

RECOMMENDATION II: Graduand Teacher Competencies

RECOMMENDATION II: Graduand Teacher Competencies

SPECIFIED OUTCOMES OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Recommendation II is a set of Graduand Teacher Competencies (GTCs) which provide an articulation of what NIE's ITP programmes will deliver in terms of the basic professional competence of graduates. The GTC Framework (GTCF) reflects a commitment to firstly guarantee this level of competence, and secondly to align notions of professional competence within ITP graduates, and professional competence for education officers employed by MOE.

“*Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2005) acknowledge that, while “specifying what teachers need to know and be able to do is not a simple task ... [it is possible to develop a] vision of professional teaching ... [that] connects teaching with student learning and requires that teachers be able to point to evidence of that learning*”

”¹¹

The GTCF provides a holistic integration of the revised V³SK model and MOE's competencies framework of beginning teachers as expounded in the Enhanced Performance Management System (EPMS). While there is not exactly a one-to-one correspondence between any individual value, skill or type of knowledge listed in the V³SK model with any of the GTCs, there is rather, the influence of individual values, skills or types of knowledge in the definition of each of the GTCs. In the GTCF, the

competencies are identified in the three performance dimensions: professional practice, leadership and management, and personal effectiveness, which are found in MOE's EPMS.

The titles and organisation of GTCs in terms of these three performance dimensions and core competencies are summarised below in Table 3.

TABLE 3: ORGANISATION OF THE GRADUAND TEACHER COMPETENCIES

| Performance Dimensions | <u>Core Competencies</u> |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Professional Practice | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nurturing the whole child 2. Providing quality learning of child 3. Providing quality learning of child in CCA 4. Cultivating Knowledge: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. with subject mastery ii. with reflective thinking iii. with analytic thinking iv. with initiative v. with creative teaching vi. with a future focus |
| Leadership & Management | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Winning Hearts and Minds <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Understanding the Environment ii. Developing Others 6. Working with Others <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Partnering Parents ii. Working in Teams |
| Personal Effectiveness | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Knowing Self and Others <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Tuning into self ii. Exercising personal Integrity and legal responsibilities iii. Understanding and respecting others iv. Resilience and adaptability |



It must be stressed that the GTCs address the competencies of a **graduating teacher from ITP programmes** as distinct from a beginning teacher defined by MOE as someone who has been in the teaching service for between 1 to 3 years. They specify the basic achievements that students should have demonstrated at the point of graduation from NIE's ITP programmes. Competencies which are outside this framework will need to be addressed under MOE's Learning Framework for Teachers.

The competence expected of graduating teachers in relation to each GTC has been specified in terms of two focus levels – Capacity Building (CB) and Awareness (A).

- i. **'Capacity Building'** - where each graduating teacher should be able to demonstrate the achievement of the defined competency;
- ii. **'Awareness'** - where graduating teachers are aware of what these competencies mean, but are not yet able to demonstrate their achievement as professional capacities. Obviously, these would be areas that graduands would need to develop further through induction, mentoring and professional development if they were to bring these from 'awareness' to 'capacity building' level.

Table 4 at the end of this chapter shows the specified outcomes of each of the GTCs in terms of Capacity Building (CB) or Awareness (A) levels.

In any teacher education programme, it is not sensible to expect that graduating teachers will achieve an equivalent level of competence across all competencies. To promise these competencies in a fresh graduate would not be realistic. Thus, what is proposed here is that basic 'Capacity Building' competencies will define the graduating teacher, and that it is incumbent upon NIE to deliver this expectation to stakeholders. As for competencies categorised as 'Awareness', these will have to be developed further through ongoing professional development, especially during the BT phase of each teacher's career.

The GTCF indicates that, at the end of their ITP programme, graduating students will have been adequately prepared to deal with the core roles of **nurturing the child and quality of learning of the child; strong subject mastery and competencies related to the teaching and learning of the subject, working with and respecting others; and values pertaining to self.** These are the deliverables and outcomes that should be evident in the professional work of all graduating teachers that are sent to the schools.

Impact on programmes

Since this new GTCF incorporates the attributes in the V³SK Model, there will be a need to re-examine programmes in terms of structure, delivery and assessment so that those competencies termed as 'capacity building' are the 'guaranteed' outcomes. Specifically, assessment tasks will need to be aligned with these competencies, and to explore how this "guarantee" can become evidence-based.



As the GTCF proposed has been developed primarily with the PGDE in mind, there is a need for further adaption for ITP programmes with longer durations, namely the Diploma of Education and Bachelor of Education. The focus will be on extending either the range or definition of competencies, as well as the designations of levels of competence expected.

