DEVELOPING AN INTERNATIONAL SURVEY OF TEACHERS' ASSESSMENT CAPABILITIES: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

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Professional standards require teachers to be assessment literate - to construct, administer, and score reliable, valid assessments, communicate interpretations and use evidence to adjust teaching to support students. This project investigates student-teachers' assessment literacy throughout teacher education into the first years as teachers across six countries. We target the nature of programmes and changes in understanding assessment purposes, practices, principles and policy. This project builds on the ACT survey of student-teacher understandings of assessment conducted over three years across four New Zealand universities (Hill, et al. 2013).

Comparative research highlighted that exploring and comparing findings can be difficult for cultural, conceptual and methodological reasons while meaningful measurements and interpretations of real world contexts need to consider personal, social and structural factors (Osborn 2004). To adapt the ACT survey for an international project with inter- and intra- country collaboration in Canada, Denmark, Greece, Hong Kong, New Zealand, and the United States, measures need to be tailored to be country context relevant and valid. This paper focuses on the challenges faced and strategies used in this process. These were:

1) Developing country-relevant yet comparable surveys required adaptations of the ACT survey to avoid misinterpretations due to different meanings of terms in different languages and policy contexts. Problematic areas identified by teachers/teacher educators included constructs associated with diversity, ethnicity, and formative assessment practices.

2) Present policy affects practice. Consideration was needed to deal with current and past policy in different countries and to manage the implications of policy changes when these occur at different rates and points in time. This is being managed through input from teacher education informants.

3) Most notable are the limitations of surveys as research tools appropriate for producing reliable findings across different contexts. In adapting the survey, we needed to keep in mind opportunities for forthcoming cross country analysis and maintain a balance between context-specific questions and questions that were ‘common’. Analysis of similarities and differences in common questions can help identify shared values and practices and illuminate local cultural or situational factors.