A Mapping of the Espoused Subject Outcomes and Enacted Course Delivery of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction

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Lam, B. H., Tsui, K. T., Brown, G., & Deneen, C.

The Hong Kong Institution of Education

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Abstract

This paper reports the results of Phase II of a TDG-funded study in which the subject learning outcomes (SLOs) of identified based on views of students and staff on the courses offered by an academic department of a teacher education institution in Hong Kong. In Phase I of this study, 5 major categories of subject learning outcomes were identified through a series of delphi study and an e-survey completed by staff and studentsof the courses offered by thedepartment. The 5 categories of outcomes were named *Teacher Professionalism, Student-Centered Pedagogical Practices, Assessment and Evaluation, Curriculum Planning, and Curriculum Theory and Knowledge*. In this phase II study, the project team has carried out a systematic content analysis on C&I course objectives/outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and assessment tasks based on these five categories of SLOs . Results of the content analysis are presented in terms of the alignment of course outcomes, course content, and assessment(s) with theSLOs.. With regard to the coverage of the SLOs in various programmes, implications are drawn on the focus for C&I course development, with specific concern about the breadth and depth of professional training on these respective categories of outcomes for teacher education in this generation.

Outcome-based approach to teaching and learning in higher education

The place of curriculum theory in a teacher education programme has emerged to be a topic of great interest for teacher education currently in the literature. For an academic department specialises in curriculum and instruction, it is our concern to see how we are valued on the courses we offered, with the direction we claimed to justify our place in professional teacher training. In phase I of this study, we developed a two-part method to collect students' and instructors' preferences for C&I Subject Outcomes. In the first phase, a Delphi study was conducted with the help of the faculty staff. They were invited to list and endorse the major Subject Outcomes that could be identified from the courses being offered by the department. After two *Iterations* the subject outcomes gathered were reduced into a list by the research team with consensus sought from staff members. Based on the list of subject outcomes identified from Delphi study, a questionnaire contains 42 items was administered online to all students and faculty staff of the department. They were asked to rate the relative importance of these subject outcomes. Eight-six graduating students and 16 faculty members in the 2009/2010 academic year responded. Five factors (*espoused subject outcomes*) are identified based on the confirmatory factor analysis. These so-called subject learning outcomes (SLO) are labeled as *Teacher Professionalism, Student-Centered Pedagogical Practices, Assessment and Evaluation, Curriculum Planning, and Curriculum Theory and Knowledge.*

As emerged in the phase I study, Curriculum Theory factor had a much weaker loading on the general departmental outcomes factor for staff than students and received a significantly weaker endorsement from the staff relative to the much more highly valued Teacher Professionalism factor. Clearly, it is worthwhile to further investigate the role played by the Theory factor in the Curriculum and Instruction

curriculum.

If the learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and assessments of the various courses in the department tend to place greater emphasis on the theoretical knowledge component rather than the teacher professionalism aspect, it is entirely plausible that students would not distinguish as strongly the relative importance of theory versus professional actions. One way to examine this hypothesis would be to examine the focus of the departmental courses relative to these five factors. If few courses address the teacher professionalism factor then it is understandable that students would not give it as high a rating as the staff.

The Study

This paper presents a mapping exercise on the content analysis of course documents of core courses offered by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction to examine the level of alignment between the enacted subject outcomes stipulated in the course documents and the espoused subject outcomes. The mapping was conducted by the research team to evaluate the alignment between the enacted and espoused subject outcomes.

The scope of which the mapping was done comprises all the mandatory (core) courses for Bachelor of Education programmes (BEd) and Postgraduate Diploma in Education programme (PGDE) offered by the Department. There were totally 14 courses as listed below:

Table I: Core modules in C & I for 2009-2010 intake

Module	Programme	Course Title
CUI5046	PGDE	Curriculum and Assessment
CUI5048	PGDE	The Professional Teacher in Classroom, School & Community
CUI1086	BEd	Teaching and Learning
CUI2087	BEd	Assessment
CUI2088	BEd	Promoting Positive Classroom Environments
EPC3148	BEd	Understanding and Managing Diversity
CUI4089	BEd	Curriculum and Innovations
CUI4900	BEd	Honors Project
CUI2062	3-yr BEd(P)MM 3-yr BEd(S)MM	Assessment for Learning
EPC4107	3-yr BEd(P)MM 3-yr BEd(S)MM	Understanding and Managing Diversity
CUI1031/CUI 2030	3-yr BEd(LT) MM	Teaching Strategies & Classroom Orgranisation (Secondary)
CUI3012	3-yr BEd(LT) MM	Curriculum Development and Assessment in Schools
CUI1108C	3-yr BEd (PVE) PT	Strategies for Teaching and Learning in PVE
CUI1107C	3-yr BEd (PVE) PT	Assessing and Recognizing Learning in PVE
CUI1109C	3-yr BEd (PVE) PT	Instructional Design in PVE