The next important step is to map out where the competencies are addressed in the courses and how these competencies, especially at the 'CB' level are developed and assessed. The quality of instruction and learning opportunities to cultivate the 'CB' competencies must be clearly articulated. For this to be accurately monitored, all course outlines must indicate which competencies, and at what level (CB or A), each course addresses.

Student Teachers Mapping Their Learning Journeys

Student teachers, by referring to the GTC Framework, will be able to map out their learning journeys, identifying where they perceive to have been well prepared (CB), and sufficiently exposed to elements that they needed to be aware of and which they would need to strengthen further in the 'beginning' phase of their professional career (A).

ITP programmes mark the formal commencement of the continual process of teacher learning. A beginning teacher's expertise in handling routine teaching and other domain-specific professional matters develops over the

initial years of induction and professional development, as they move towards the development of adaptive expertise¹². The specification of competencies through the GTCs will assist schools and MOE to focus support during the BT phase on both the extension of the capacity built during ITP in areas such as management of learners and learning, and monitoring and assessing learning, as well as the conversion of 'awareness' into 'capacity' in areas such as teaching creatively and partnering parents.

In any robust system, there is a need to evaluate the quality of graduates in terms of these core competencies. Examples of measures that could be adopted include:

- Self-reporting by individual student teachers based on the GTCF where they will indicate where they were relative to the CB/A competencies at entry into the programme and where they are at the exit point and what do they hope to focus and develop in the next couple of years into teaching.
- Using portfolio assessment at the end of their programmes. This portfolio could include different kinds of papers, projects and other forms of learning and assessments that students themselves will choose to reflect the range and depth of core competencies they have developed during preparation. These will have to be evaluated by internal as well as external evaluators. *(The portfolio approach will be further elaborated on in the chapter for Recommendation V : Assessment)*

TABLE 4 : GRADUAND TEACHER COMPETENCIES FRAMEWORK

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

| Core Competencies | Definitions | Focus level of ITP Learning |
|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. Nurturing the Whole Child | <p>The teacher believes that all pupils can learn.</p> <p>The teacher shows care and concern for all pupils.</p> <p>The teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – develops a culture of care, trust and friendliness that enhances the well being and character development of pupils; – uses a variety of methods to determine current and future pupil needs and expectations, and provides necessary guidance and support; – encourages practices that support the physical, emotional and social well-being of pupils; – has high expectations of all pupils, respects their varied backgrounds, and is committed to their development as learners; – uses communication skills, listening and attending skills in his/her interactions with pupils; and, has skills in identifying and assisting pupils with basic learning problems. | <i>Capacity Building</i> |
| 2. Providing Quality Learning of Child | <p>Teaching for Learning – the teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – has a well integrated understanding of how pupils learn and develop and provides learning opportunities that support their development; – is organised and self-managing in relation to time, planning, resources, attention and relationships; – creates instructional opportunities adapted to diverse learners; – uses a variety of instructional strategies to teach concepts in ways that encourage pupils to see learning as meaningful; – has a repertoire of approaches that engage pupils in problem-solving, and critical and creative thinking; and, – plans, develops and delivers IT-integrated and multi-media supported learning experiences to engage pupils and to help them understand issues pertaining to cyber wellness. <p>Management of Learners and Learning – the teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – creates and maintains an effective classroom environment that encourages positive social interaction, self-motivation and active engagement in purposeful learning; – manages the resources of time, space; activities, and attention to engage pupils individually and in groups in productive tasks; – proactively plans to maintain discipline and order in class; – facilitates pupils’ acquisition of self and relationship management skills; and, – uses basic helping skills to assist pupils in coping with learning. | <i>Capacity Building</i> |

| Core Competencies | Definitions | Focus level of ITP Learning |
|---|--|-----------------------------|
| | <p>Monitoring and Assessing Learning – the teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – understands the link between the purpose of assessment and the intended learning outcomes; – comprehends that assessment is closely tied to the teaching learning activities; – comprehend that assessment is closely tied to pupil motivation and their academic performance; – understand the interdependence of ‘assessment of learning’ on ‘assessment for learning’; – can use a range of appropriate monitoring and assessment strategies and instruments to identify learning needs, to evaluate progress, to provide evaluative feedback to help pupils in their progress, and to take follow-up action – understands statistical concepts in representing pupils’ patterns of responses to assessment tasks; and, – recognises objective and ethical assessment procedures. | <i>Capacity Building</i> |
| 3. Providing quality of learning of child in Co-Curricular Activities | <p>The teacher is aware of the opportunity to use CCA to inculcate desirable values and attitudes, and to support the holistic development of pupils.</p> <p>The teacher is aware of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the use of CCA to provide opportunities for pupils to maximise their potential and is committed to supporting CCA activities; – the need to manage pupil behaviour in CCA activities; and, – basic safety procedures / considerations during activities, including basic first aid. | <i>Awareness</i> |
| 4. Cultivating Knowledge with : i. Subject Mastery | <p>The teacher shows strong working knowledge of subject matter and related educational issues, and seeks to deepen his/her understanding of the subject area and teaching practices.</p> <p>The teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – draws on deep and well integrated disciplinary knowledge; – draws on well developed Pedagogical Content Knowledge; – has knowledge of recent developments in the field; – helps pupils associate concepts and principles to their everyday experiences; and, – is able to apply his/her subject knowledge to help learners of different levels understand core concepts and their applications. | <i>Capacity Building</i> |
| ii. Reflective Thinking | <p>The teacher adopts a critically reflective stance towards his/her own professional practice as a basis for ongoing monitoring and refinement of those practices, including the identification of strengths and areas for improvement.</p> <p>The teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – seeks opportunities to grow professionally; and, – is aware of major areas of research on teaching and of resources for professional learning. | <i>Capacity Building</i> |

