the standards required of experienced teachers. These eight essential components of competence, are in fact eight standards used as a benchmarks in terms of which assessor competence at beginner and student teacher levels should be understood. These standards are sequenced to mirror general practice when teachers assess learners in reality.

Standards for competence as assessors at experienced teacher level:

1. *Understand the continuum of continuous assessment, principles, purposes, characteristics, and uses of different types of assessments, to effectively assess learning, and apply such understanding in authentic classroom contexts.*
2. *Prepare learners for the demands of particular assessment formats and make appropriate accommodations in assessment, especially for learners with disabilities and language learning needs.*
3. *Apply appropriate quality assurance measures and appropriate frames of reference to make credible judgements on learners' performances.*
4. *Assess the relevant subject and curriculum areas effectively in terms of statutory and curriculum assessment requirements.*
5. *Keep meaningful records and report on learner achievement to stakeholders.*
6. *Use assessment information to share timely and descriptive feedback with learners and their families.*
7. *Use learner assessment data to analyse and evaluate learner understanding of subject/content, in order to identify interventions to remediate learning deficiencies.*
8. *Analyse assessment data to understand patterns and gaps in learning, to guide planning and instruction, and to adapt teaching and assessment practice.*

Table 6.3 indicates references to the standards of assessor competence in the documents analysed, albeit in varying terminology conveying the same essential meaning.

Table 6.3 **References to the themes or standards describing assessor competence**

Theme or standard	Documents
1. <i>Understand the continuum of continuous assessment, principles, purposes, characteristics, and uses of different types of assessments, to effectively assess learning, and apply such understanding in authentic classroom contexts.</i>	NZ; SA2; GER; USA1; AUS; UN1; UN2; JAP; USA2; UK; SR; and USA3.
2. <i>Prepare learners for the demands of particular assessment formats and make appropriate accommodations in assessment, especially for learners with disabilities and language learning needs.</i>	NZ; SA1; USA1; UN1; UN2; USA2; UK; and USA3.
3. <i>Apply appropriate quality assurance measures and appropriate frames of reference to make credible judgements on learners' performances.</i>	NZ; SA2; GER; USA1; AUS; and UN1;

4. <i>Assess the relevant subject and curriculum areas effectively in terms of statutory and curriculum assessment requirements.</i>	SA1; SA2; GER; USA1; AUS; UN1; JAP; USA2; UK; and SR
5. <i>Keep meaningful records and report on learner achievement to stakeholders.</i>	GHA; NZ; SA1; GER; USA1; AUS; UN1; JAP; USA2; UK; SR; USA3.
6. <i>Use assessment information to share timely and descriptive feedback with learners and their families.</i>	GHA; NZ; SA1; SA2; GER; USA1; AUS; UN1; UN2; JAP; USA2; UK; SR; USA3.
7. <i>Use learner assessment data to analyse and evaluate learner understanding of subject / content, in order to identify interventions to remediate learning deficiencies.</i>	GHA; NZ; SA1; SA2; GER; USA1; AUS; UN1; USA2; UK; SR; USA3; USA4.
8. <i>Analyse assessment data to understand patterns and gaps in learning, to guide planning and instruction, and to adapt teaching and assessment practice</i>	NZ; SA1; SA2; GER; USA1; AUS; UN1; UN2; JAP; USA2; UK; SR; USA3; USA4

- c. The researcher did not interpret all levels of competence in those documents reflecting a progression. The focus was on discerning the competence of the beginner teacher, and if data were included, that of the student teacher or graduate. The fact that different scales of progression or frames of reference were used in these documents, complicated the analysis in this regard. At the first level of analysis, phrases and descriptions from documents were collated to gain a sense of the difference between student teacher and beginner teacher competence. Edwards (2016) argues that the context needs to be considered in this regard. Student teachers, with the exception of those few fortunate enough to be matched with a receiving teacher passionate about assisting newcomers to be the best they can be, and allow the student teacher to design, implement and assess learners formally during teaching practice, have limited opportunities to learn “at the chalk-face”, as is the case with beginner teachers. This is why criteria related to student teachers predominantly indicate *knowledge and understanding*, whereas beginner teachers are in a position to *apply what they know and understand*, albeit hesitantly and tentatively at first.
- d. These are interpretations as the researcher focused on the voices of the authors of relevant documents regarding the competence of teachers as assessors. When the findings from QDA related to context (in Annexures G and H) as well as the findings from HPI conducted, are incorporated, a more complete picture of standards and criteria as envisaged in this study was revealed. As the QDA (context- and standards-related) were done before the second round HPI were conducted, the findings of the QDA and first round interviews informed the questions asked of participants in a second round.

Conclusion

The documents analysed in this part of the QDA revealed authors' voices with regard to the “what” question in the approach applied (Refer to Figure 4.2). The “How?” question could not be analysed as the documents are records of the authors views and not interactive in this regard. This aspect was addressed when analysing documents describing a distance education context, namely that of the UNISA College of Education, offering ITE in South Africa, as well as the experiences and views of participants in HPI. This concludes the QDA of 15 documents describing the competence of teachers as assessors. This analysis resulted in three domains of competence, foundational, practical and reflexive competence as assessor, as well as a list of eight standards for applied competence at experienced teacher level. These were used in synthesising criteria for assessing the competence of beginner teachers as well as student teachers in Chapter 6 of the study after the second round interviews were done.

