

**Authentic assessment in pedagogy-related  
modules in teacher education:  
Vietnamese student teachers' perspective**

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## **Abstract**

Vietnam is undergoing comprehensive educational reform, and teacher training plays a vital role in providing qualified teachers to support this reform. Assessment is expected to act as a mean to close the gap between university training and the demands of teaching in school. Against the backdrop of these changes, this study adopted qualitative approach to investigate student teachers' perceptions of authentic assessment in pedagogy-related modules in teacher education.

Based on the main characteristics of authentic assessment and some popular authentic assessment methods in higher education and teacher education, the research designed an intervention with three authentic assessment tasks in order to implement for formative assessment in a pedagogy-related module in a university of education. Interviews were conducted with student teachers after each task.

The study found that the student teachers appreciated authentic assessment tasks. They saw links between the content, criteria, and social context of the assessment tasks and those of real teachers' tasks in school. They also saw that they had a role to play in assessment design and in assessing assessment performances and other work. Notably, they perceived that authentic assessment influenced their learning strategies and motivation, their professional competencies and the formation of their professional identity as teachers. Student teachers' prior assessment and schooling experience, practical experience and teaching career goals were all seen to impact on their perceptions. The study proposes one theoretical framework for the interpretation of student teachers' perceptions of authentic assessment and revisits another for the design of authentic assessment in teacher education and higher education.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

HE: higher education

MOET: Ministry of Education and Training

US: United States

UK: United Kingdom

STs: Student teachers

HERA: Vietnam's HE Reform Agenda



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## INTRODUCTION

*'Students can, with difficulty, escape from the effects of poor teaching, [but] they cannot (by definition if they want to graduate) escape the effects of poor assessment'*

*(David Boud, 1995, p.35)*

### **1. Rationale for the study**

Assessment has been widely considered integral to the teaching and learning process. Assessment implies the use of test results or information from other informal methods to make judgments (Hogan, 2007). There are a variety of purposes for assessment in education depending on stakeholders' needs and goals; thus, assessment is used in different contexts and scopes. In this study, the term 'assessment' refers to classroom assessment or teacher-made assessment.

Assessment is a powerful force in teaching and learning at all levels of education. It is well established that without changes in assessment of students' learning, there is no real change in education practice (Torrance, 1994). This means student assessment drives educational change. As claimed by Marks and Onion (2013), pupils are at the centre of the learning process. Assessment is the endpoint of a learning process but also the start point of the next. The authors explain that, informed by assessment results, teachers might implement new changes in teaching and learning with consideration of students' needs and competences. Therefore, teaching, learning and assessment are aligned together: changes in assessment lead to changes in teaching and learning (Biggs, 1999). This perspective drove the current research to trial authentic assessment as an alternative approach in Vietnam teacher education context, in order to make some changes in Vietnamese students' learning.

Social constructivism has been a dominant learning theory in education since the 1970s, which influenced changes in assessment (Scholtz, 2007; Shepard, 20000; Tombori & Borich, 1999). Based on the notion that learning is an active and continuous process of constructing a person's knowledge through social interaction with other people, social constructivism has driven a range of changes in assessment, such as using assessment to improve student learning; encouraging students' collaboration in

assessment tasks; and empowering students in assessment by peer and self-assessment and creating assessment criteria (Airasian & Russell, 2007; Black & William, 2009; Boyle & Charles, 2013; Rust, O'Donovan & Price, 2005). Additionally, social constructivism inspires situated cognitive learning which emphasises the need to construct knowledge in real-life situations and develop competencies in communities of professional practice (Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989; Herrington & Oliver, 2000; Kim, 2001). Therefore, social constructivism was also the origin of authentic assessment and professional development models based on first-hand experience. In other words, the dominance of social constructive beliefs in educational research has motivated the implementation of authentic assessment in practice to improve students' learning and develop their professional competencies. This is also a standpoint from which to conduct the current research.

It is noticeable that, currently, the demand from society for employable and skilled graduates has increased dramatically. Institutions have to focus on skills development for students and link training to the labour market (Tran & Swierczek, 2009). To achieve this, university training needs to offer more opportunities for students to gain practical experience by utilising a variety of authentic teaching, learning and assessment strategies. Authentic assessment has been found to be advantageous (Darling-Hammond, Ancess & Falk, 1995) because of its emphasis on skills and abilities relevant to long-term professional success (Archbald & Newman, 1988). By focusing on contextualised, interpretative, performance evaluation (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2004), authentic assessment has become a powerful tool for educators to prepare students for their future profession (Lund, 1997). In a teacher education context, it is also necessary for prospective teachers to be given good support in transitioning from university to the workplace (Allen, 2009), which is another reason for adopting authentic assessment in teacher education. However, preparing graduates to enter the workplace has encountered many limitations in higher education (HE) and teacher education all over the world (Allen, 2009; Tran & Swierczek, 2009), and authentic assessment has not been implemented widely, especially in non-Western contexts and teacher education (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000). Consequently, the current research was conducted with a desire to promote the implementation of authentic assessment to develop Vietnamese student

teachers' professional competencies to narrow the gap between the university training and working life.

To date, there is no commonly agreed framework for designing authentic assessment (Frey, Schmitt & Allen, 2012). It is worth noting this because authentic assessment is linked to professional practice, is highly contextual and requires a specifically theoretical framework or guide for implementation in each context (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000). In other words, if practitioners in a field (for example, teacher education) or in an education system (for instance, Vietnam) wish to adopt authentic assessment, it is suggested that they develop their own theoretical frameworks and guidelines. This explains the need for the current research before authentic assessment can be officially implemented in teacher education in Vietnam. Because authentic assessment has not been implemented widely and studied systematically in Vietnam, other frameworks of authentic assessment constructed in other contexts, such as those of Darling-Hammond & Snyder (2000) and Gulikers, Bastiaens and Kirschner (2004) were adopted as the theoretical basis of the current research.

