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Beginning fall 1980 newly certified teachers in Georgia will be required to demonstrate a variety of content and teaching competencies before receiving renewable certification. The Georgia performance-based certification program has three important facets, two of which occur before initial certification. First, all prospective teachers must pass a criterion-referenced test on the content of the certification field. Second, the undergraduate institution must affirm that during student teaching the prospective teacher adequately demonstrates a set of minimum teaching competencies specified by the state.

The third step is perhaps the most unique and comprehensive. After passing a criterion-referenced test and graduating from an approved teacher education program, all beginning teachers receive a three-year nonrenewable certificate. During the term of the certificate they must satisfactorily demonstrate 14 performance competencies in two consecutive assessments, one in the fall and the second in the spring.

Acceptance of the new certification requirement has been facilitated by state and local recognition that in-service activities to improve beginning teacher performance are necessary between the two assessments. Widespread staff development efforts have been supported by state funds even during the program's developmental phase. The promise of educationally meaningful staff development activities has been shaped in large measure by the content of specifically developed teacher performance assessment instruments. Initial content for the instruments was affirmed by a statewide survey of nearly

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# ASSESSING TEACHER PERFORMANCE

## GEORGIA'S PERFORMANCE-BASED CERTIFICATION PROJECT COMBINES ASSESSING TEACHERS' PERFORMANCE WITH ASSISTING IN TEACHERS' GROWTH.

6,000 educators.<sup>1</sup> These instruments provide a set of clear performance expectations for 14 teaching skills considered minimally essential for certification. The assessment process provides reliable feedback about how a teacher's classroom performance meets established expectations. Assessment focuses not only on assessment activities, but on "assisting" teachers to improve basic teaching skills through staff development and supportive supervision.

### The Assessment Tools

The assessment instruments measure 14 teaching competencies considered essential for certification. Separate instruments assess performance competencies in *Teaching Plans and Materials*, *Classroom Procedures*, *Interpersonal Skills*, *Professional Standards*, and *Student Perceptions*. Only the first three instruments are used for certification.

The teacher prepares for the teaching plans and materials assessment by developing a lesson plan portfolio, providing him or her the maximum opportunity to demonstrate the desired competencies. Three trained observers, a peer teacher, a school administrator, and a state employee, participate in a joint interview to discuss instructional planning and evaluation practices. Fifteen performance indicators defining five competencies in this area are then rated independently by each observer.

Subsequently, each of the observers independently visits the classroom for a minimum of 40 minutes to rate 30 performance indicators defining nine classroom procedures and interpersonal skills competencies. The

classroom procedures competencies define instructional and administrative practices, while the interpersonal skills competencies address the teacher's proficiency in interacting with students to create a comfortable instructional atmosphere. The 14 competencies used for certification are listed by instrument below.

### Teaching Plans and Materials

I. Plans instruction to achieve selected objectives.

II. Organizes instruction to take into account individual differences among learners.

III. Obtains and uses information about the needs and progress of individual learners.

IV. Refers learners with special problems to specialists.

V. Obtains and uses information about the effectiveness of instruction to revise it when necessary.

### Classroom Procedures

VI. Uses instructional techniques, methods, and media related to the objectives.

VII. Communicates with learners.

VIII. Demonstrates a repertoire of teaching methods.

IX. Reinforces and encourages learner involvement in lessons.

X. Demonstrates an understanding of the school subject being taught and demonstrates its relevance.

XI. Organizes time, space, materials, and equipment for instruction.

### Interpersonal Skills

XII. Demonstrates enthusiasm for teaching, learning, and the subject being taught.

XIII. Helps learners develop positive self concepts.

XIV. Manages classroom interactions.

Each competency is defined by two to five performance indicators that are rated on a five-point scale. The scale points have been defined by one-sentence descriptors to reduce ambiguity and increase interrater agreement. A performance indicator and associated scale of descriptors for competency VII, "Communicates with Learners," is shown in Figure 1.

Teachers receive performance feedback on each competency and its associated indicators. All ratings for each indicator are displayed on a computer profile along with a summary for each competency. Figures

**Figure 1. Indicator VII—Provides feedback to learners throughout the lesson**

**Scale of Descriptors**

1. Accepts learner comments or performance without feedback about their adequacy.
2. Responds to negative aspects of student work, but few comments are made about positive aspects.
3. Informs students of the adequacy of their performance. Few errors pass by without being addressed.
4. Helps learners evaluate the adequacy of their own performance.
5. In addition to 4, the teacher probes for the source of misunderstandings which arise.