The Mapping Exercise

The four research team members performed the analysis of the courses independently. The Objectives (O), Assessment (A), and Contents (C) of the 14 courses were first evaluated for their emphasis of the 5 factors. The team members assigned numbers to represent the five factors, i.e., 1 stand for "*Teacher Professionalism*", 2 stand for "*Student-Centred Pedagogical Practices*", 3 stand for "*Assessment and Evaluation*", 4 stand for "*Curriculum Planning*", and 5 stand for "*Curriculum Theory and Knowledge*". The four team members reviewed all the course outlines by checking them on the areas of O, A and C with a standard process. For example, if there are 3 objectives (a, b, and c) in a course outline, raters would assess each of the objectives individually and check whether each of them covers one or more of the 5 factors, and write down the chosen factor's assigned number. The relative emphasis/priority of each factor within each course and across the programme were also taken note of.

The team members then met to check and discuss the results and interpret the findings after they had checked all the course outlines respective to the three areas. with the result is a pool of numbers for O, A and C for each respective course. The research assistant then input the numbers accordingly for each of the courses. And for each items of O, A, and C, the result is valid only when more than one raters make the same judgment, *i.e.* $r > 1$. The following example explains the process of how the judgment was made.

Example Ia: Total Rating for one of thecourse objectives of the course CUI5046

Course Objective A in Module CUI5046

Factor	No. of Raters
1	4
2	1
3	4
4	3
5	3

As shown in the example, only one rater decided that factor 2 is covered in the course objective; therefore, this rating would not be counted in the final analysis. The relative emphasis of the factors (enacted subject outcomes) identified in each course was further processed by Excel and presented in a series of radial diagrams that shows the coverage of the factors by the core courses, in specific course, programmes, and in all the courses offered by the Department as a whole.

Example Ib: the results against the three respective areas (O, A and C) for the course CUI 5046

CUI 5046

no. of raters

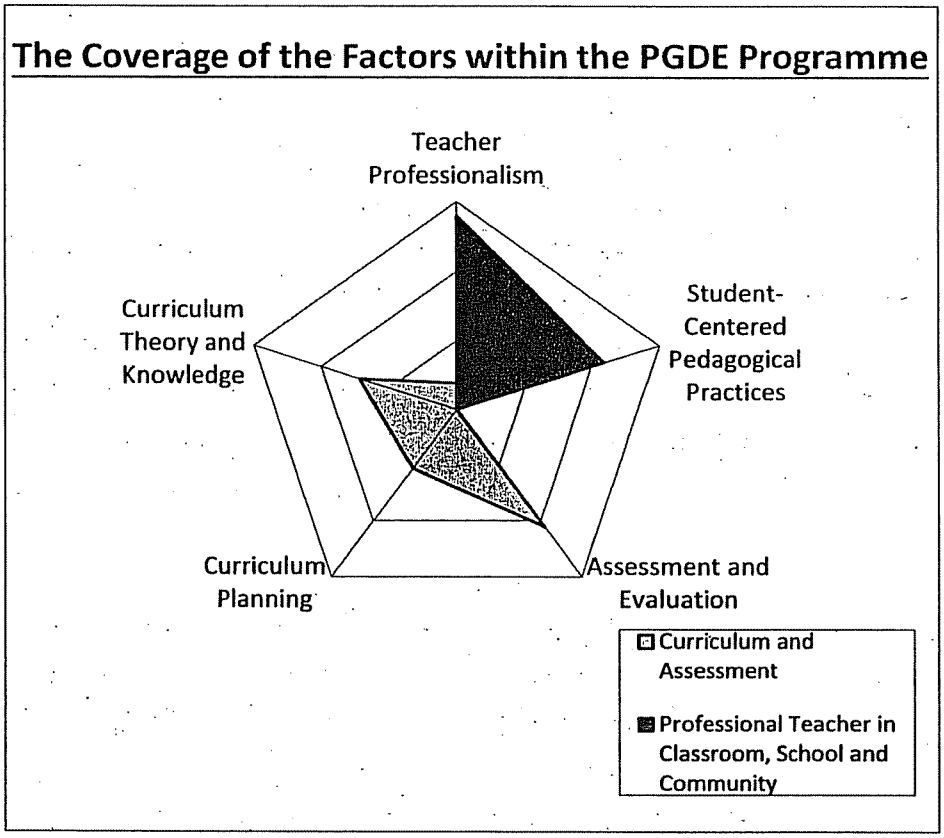
				rating frequency			
factor	O	A	C	O	A	C	Total
1	4	1	1	4			4
2	1	1	1				0
3	4	4	4	6	6	10	22
4	3	2	4	3	3	5	11
5	3	3	3	4	5	6	15

Key: O= Objectives, A= Assessments, C=Module Contents

The left side of the above table indicates the *number of raters* who have chosen the factors for a particular objective of the course. In column O, all 4 researchers agreed that factor 1 was present in the course objective. Only 1 researcher regarded factor 2 present in the objective. The right side of the table indicates the *frequency* that the factors were chosen for each area, the possible sum is greater than four (> 4) since there were multiple items in each area. The right-most column presents the *total* frequency of each factor identified in the course across the 3 areas, which represents the relative emphasis / priority of each factor in the course.