According to Boud (1995), assessment influences learning in three ways: (1) the intrinsic or objective qualities of the assessment; (2) a teacher's use of assessment for the subject and the specific learning goals; and (3) students' interpretation of the assessment task and the context of the assessment. The influence of assessment on student learning is reflected in the 'consequential validity' terminology, which will be one of the central concepts discussed later in this thesis. The third way indicates the impact of students' perceptions of assessment on student learning, which has been gaining attention in education research, and is also the focus of the current research.

In particular, based on both education practice and research, researchers and practitioners recognise that students' perceptions of assessment impact their use of assessment in practice (Struyven, Dochy & Janssens, 2005; Tittle, 1994). Students might interpret characteristics and requirements of an assessment through the lens of their own assessment experience, learning beliefs or habits (Gulikers, 2006). Such interpretations direct their performance in that assessment. In particular, students' perception of assessment considerably affect their actual use of and preferences for learning approaches, such as surface, deep or strategic learning and vice versa (Marton

& Säljö, 1997; Struyven, Dochy & Janssens, 2005). Based on students' perceptions of demands in a specific assessment task, they employ different learning approaches to fulfil the task. For instance, if students think an assessment task requires them to reproduce information without analysis or critique, they might adopt a surface learning approach (Scouller, 1997). Hence, to change students' use of assessment in their learning, their perceptions of assessment should be changed.

Moreover, students' perceptions of assessment also motivate their learning (Cox et al., 2014; Docking, 1987). For example, assessment with high standards challenges and motivates students to gain a sense of achievement or widen their knowledge and skills (Harlen & Crick, 2003; Qassim, 2008). There is empirical evidence of the relationship between students' perceptions of assessment and their performance (Brown & Hirschfeld, 2008). Students' conceptions of their accountability in assessment show a positive correlation with their outcomes whereas their conceptions of school accountability in assessment negatively influence their achievement (Brown & Hirschfeld, 2008).

Due to the importance of assessment to both the education system and student learning, since the 1990s improving assessment in order to improve the curriculum, teaching and learning has been a popular trend in education in many countries (Torrance, 1994), especially in developing countries undergoing comprehensive educational reform such as Vietnam. The study reported here was conducted in teacher education in Vietnam where all levels of schools are undergoing comprehensive innovation (MOET, 2013; Prime Minister Office, 2012) with the main goal of providing high-quality graduates in line with the socio-economic structures of the industrialisation and modernisation of the nation (Kelly, 2000). To achieve all objectives of the reform, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has implemented several changes in higher education, such as a credit-based training system, promoting autonomy for institutions that then produce assessment criteria, standards and policy (Do & Ho, 2014; MOET, 2007). These changes at national level have an impact at an institutional level, for example when designing curricula, materials, altering instruction, approaches and methods of assessment.

Teacher education, especially initial training, plays a critical role in any educational reform in any country, because qualified teachers are needed to

implement government plans. In the current Vietnam education reform, MOET has attended to the reconstruction of educational institutions to provide high-quality training programmes for both prospective and current teachers (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2008). For a long time, teacher education in Vietnam has been criticised as less focused on developing multiple skills for teachers, and for the gap between what is taught in the institution and what happens in practice (Hamano, 2010; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2008). Therefore, it is urgent that educational institutions renew their curricula (Hamano, 2010; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2008). Within the curricula of teacher education, pedagogy-related modules play an important role in developing teaching competences for prospective teachers, and authentic teaching and assessment approaches should be adopted in these modules.

In short, in the context of the global development of assessment approaches, especially authentic assessment, appreciation of the role of students' perceptions of assessment in student learning, and the call to conduct empirical research on authentic assessment in specific contexts, this study was designed and conducted to study teacher education in Vietnam. The details will be presented in the following chapters. This study aimed to investigate student teachers' (STs)<sup>1</sup> perceptions of authentic assessment in pedagogy-related modules in teacher education in Vietnam by designing and implementing an intervention with authentic assessment tasks in a pedagogy-related module. Furthermore, factors influencing STs' perceptions of authentic assessment were identified and impacts of authentic assessment on STs' learning were also explored. With such findings, implications for assessment in pre-service teacher education in the non-Western context were proposed to improve the authenticity of assessment in professional modules in teacher education.

## ***2. Justification of a qualitative methodology***

With the aims of the study stated above in mind, I constructed an overarching research question: how do STs perceive authentic assessment in pedagogy-related modules? I then elaborated it into three sub-questions:

---

<sup>1</sup> Student teachers in Vietnam are studying majors in Teacher Education in order to become teachers (for example, Mathematics Education, Physical Education, Primary Education, Early Childhood Education). They have sponsorship from the government and are called 'student teachers' from the point at which they enroll onto the teacher education programme.

- + Which dimensions of authentic assessment in pedagogy-related modules do STs think are important?
- + Why do STs have such perceptions of authentic assessment?
- + How do STs perceive the impact of authentic assessment on their learning?

To answer the research questions, a qualitative approach was deemed to be the most appropriate methodology. The ontological and epistemological foundations of qualitative research were also considered to clarify why the qualitative approach was chosen and how it affected the research design. The current research utilised interpretivism as the underlying philosophical framework. The meaning of interpretivism to the study and the detailed process of design and implementation are described in Chapter Four. Here, a general explanation of the choice of qualitative research is presented.