References Refer to *TABLE 1 - QDA - CRITERIA - DOCUMENTS ANALYSED IN TWO CATEGORIES*

ANNEXURE J

AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ASSESSING SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS

By Hennart van Schalkwyk

Introduction

This account of an alternative approach to assessing summative assessments during teaching practice should be read in conjunction with Recommendation 6.6.2, and gives a more detailed account of the approach.

The approach

This approach requires that during teaching practice placements, when a summative assessment task is conducted by the receiving teacher (such as a term test for purpose of explanation), the student teacher is given an account of the entire process including evidence of pre-, during-, and post-assessment quality assurance (moderation) so that the student teacher is well informed about the particular summative assessment process. Prior to assessing (marking) the learners' responses to the task (answer scripts, in this instance), the receiving teacher carefully selects three sample scripts from the group assessed, being the scripts of a poor performing learner, an average performer, and one above average performer, based on previous performances in the judgement of the receiving teacher who is familiar with the group. These three scripts are photo-copied so that the student teacher has an exact replica of what the receiving teacher assesses. The receiving teacher then assesses the entire batch of scripts while the student teacher is required to assess the three copied scripts only, independently, using the same memorandum and assessment tools used by the receiving teacher. After all scripts are assessed by the receiving teacher and the three copies have been assessed by the student teacher, their judgements are compared in a moderating discussion of interpretations and judgements. Both justify their judgements and assessment decisions and an agreement has to be reached on the final result to be recorded for the three learners, should there be significant differences in judgements.

The inevitability of the fracture between the ideal and the reality of student teacher competence has arguably led to the status quo, namely that ITE institutions are not able to deliver qualified teachers who are classroom ready when they enter the profession, particularly with regard to their ability to conduct summative assessment. It is understood that some student teachers have opportunities to do summative assessments during teaching practice placements and many others not, and that such opportunities vary in quality and potential to facilitate learning and assessment, whereas the ideal is that all student teachers have exactly the same opportunities of the same quality and potential, and are assessed in exactly the same way. In this study the inevitability of the fracture between ideal and real was confirmed in the responses from all categories of participants in the HPI conducted. This does not mean that student teachers trained by the UNISA College of Education are not competent in all assessment abilities. In fact, this study showed that it is only summative assessment ability that cannot be assessed effectively in the prevailing context. Many student teachers who studied at the UNISA College of Education are competent in this regard, without this being confirmed by means of formal assessment measures. Other abilities such as using informal, formative and planning for summative assessment, are more observable and assessable, yet opportunities to practise these remain limited and insufficient. In the opinion of this researcher this does not mean that student teachers are completely incompetent in summative assessment. Essentially the concern lies in the limited ability to assess such competence effectively for every student teacher registered for either of the entry qualifications.

The empirical work in this study revealed this approach that has the potential to ensure that summative assessment ability is assessed more effectively during teaching practice placements, albeit not in a complete sense. The approach has merit and is currently piloted at a university in Australia. For the sake of clarity of this explanation, it is noted that student teachers are required to submit evidence of at least two such summative assessment opportunities, substantiated by a report by the receiving teacher, during a teaching practice placement.

The approach described above in a cursory manner, has several advantages. (i) Student teachers are given opportunity to assess authentic evidence in real-life summative contexts; (ii) receiving teachers need not be wary of student teachers' assessment ability as his/her own assessment responsibility is not relinquished; (iii) the work load for the student teacher is manageable; (iv) careful and thorough judgements can be made on the tasks assessed; (v) it is a learning experience for the student teacher and in Vygotskian terms, also for the receiving teacher; (vi) the receiving teacher can make well-informed judgements on the student teacher's summative assessment ability; and most importantly in the opinion of this researcher, (vii) there is substantial evidence of summative assessment ability for every student teacher as all student teachers would have to submit evidence of at least two such assessment opportunities per placement.

This approach does not allow for student teachers to demonstrate competence in all seven applied competencies (Tables 5.11 – 5.17 in Chapter 5), as would have been the case in prolonged teaching practice placements. It does, however, allow for quality experience by all student teachers and provides valid evidence of their ability to make substantiated judgements on learner performances in a context where prolonged placements are unmanageable, such as at the UNISA College of Education. Some of the aspects not assessed in this approach, such as assessment planning and item and instrument design, for example, are already assessed in the assessment theory and subject methodology assessment models.

Conclusion

This account of an alternative approach to assessing summative assessment during teaching practice may be used in implementing Recommendation 6.6.2 of this study of standards and criteria for assessing the competence of student teachers as assessors in a distance education context.

ANNEXURE K: CERTIFICATE OF PROOF OF PROFESSIONAL EDITING

9 DECEMBER 2021

This is to certify that the doctoral thesis under the title:

STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING THE COMPETENCE OF STUDENT TEACHERS AS
ASSESSORS IN A DISTANCE EDUCATION CONTEXT

Written and researched by Mr Hennart van Schalkwyk and to be submitted for examination
to the University of South Africa, has been professionally edited by me

DR M.A. CURR (PH.D., LONDON UNIVERSITY)