| Core Competencies | Definitions | Focus level of ITP Learning |
|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| iii. Analytic Thinking | <p>The teacher demonstrates a capacity to engage with problems.</p> <p>The teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – identifies possible cause-and-effect relationships, develops plans to respond, prioritises tasks in order of importance, and carefully monitors responses; – makes and defends complex choices and decisions; and, – frames, analyses and synthesises information in order to solve problems and provide solutions. | <i>Capacity Building</i> |
| iv. Initiative | <p>The teacher seeks opportunities to take initiative to improve his/her professional practices.</p> <p>The teacher is aware of the value of, and need for skills in innovation and entrepreneurship.</p> | <i>Awareness</i> |
| v. Creative Teaching | The teacher explores the use of creative teaching techniques / strategies to cater for pupils with different abilities. | <i>Awareness</i> |
| vi. with a Future Focus | <p>The teacher is committed to environmental sustainability, social justice and equity.</p> <p>The teacher is aware of the need to develop 21st century skills and values in his/her pupils.</p> <p>The teacher recognises that, in a rapidly changing world, the ability to experiment with and advocate for new practices will be a core professional capacity.</p> | <i>Awareness</i> |

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

| Core Competencies | Definitions | Focus level of ITP Learning |
|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 5. Winning hearts and minds: i. Understanding the Environment | <p>The teacher is aware of the rationale for national education policies and practices and their infusion.</p> <p>The teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – has critical awareness of the norms and values inherent in the Singapore system of education; – understands the Desired Outcomes of Education; and, – is aware of the role of school rules, and is committed to understanding and abiding by the operating procedures and organisation structure of the school to which he/she is appointed. | <i>Awareness</i> |
| ii. Developing Others | The teacher takes initiative to support peers and colleagues. | <i>Awareness</i> |

| Core Competencies | Definitions | Focus level of ITP Learning |
|--|--|-----------------------------|
| 6. Working with Others: i. Partnering Parents | The teacher: – is aware of the need to build collaboration and partnership with parents to maximise the learning of pupils; – uses strategies to keep parents informed on the progress of pupils and school activities; and, – values perspectives of parents. | <i>Awareness</i> |
| ii. Working in Teams | The teacher actively seeks out opportunities for professional collaboration within and beyond the school. The teacher: – cooperates with and supports colleagues; – shares information and good ideas; – expresses positive expectations of others; and, – speaks positively of team members. | <i>Capacity Building</i> |

PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

| Competencies | Definitions | Focus level of ITP Learning |
|--|--|-----------------------------|
| 7. Knowing Self and Others i. Tuning into Self | The teacher takes care to: – monitor his/her emotional and professional self in order to identify immediate support and/or developmental needs; and, – to achieve work-life balance, and seeks guidance where necessary. | <i>Capacity Building</i> |
| ii. Exercising Personal Integrity and Legal responsibilities | The teacher is aware of the need for professionalism in all aspects of his/her demeanour. The teacher is aware of his/her legal responsibilities and the need to maintain high standards of professional integrity when discharging his/her duties and responsibilities. | <i>Awareness</i> |
| iii. Understanding and Respecting Others | The teacher is committed to National Education, and to valuing diversity in all its forms. The teacher demonstrates sensitivity to cultural and religious differences. | <i>Capacity Building</i> |
| iv. Resilience and Adaptability | The teacher: – is tough in spirit, able to persevere in times of challenge, keeping a positive disposition; – stays the course though there may be obstacles to surmount (he/she is optimistic); – is able to think on his/her feet and make decisions appropriate to the situation at hand; and, – encourages and teaches her/his pupils to be resilient and adaptable. | <i>Capacity Building</i> |