As stated by Ritchie et al. (2013), 'the aims of qualitative research are generally directed at providing an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world, by learning about people's social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories.' (p. 22). Moreover, Hammersley (2013) and Tracy (2013) also state that qualitative research methods have the potential to collect detailed, insightful data that reflect how people see different phenomena in the world and allow for an explanation as to why they have such perceptions. In the current study, the main purpose was investigating STs' perceptions of authentic assessment, which means that the study aimed to explore people's thoughts. The subject of study was not authentic assessment, but authentic assessment as interpreted by STs. Therefore, a qualitative approach was believed to be an appropriate and effective design to achieve the research purpose. Moreover, a qualitative approach was adopted because of the lack of comprehensive research on Vietnamese STs' perceptions of authentic assessment (this assessment approach is new in the Vietnamese context). Thus, to maximise the richness of information related to STs' perceptions of authentic assessment, qualitative research methods were adopted.

To ensure that STs had meaningful experience of authentic assessment before expressing their perceptions of it, an intervention with three authentic assessment



tasks was designed and implemented in two classes of pedagogical-related modules in a teacher education programme in a university of education in Vietnam. Fourteen second-year STs agreed to participate in the whole research process. After each task, they were invited to state their opinions. Semi-structured individual interviews were the main research method used to collect data. The interview data were supported by data from observations and documents related to the pedagogy-related modules such as university reports. In other words, the data is purely qualitative. A thematic analysis approach, a crucial approach in qualitative data analysis, was also adopted in the current research.

### **3. Significance of the study**

The current study was conducted as an attempt to promote research on authentic assessment in teacher education in non-Western settings. Whereas authentic assessment in HE and teacher education has gained attention in Western countries, it is still overlooked in non-Western contexts, especially in Confucian-influenced countries (Luong, 2016; Nguyen, 2008). Subsequently, STs' perceptions of authentic assessment have not been investigated comprehensively here. Moreover, the study also aimed to implement authentic assessment as an alternative approach in Vietnamese teacher education and thus support the Vietnamese government's reform in HE and teacher education. Therefore, this study has the potential to make both theoretical and practical contributions.

As for theoretical contributions, the current study provides empirical evidence of views of authentic assessment in pedagogy-related modules in pre-service teacher education from STs in a non-Western setting. From this evidence, as well as the synthesis of the literature on students' perceptions of authentic assessment in other contexts, a framework of STs' perceptions of authentic assessment in professional courses can be initiated. This is the most important contribution of the current study because, to date, even in Western settings, there is no framework of STs' perceptions of authentic assessment in professional courses.

Despite the fact that the study was conducted in only one university of education in Vietnam and the findings cannot be generalised comprehensively to other

settings, it may still contribute to expanding understanding of students' perceptions of authentic assessment in other disciplines and countries, especially in countries with similar HE and teacher education to Vietnam. In other words, the study can help to modify existing frameworks of students' perceptions of authentic assessment in HE around the world. Furthermore, in the study, an intervention of authentic assessment was implemented to investigate how Vietnamese STs responded to it. Consequently, the findings indirectly contribute to build up a framework to design authentic assessment tasks in teacher education, and possibly in other HE settings.

Regarding practical contributions, the study is expected to promote the implementation of authentic assessment in teacher education in Vietnam. The implementation of authentic assessment can potentially support prospective teachers to improve their learning, gain practical knowledge, and develop professional skills effectively to prepare for the teaching profession. The prospective teachers' preparation for teaching will directly impact the success of educational reform at all levels of education.

Moreover, with the focus on STs' perceptions of authentic assessment, this study attends to the role of the student voice in educational reforms. It is envisaged that before any change in educational practice, the perspectives of stakeholders, especially students, have to be investigated thoroughly so that educational initiatives can be adjusted to suit the stakeholders' expectations. Furthermore, to some extent, the current study also encourages the use of authentic assessment in HE in Vietnam to increase the quality of professional competency development for students in other disciplines. In the context of the Vietnamese HE system, which still emphasises examinations for grading and qualifications, the graduates have not been appreciated in terms of their professional competencies to meet the labour market's needs. The implementation of authentic assessment is expected to bridge the gap between university training and the workplace.

#### **4. Structure of the thesis**

The *Introduction* provides a general rationale of the study which helps to identify why Vietnamese STs' perceptions of authentic assessment are the subject of study, the

justification of qualitative methodology, the significance of the study and the structure of the thesis.

*Chapter One* contextualises authentic assessment in professional courses in teacher education within literature on alternative assessment and authentic assessment in HE. The chapter elaborates two standpoints as the conceptual framework of authentic assessment in HE: the impact of social constructivism learning theory to alternative assessment including authentic assessment; and changes of HE that lead to authentic assessment. Additionally, the concept and dimensional framework of authentic assessment in teacher education are introduced and described. The validity of authentic assessment is also justified to strengthen the appropriateness of utilising authentic assessment in professional competency development. Finally, the teacher education curriculum is also outlined and the position of pedagogy-related modules is emphasised.

*Chapter Two* discusses the findings of prior research on students' perceptions of authentic assessment in HE and teacher education. These are presented in detail to provide the basis for data analysis and discussion later.

*Chapter Three* describes the context of higher education and teacher education in Vietnam to clarify the need of implementation of alternative assessment approaches including authentic assessment here.

*Chapter Four* outlines the methodology of the study to answer the research question. The chapter explains in detail the rationale for the chosen qualitative research. Next, a process of data collection is presented. Data analysis and ethical issues are also elaborated.

STs' perceptions of various authentic assessment tasks (including case methods, role-play, planning, organising and conducting an extracurricular activity) are presented in *Chapters Five, Six and Seven* respectively. Specific aspects of STs' perceptions of authentic assessment are discussed at the end of each chapter.

*Chapter Eight* combines the findings of three rounds of the study to produce a framework of STs' perceptions of authentic assessment. It also indicates factors influencing STs' perceptions of authentic assessment and revisits existing frameworks of authentic assessment design.

Finally, *Chapter Nine* draws together the answers to the research questions, implications, recommendations and limitations of the study as well as the researcher' reflections.