Results of Mapping

The result of mapping is lastly presented by a series of radial diagrams which show the coverage of the five SLOs within a single programme with regard to the core courses offered by the department, or across all the programmes on all the courses the department offered. Below is an illustration of the factors based on the two core courses which are offered in the PGDE programme.

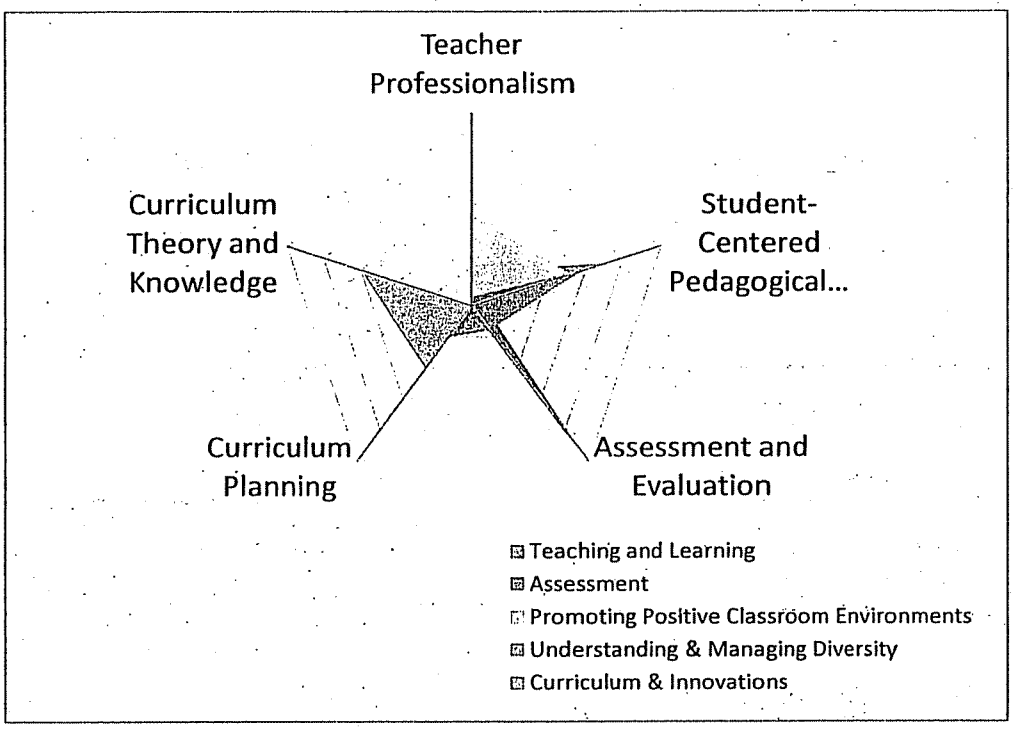


The diagram above shows the factors/SLOs coverage in the PGDE programme. The areas shaded in blue and brown represented the complementary role played by the 2 core courses in the PGDE programme, entitled "Curriculum and Assessment" and "Professional Teacher in Classroom, School and Community". Comparatively, greater emphases were given to factor 1 (Teacher Professionalism), while less emphases were given to factor 4 (Curriculum Planning), as reflected from the shaded areas which represent the coverage of respective SLOs in the courses, i.e. the five factors/SLOs as labeled at each point at the radial shape outline. In the PGDE programme, only two courses are offered which generally covers the five SLOs in the period of study of one year (for full-time programme) or two years (for part-time programme).

The diagram below shows the factors/SLOs coverage in a Bachelor of Education full time programme. It generally suggested that the core courses offered over the 4 years

of study BEd programme cover learning of the five aspects as suggested in the espoused SLOs found from our previous study. However, in the BEd programme, the learning for each of the SLOs may be in greater depth as there are totally 4 core courses to be learned which are designed to include the targeted SLOs.

The Coverage of the Factors within the Core Courses of the Bachelor of Education Programme



Conclusion

The results from the various programmes broadly conforms to the relative importance of outcomes identified by department members and students. Nevertheless, learning in terms of the breadth and depth on each of the individual factors varied greatly between programmes, e.g. by comparing F/T PGDE and BEd. The 1-year PGDE programme provides content coverage of the 5 learning outcomes within 2 CORE courses in the one-year programme, while the 4-year BEd programme covers the learning outcomes across the 4 years of study on 5 courses. The results may

contribute to the discussion on the professional training of teachers on major issues such as, what a foundation programme should provide and what training should be regarded as sufficient for preparing teachers with the prerequisite skills and knowledge, and what the status of accreditation of teachers who graduate from different programmes should be whenthey have received quite different training on academic subjects .