2 and 3 represent a sample portion of a performance profile.

The complete computerized performance profile summarizes ratings for each of the 14 competencies and all 45 performance indicators.

**Validity and Reliability**

The use of assessment instruments for making certification decisions demands that validity and reliability be well documented. Consequently, a variety of reliability studies were made during program development as were studies of criterion-related validity using a number of pupil outcome variables. Generalizability analyses have shown the set of 45 indicators to have a reliability of .88 when differentiating teachers and generalizing over raters and occasions; analogous competency values range from .70 to .85.<sup>2</sup>

The assessment instruments have been correlated with pupil perceptions of the school climate/learning environment, pupil engagement rates during lessons, and mean achievement gains during assessment units.<sup>3</sup> Research findings demonstrate that the instruments are significantly correlated with outcomes that are reasonably predicted. For example, not all planning competencies are signifi-

cantly correlated with either pupil learning environment perceptions or engagement rates. Yet, scores on all 14 competencies have been positively related to pupil learning gains. Similarly, scores on 18 of the 20 CP indicators are positively correlated with pupil academic engagement rates. The factor structure of the instruments and the legal feasibility of the assessment process have also been extensively investigated. In summary, the numerous research studies on the assessment instruments generally support their technical quality, legal defensibility, and accuracy in making reliable certification decisions on each of the 14 competencies measured.

**The Foundations for Success**

The success with which the performance-based certification model and assessment of teachers in Georgia has been implemented has two important foundations. First is the belief among educators that teachers should be held accountable for demonstrating acceptable performance on a set of teaching skills endorsed by the profession as essential for successful practice. Second is the commitment to "assist" those having performance deficiencies, through staff development and supportive supervision activities using performance assessment data. Thus, "assessing" (teacher performance) and "assisting" (teacher growth) are essential ingredients of this innovative, professional commitment to better teaching and the improvement of education in Georgia's classrooms. ■

**Figure 2. Summary Sheet of Teaching Performance**

Teaching Plans and Materials	No. Ratings	No. Ratings at ML*	% of Ratings at ML	Performance Relative to Standard		
				50	75%	100
TPM I: Plans instruction to achieve selected objectives.	15	12	80			].X
TPM II: Organizes instruction to take into account individual differences among learners.	9	5	56	X.....]		
TPM III: Obtains and uses information about the needs and progress of individual learners.	6	4	67	X..]		

\* Minimum level of performance.

**Figure 3. Summary of Indicator Ratings for Each Competency**

Teaching Plans and Materials	Ratings				ML*	Ratings at ML
TPM I: Plans instruction to achieve selected objectives.						
Indicator 1. Specifies or selects learner objectives for lessons.	5	4	3	3	3	3
Indicator 2. Specifies or selects teaching procedures for lessons.	4	3	4	3	3	3
Indicator 3. Specifies or selects content, materials, and media for lessons.	3	4	3	3	3	3
Indicator 4. Specifies or selects materials and procedures for assessing learner progress on the objectives.	4	3	3	4	4	1
Indicator 5. Plans instruction at a variety of levels.	3	4	4	4	4	2
						12/15 (80%)

\* Minimum level of performance.

<sup>1</sup> C. E. Johnson, J. R. Okey, W. Capie, C. D. Ellett, and P. T. Adams, "Identifying and Verifying Generic Teacher Competencies," research report, Teacher Assessment Project, College of Education, University of Georgia, July 1978.

<sup>2</sup> W. Capie, K. Tobin, C. D. Ellett, and C. E. Johnson, "The Application of Generalizability Theory to Assessing the Probability of Misclassification with Teacher Performance Assessment Instrument Measures," research report, Teacher Assessment Project, College of Education, University of Georgia, August 1980.

<sup>3</sup> C. D. Ellett, W. Capie, and C. E. Johnson, "A Pupil Perception/Process/Product Model for Validating Teacher Performance," paper presented at annual meeting of American Psychological Association, Division 15, Montreal, Canada, September 1980.

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