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **A LANDSCAPE OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND TEACHER EDUCATION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the study explores STs' perceptions of authentic assessment in pedagogy-related modules. Hence, a literature review related to authentic assessment in higher education (HE) and teacher education is presented in this chapter as a basis for the study. First of all, an overview of social constructivism and its relationship with alternative assessment is elaborated. Next, a brief history of changes in HE is provided to explain the need for alternative assessment in HE and teacher education. In addition, the key concept 'authentic assessment' and perspectives in validity in authentic assessment are included, to shed light on the choice of authentic assessment in HE and teacher education. Additionally, theoretical frameworks of authentic assessment in teacher education are also elaborated. The chapter ends with a description of existing findings in research on authentic assessment in HE and teacher education.

### **1.2 Social constructivism and its relationship with alternative assessment approaches**

It is undeniable that changes in assessment research and practice have been influenced by changes in the dominant theories of learning, because teaching, learning and assessment are aligned with each other.

Since the 1920s, notions of behaviourism have affected learning and assessment practices. Beliefs deriving from behaviourist learning theories stated that 'learning occurs by accumulating atomized bits of knowledge' and 'learning is tightly sequenced and hierarchical', and 'transfer is limited so each objective has to be explicitly taught' (Shepard, 2000, p.5). Such beliefs led to frequent testing to ensure that students have mastered one objective before teachers move on to the next; and objective tests became the preferred method at all levels of education at that time

(Shepard, 2000). The advantages of objective tests are large content coverage and high reliability of assessment results. However, the dominance of objective tests created the testing culture and scientific measurement paradigm that has been criticised for encouraging rote learning and promote the tendency to teach and learn for testing (Shepard, 2000).

In the 1970s, the establishment of social-constructivism theory influenced the re-conceptualisation of classroom assessment practice (Shepard, 2000). This also shifted a 'testing culture' to a 'learning culture' or an 'assessment culture' in which assessment is supposed to support students' learning rather than measure their achievement. In particular, social-constructivists believe that learning is an active process of mental construction in which existing knowledge enables the learning of new knowledge (Shepard, 2000). In other words, they believe that students with little domain-specific or procedural prior knowledge might encounter obstacles when learning anything new. Moreover, social-constructivism suppose that daily human experiences 'are transformed or processed into mental images or sound and stored for later use' (Tombari & Borich, 1999, p.12). This theory also focuses on studying the cognitive process and outcomes that underlie students' answers, instead of focusing on creating a learning environment to produce more correct answers, as in behavioural theory (Tombari & Borich, 1999). Therefore, cognitive theory focuses more on assessing learning processes instead of only learning 'products', and the implementation of assessment tasks to support students' learning. This theory also advocates formative assessment, which can take place throughout a learning process, with the main goal of providing information (feedback) to improve students' learning (Airasian & Russell, 2007; Black & Wiliam, 2009; Boyle & Charles, 2013). In other words, assessment should be integrated into the process of learning to support students' scaffolding of their expertise (Scholtz, 2007).

Social constructivism also supports the notion of situated cognitive theory, which emphasises that learning is the construction of knowledge in real-life situations (Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989; Kim, 2001; Herrington & Oliver, 2000). Therefore, assessment is meaningful if it requires students to apply their knowledge and skills to solve problems that reflect real practices and professions. This has supported the

establishment of authentic assessment, which will be discussed more in the following section.

Furthermore, the social constructivists contend that human intellectual abilities are socially and culturally developed (Shepard, 2000). Individual intellectual development is considered the result of a spiral of causality: the current level of individual development helps the individual to participate in a certain social interaction, which brings him to new states of development. These in turn lead the individual to participate in more sophisticated social interaction (Dillenbourg et al., 1995). Shepard (2000, p.20) argues that, 'new learning is shaped by prior knowledge and cultural perspectives' and that learning takes place in a specific social context in which people interact to learn about each other's experiences. For this reason, education researchers and practitioners encourage collaborative learning, which has proved beneficial to student learning and achievement through several empirical studies. Under certain conditions, working in pairs produced better performances in individuals post-test than individual training (Dillenbourg et al., 1995). In assessment, group-based assessment, peer assessment and giving and receiving feedback from peers to maximise social interaction among students are also believed to positively influence students' learning (Shepard, 2000).

Additionally, social-constructivism suggests that learning should focus on deep understanding (Shepard, 2000), which becomes the basis for assessing students' high-order thinking skills. The concept of 'metacognition', which is defined as 'thinking of thinking' refers to a process of self-monitoring learning and thinking and is another contribution made by cognitive theorists (Shepard, 2000). Hence, as Shepard (2000) states, from the social constructivism point of view, students' self-assessment should be adopted in assessment because self-assessment is 'part of the social processes that mediate the development of intellectual abilities, construction of knowledge, and formation of students' identities' (p. 43). Shepard (2000) reviewed several empirical studies on self-assessment and showed that self-assessment increased students' sense of responsibility for their own learning; improved the collaboration between teachers and students; and raised students' interest in criteria and substantive feedback, rather than their grades. In self-assessment, teachers do not give up responsibility, but share it with their students to build trust between them, and encourage students' autonomy

in learning and reflection on their learning (Shepard, 2000). On this point, the importance of assessment for the development of students' identities was also mentioned, which is an advantage of social constructivism over behaviourism. In self-assessment, students have more opportunities to understand themselves and formulate their identities.

In general, social constructivism became the dominant theory adopted in the current research because of its support for the establishment of alternative assessment approaches, including authentic assessment. Social constructivism also helped to explain why alternative assessment should be used in the contemporary era of HE.

### **1.3 Changes in higher education lead to authentic assessment**

Black (2002) generates three main purposes of assessment: to confirm students' achievement for certification or transfer to the next process; to provide accountability to public stakeholders, and to improve students' learning. Others include motivating students (Earl, 2003) and preparing students for the future (Irons, 2007). Indeed, assessment has served such purposes in education for a long time and recently the purposes of improving students' learning, motivation and preparing students for the future have been increasingly recognised as important due to changes in learning perspectives as mentioned above and changes in HE context.

Assessment is often divided into formative and summative. However, the division is not strictly clear (Airasian & Russell, 2007; Freeman & Lewis, 1998). It is agreed widely that summative assessment is often carried out at the end of a learning process, such as a project or a term, to judge the overall success of that process (Airasian & Russell, 2007; Boyle & Charles, 2013; Freeman & Lewis, 1998). Conversely, formative assessment focuses more on providing reflective information to improve student learning during the process (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Indeed, summative assessment may also be formative if it provides clear, detailed information, including feedback for students to improve their learning (Bennett, 2011; Irons, 2007). Therefore, the distinction between summative and formative assessment is fuzzy (Sambell, McDowell & Montgomery, 2013).



Despite the divergence of perspectives on summative and formative assessment, it is undeniable that, for decades, summative assessment has dominated all levels of education including HE (Stiggins, 2002). Formative assessment has only gained more attention in both education practice and research after the review of classroom assessment practice by Black and Wiliam (1998). The review emphasises that formative assessment can improve students' learning, especially for low achievers (Black & Wiliam, 1998), whereas summative assessment is seen as a tool for providing a snapshot of student learning without effectively and instantly affecting instruction (Stiggins, 2005). Although the review reflects mainly assessment practice at school, it is still helpful to identify the importance of formative assessment in HE. Recent emphasis on the acquisition of competences rather than ranking students in HE required teachers to use more formative assessment activities to enhance student learning, develop their competencies throughout a course, this called for a balance of summative and formative assessment to maximise the benefits of assessment for students (Stiggins, 2005). It should be noted that formative and summative assessment complement (rather than replace or compete with) each other.

The call for changing assessment in HE also derived partly from changes in the training purposes of HE (Atkins, 1995; Cox et al., 2014). Assessment focuses on students' performance measured against predetermined learning objectives; it is designed based on those objectives (Murphy, 2006). Therefore, when educational objectives change, assessment changes. For many years, HE focused on promoting learners' knowledge in specific domains (Dochy, Segers & Sluijsmans, 2006). However, with rapid production of new knowledge in modern society, the goals of HE should expand to include developing learners' skills, such as problem-solving skills and professional skills in real-life contexts. One of the most important goals of HE is to develop learners' capacities for lifelong learning to ensure that they can build up knowledge and skills throughout their lives (Boud, 1995, 2000). Therefore, assessment in HE is expected to equip students with the ability to undertake assessment of learning tasks throughout their lives, by checking their performance against assessment standards and seeking feedback from people in their environment to improve their learning (Boud, 2000; Boud & Soler, 2015). In other words, students can become long-term assessors (Boud, 2000; Boud & Soler, 2015). This is also a major

reason for the emergence of alternative assessment, which refers to all alternative forms of assessment focused on students' competencies in their future profession (Maclellan, 2004). Performance-based, authentic, direct, constructive assessment are all considered alternative forms of assessment, characterised by students' involvement in goals and criteria design, the requirement to perform a task or produce an artefact/product, and measurement of high-order thinking and social skills (Maclellan, 2004). More importantly, alternative assessment focuses on assessing students' competencies in real-life settings and promoting self-motivation and self-regulation to become successful lifelong learners (Maclellan, 2004). In the current research, authentic assessment will be focused on as representative of alternative assessment.

Authentic assessment was introduced in the late 1980s in the context of confusion about the validity of standardised tests (Archbald, 1991). For a long time, assessment in HE was dominated by written examinations (Flores et al., 2015) or multiple-choice tests (Kvale, 2007), which are criticised for focusing on students' knowledge and being limited in assessing students' skills and learning (Flores et al., 2015; Kvale, 2007). Archbald and Newman (1988) introduced this term 'authentic achievement', initially with the aim of seeking an alternative assessment approach to promote assessment centred on meaningful, real problems or tasks (Archbald, 1991; Frey, Schmitt & Allen, 2012). Wiggins (1989, 1990) launched the term 'authentic assessment' in 1989, refined the notion of authentic assessment and carried out several studies to support the benefits of applying authentic assessment in education. Today authentic assessment is considered a philosophy of classroom assessment and a combination of practical data collection techniques (Frey, Schmitt & Allen, 2012). In authentic assessment, new assessment methods such as portfolios, group projects, case studies and simulations have been implemented and proved their validity in assessment students' professional competencies (Brown & Knight, 1994; Kniveton, 1996; Struyven, Dochy & Janssens, 2005).

Furthermore, the promotion of other modes of assessment, including self-, peer- and co- assessment, is further evidence of the increase in authentic assessment in HE. These modes aim to encourage students to be active learners and get more from themselves, their peers and lecturers. Research on the use of these modes supports the positive impact of a combination of various modes of assessment on

student learning (Dochy, Segers & Sluijsmans, 2006). By involving students more in the assessment process, they become more responsive and reflective. Evidence confirms that students perceive self-, peer and co-assessment as reliable, fair and valid (Dochy, Segers & Sluijsmans, 2006). Feedback is key in authentic assessment. Feedback is considered to be 'information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding' (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). It seems to be one of the most influential factors on students' learning and achievement (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Evans, 2013; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). In authentic assessment, students can gain feedback from their teachers, peers and themselves to improve their performance in the next stage.

Despite of the advantages of authentic assessment, current assessment in HE is still focused on assessing students' knowledge and generation of materials for grading, rather than assessing their learning process and helping them to change their learning (Boud & Falchikov, 2007; Medland, 2016; Murphy, 2006). In other words, assessment has not changed as expected yet. Hence, encouraging the application of authentic assessment is required in HE, especially in professional training courses. However, it should be noted that evidence from other studies also indicates that students require preparation time to become accustomed to alternative assessment methods, and that if they lack sufficient preparation time this constrains the effectiveness of these methods (Gibbs & Dunbar-Goddet, 2009). For instance, there are a wide range of obstacles to self-, peer and co-assessment, including students' lack of assessment experience (Dochy, Segers & Sluijsmans, 2006). This may require a return to traditional assessment methods (Medland, 2016) or a need to prepare students for alternative forms of assessment. Therefore, the effect of these models requires careful study before they are implemented in any context (Dochy, Segers & Sluijsmans, 2006). For example, to apply authentic assessment in teacher education in Vietnam, research should be conducted to investigate how student teachers respond to this new assessment approach.

#### **1.4 Authentic assessment**

##### **1.4.1 *Concept of authentic assessment***

It is hard to suggest an exact definition of authentic assessment, even though recent

research has attended to this (Cumming & Maxwell, 1992). According to Frey, Schmitt and Allen (2012) there is a variety of definitions of authenticity presented in the literature and in material for teacher training. Firstly, some researchers have used general definitions of authentic assessment. For Wiggins (1990), 'Assessment is authentic when we directly examine student performance on worthy intellectual tasks' (p.2), making no distinction between performance assessment and authentic assessment. However, others have differentiated between these two approaches, such as Fischer and King (1995):

“Authentic assessment” is an inclusive term for alternative assessment methods that examine students’ ability to solve problems or perform tasks that closely resemble authentic situations.

Based on Fischer and King’s (1995) definition, authentic assessment includes a wide range of alternative assessment methods that aim to measure students’ competences and skills performed in the ‘real’ world, which means a more natural and real-world setting. This might distinguish authentic assessment from performance-based assessment (Herrington & Herrington, 2008). While performance-based assessment focuses on students’ performance, authentic assessment focuses on the context in which students’ performance is delivered (Herrington & Herrington, 2008). In fact, some researchers and practitioners have used performance assessment and authentic assessment interchangeably (Koh, 2017; Palm, 2008), emphasising the reality and context of performance assessment (Palm, 2008).

The emphasis on ‘realistic’ settings in authentic assessment does not mean that assessment has to happen in real workplaces, although it is encouraged (Frey, Schmitt & Allen, 2012). Authentic assessment can be carried out in the classroom, but the content of the tasks has to contain ‘real’ professional and practical issues. Students are then required to use knowledge and skills needed for their future profession (Frey, Schmitt & Allen, 2012; Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2004). Fischer and King’s (1995) definition of authentic assessment has been adopted for the current study because it does not attempt to restrict authentic assessment to a specific assessment method, as long as alternative assessment methods aim to examine students’ high-order thinking skills and actual competencies by performing or producing realistic tasks.

It is worth noting that authenticity of an assessment task is contextualised (Gulikers, Bastiaens, & Kirschner, 2004). According to Fischer and King's (1995) definition, authentic assessment tasks 'resemble authentic situations' but to whom and to what these 'situations' are authentic varies. Messick (1994) and Honebein, Duffy and Fishman (1993) emphasised this ambiguity in authentic assessment practice. Specifically, an assessment task can be realistic in terms of school life because it requires students to handle a school problem (Honebein, Duffy & Fishman, 1993; Messick, 1994). However, that assessment task may not be authentic outside school. Another example is that microteaching is an authentic assessment task for student teachers but it cannot be authentic when applied to nursery students. Such ambiguity highlights the need for assessment tasks that resemble common problems in the real professional life of specific groups of students.

Another point related to authentic assessment is that authenticity should be considered as a spectrum (Newmann & Wehlage, 1993). An assessment task can be more or less authentic depending on its connectedness to the world. For instance, a realistic task may be too complex and challenging for first-year students, and thus their lecturers may reduce the complexity of the task or apply less challenging criteria in assessment. As long as the task resembles a real situation to some extent, it is still authentic. There is no completely authentic assessment task because the tasks are not actually 'real', especially when they are conducted in classroom (Cumming & Maxwell, 1992). Even when an authentic assessment takes place in a workplace, it is not completely real. For example, during practicum, student teachers are assessed in their teaching work, but they are still under supervision of experienced teachers in school and have not yet assumed all the responsibilities of real teachers. As claimed by Messick (1994) and Honebein, Duffy and Fishman (1993), authenticity is a relative concept. Therefore, flexibility in consideration of authentic assessment should be appreciated in education practice, particularly when examining the validity of authentic assessment.

#### ***1.4.2 Validity of authentic assessment***

**Validity** is the most important characteristic of an assessment or test with a huge literature (Hogan, 2007). Validity is defined as the extent to which an assessment

actually measures what it is intended to measure, and permits appropriate generalisations about students' skills and abilities (Dietel, Herman & Knuth, 1991). In other words, validity reflects the accuracy and appropriateness of an assessment in measuring students' psychological constructs (Popham, 2002).

In line with the expansion of situated learning perspectives, in assessment both educational researchers and practitioners have drawn more attention to the contextualisation and authenticity of assessment (Wiggins, 1993). Wiggins (1993) suggested that standardised tests sacrifice validity for reliability. Standardised tests might constrain the bias of marking, but they cannot confirm whether students have the capacity to use the absorbed knowledge wisely or perform successfully in highly contextualised situations (Wiggins, 1993). Hence, in respect of assessing students' competencies to prepare for their future roles, Wiggins (1993) assumed that 'the criterion of a good test is its congruence with reality' (p.206) and agreed with other authors that maximising the fidelity and comprehensiveness of assessment tasks was an appropriate strategy to increase validity. This also assumes that an assessment task is valid when it appropriately reflects the complex, comprehensive and integrated competencies that need to be assessed (Gielen, Dochy & Dierick, 2003). Therefore, in competency-based education, authentic assessment is highly valid.

Moreover, recently there has been an emphasis on a new type of validity named predictive validity, which is defined as the ability of an assessment to predict students' performances of professional, subject-specific or key skills in the future (Boyd & Bloxham, 2007), especially in HE and vocational courses. Authentic assessment has been proved to have high predictive validity because it reflects a close link between results in university and graduates' performance in the workplace (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2004).

Alternative assessment methods have become established and widespread, and there has been an appeal to generate new criteria to judge the validity of assessment (Moss, 1992; Moss, Girard & Haniford, 2006). As Moss (1992) and Moss et al. (2006) claim, the validity of performance assessment was hard to assess with traditional approaches and criteria. Such assessment tasks typically allow students to be free in implementing integrated, complex knowledge and skills in a particular context, involve students in the assessment process and collect a full array of

indicators of student learning. Thus, 'meeting criteria related to such validity issues as reliability, generalisability, and comparability of assessment – at least as they are typically defined and operationalized – becomes problematic' (Moss, 1992, p.230). Therefore, validity of assessment should be judged by new criteria. According to Messick (1987, 1994),

Validity is an integrated evaluative judgment of the degree to which empirical evidence and theoretical rationales support the adequacy and appropriateness of inferences and actions based on test scores. (Messick, 1987, p.1)

Messick's (1987) definition indicates that validity is a matter of interpretation and social consequences. If this interpretation is accurate, the consequent educational decisions regarding teaching and learning implementation are more likely to be successful (Popham, 2002). Furthermore, validity refers to the degree of adequacy and appropriateness of the interpretation and use of assessment results (Messick, 1987). Messick's (1987) definition has widened understanding of validity and permitted a flexible judgment of the validity of an assessment.

Based on Messick's (1987) perspective, some authors proposed the term 'consequential validity', which refers to the impacts of assessment on student learning, teaching and other educational matters (Sambell, McDowell, & Brown, 1997). In practice, it is evident that assessment has both negative and positive effects on teaching and learning (Sambell, McDowell, & Brown, 1997). For example, meaningful assessment may motivate student learning and suggest appropriate changes in teaching (Sambell, McDowell, & Brown, 1997), while anxiety about assessment may push students towards surface learning (Gibbs, 1992; Ramsden, 1992) and push teachers towards teaching for the test (Biggs, 1996). Therefore, consequential validity should be positioned as crucial in assessment practice rather than other types of validity.

Due to the importance of the effect of assessment in education practice, by reviewing some leading assessment experts' perspectives, Moss (1992) and Moss et al. (2006) emphasised the need to further expand the conception of validity to include explicit consideration of the consequences of assessment use. Moss (1992) and Moss et al. (2006) proposed decreasing technical validity criteria to the overall potential of

the assessment in improving teaching and learning. For instance, assessors and assesseees should drop a reliance on scoring rubrics that focuses on assessing a single indicator of proficiency and consider the possibility of multiple indicators of learning (Moss, 1992). The experts also suggested that, instead of focusing on objectivity of assessment, which depersonalises the interpretation of students' work and the interaction among teachers, students and parents, assessment should be designed to encourage student involvement in assessment, collecting different evidence of student learning, and sharing experience among colleagues to maximise appropriate interpretations of assessment results (Moss, 1992; Moss et al., 2006). Thus, with alternative assessment including authentic assessment, instead of emphasising technical validity criteria as in traditional assessment, assessors should focus on the consequences for teaching and learning practice.

In addition to adopting new criteria to judge validity of assessment, researchers have also sought new approaches to validate assessment (Cronbach, 1988; Kane, 1992). Cronbach (1988) and Kane (1992) suggested using argument-based approaches to validation, in which each interpretation of assessment results would be supported by interpretive arguments involving multiple inferences and assumptions. This approach to validity has been claimed as applicable to any type of assessment interpretation or use, because the evaluation of an interpretive argument does not aim to make any absolute decision about validity, but to provide strategies to improve the plausibility of the interpretive argument and measurement procedures (Kane, 1992). Sambell, McDowell and Brown (1997) consider the argument-based approach as appropriate to judge validity of alternative assessment.

Furthermore, based on empirical research, authors proposed appropriate strategies to improve the validity of alternative assessment (Wiggins, 1993; Gielen, Dochy & Dietick, 2003; Jonsson & Svingby, 2007). By reviewing 75 empirical studies on scoring rubrics in performance assessment, Jonsson and Svingby (2007) concluded that scoring rubrics could enhance the reliability of scores; that validated rubrics could facilitate valid assessment; and that transparent rubrics encourage feedback and self-assessment, thus promoting learning and improving instruction. Such conclusions imply that, with validated rubrics, in performance assessment or authentic assessment, assessment designers do not need to sacrifice validity for reliability.



Moreover, it is suggested that designing an assessment task should begin with establishing an explicit conceptual framework that describes the domains of knowledge, skills and dispositions being assessed (Gielen, Dochy & Dierick, 2003). Based on this framework, the validity of the assessment can be judged by how well the assessment matches the content and cognitive specifications of the construct measured (Gielen, Dochy & Dietick, 2003).

To sum up, in assessment and competency-based education, assessment is considered a tool for learning and professional development. The validity of authentic assessment has been proved in terms of improving student learning and professional development. Based on these advantages of authentic assessment, the current research advocated the implementation of authentic assessment in teacher education in Vietnam.

### ***1.4.3 Authentic assessment in teacher education***

#### ***1.4.3.1 Learning in professional education and teacher education***

Adopting the perspective of social constructivists, there have been some attempts to contextualise learning to bridge the gap between theoretical learning in the classroom and real-life application of knowledge in the work environment (Herrington & Oliver, 2000), such as the model of 'cognitive apprenticeships' suggested by Collins, Brown and Newman (1988). In general, cognitive apprenticeship shares some common perspectives with the traditional apprentice model. In the traditional apprentice model, apprentices learn how to carry out a task in a domain through a combination of observation, coaching and practice, and the responsibilities of the teachers are modelling, coaching and fading (Collins, Brown & Newman, 1988). At the beginning of the apprenticeship process, apprentices continuously observe the master modelling the target process, then attempt to replicate the process step-by-step under the guidance of the master (coaching). The master gradually reduces their instruction and participation (fading), focuses on giving feedback to the apprentice and the apprentices practice by themselves to execute the whole process (Collins, Brown & Newman, 1988). Such a model has been applied in several areas of professional training, including teacher training (Hockly, 2000; Kennedy, 1999). Teacher trainees observe their educators at university and supervisors in school modelling teaching methods and classroom management strategies, and then demonstrate their own

skills under the educators and supervisors' guidance. In the final stage, the trainees take responsibility for teaching and managing a class during their practicum. Indeed, all teacher trainees go through a long apprenticeship during their periods in school and this experience influences their teaching style later (Kennedy, 1999).

However, as Collins, Brown and Newman (1988) claim, traditional apprenticeship should be expanded to cognitive apprenticeship, because traditional apprenticeship is appropriate for training in concrete skills, but ineffective in terms of complex processes or cognitive and metacognitive skills. While traditional apprenticeship focuses on the specific context in which the process takes place, cognitive apprenticeship places students in various settings, which helps them to apply their skills in different contexts (Collins, Brown & Newman, 1988). Therefore, in cognitive apprenticeship, self-monitoring and self-correction are emphasised to develop students' ability to reflect on the difference between students' and masters' performance (Collins, Brown & Newman, 1988).

In teacher education, cognitive apprenticeship is supported to replace traditional apprenticeship because teaching is a complex task (Hockly, 2000). In the first stage of the training process, teacher trainees observe the trainers' modelling in several lessons; the trainees then analyse the modelled teaching process. The trainees are also supported to generalise important characteristics of good lessons based on their observations, reasoning and discussion with the trainers and peers before the trainees perform their teaching, with help of the trainers, and later independently (Hockly, 2000). With cognitive apprenticeship, teacher trainees have opportunities to improve their critical thinking and reflection skills, which support their professional development afterwards (Hockly, 2000).

After suggesting cognitive apprenticeship, Brown, Collins and Diuguid (1989) proposed the theory of situated cognition or situated learning and produced a proposal for a model of instruction that has implications for classroom practice. Situated learning emphasises what learning is specific to the situation in which it is learned (Anderson, Reder & Simon, 1996). Learning knowledge and skills in context helps students to identify the usefulness of such knowledge and skills in real life (Herrington & Oliver, 2000). The context here means both a physical and social context, and social context plays a more crucial role in learning (Dillenbourg et al.,

1995). Focus on the situated nature of cognition raises the importance of authentic activities in class that are similar to actual practitioners' activities (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Authentic activities are believed to foster students' thinking and problem-solving skills, which contribute to their success in out-of-school settings (Putnam & Borko, 2000). It is recommended that teaching experience for prospective teachers should take place in both the university and school classroom (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Although school-based experience has advantages in developing prospective teachers' professional competencies, university-based authentic training also supports that development (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Educational cases and videotapes of teaching demonstration used on university-based courses are effective in preparing prospective teachers for the richness and complexity of genuine pedagogical problems (Putnam & Borko, 2000).

Another critical aspect of the situated learning model is the notion of the apprentice observing the 'community of practice', a concept proposed by Lave & Wenger (1991). It is worth noting that a community of practice is intertwined with a domain, a community and a professional practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). It is supposed that progressive participation in a culture of practice enables the newcomers to move from the role of observers to fully-functioning members of that community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The notion of community of practice has been applied broadly in organisations, government and education. In teachers' professional learning, a community of practice has been empirically proved to be an effective model to promote the professional growth of in-service teachers and prospective teachers (Putnam & Borko, 2000). The community of practice in school not only helps teachers to share teaching experience, but can also affect the school curriculum (Putnam & Borko, 2000). With teacher trainees, it is very important for them to be enculturated into the teaching community to learn 'to think, talk and act as a teacher' (Putnam & Borko, 2000, p.10). When entering the field, teacher trainees can obtain experience through the mentoring process from the university teacher educators and experienced teachers (Putnam & Borko, 2000).

In short, social constructivism seems to be the root of modern learning theories, which have a profound influence on professional training in terms of employing authentic teaching, learning and assessment strategies.

### ***1.4.3.2 Theoretical frameworks of authentic assessment in teacher education***

Borrowing the notion of authentic assessment in other disciplines, researchers in teacher education have identified characteristics of authentic assessment in teacher education (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Rennert-Ariev, 2005).

Rennert-Ariev (2005) explores five characteristics of authentic assessment in teaching in terms of three knowledge-constitutive interests: assessment is technical, practical, and emancipatory. In authentic teaching assessment, STs should understand clearly and have control over how they will be assessed, the conditions and context of their assessment. Authentic assessment is also required to provide opportunities for students to reflect on their professional development. Moreover, in this assessment approach, assessors and students can communicate to understand each other and may use this dialogue as a basis to alter the traditional power relationship between them. In other words, students have opportunities to contribute to both assessment design and assessment of products. Finally, authentic assessment in initial teacher education should allow assessors to use their instruction and assessment to pursue educational goals or to challenge the institutional and bureaucratic structures of their work (Rennert-Ariev, 2005). In Rennert-Ariev's (2005) view, in authentic assessment in pre-service teacher education, the role of STs is emphasised. Rennert-Ariev's (2005) findings are a solid theoretical background for implementing authentic assessment in teacher education. However, Rennert-Ariev does not provide empirical evidence to support this framework.

From a different perspective, Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000), after implementing a variety of authentic assessment tools in teacher education programmes in the US, suggest four characteristics of authentic assessment for teaching. They stress the context in which teaching competencies are assessed. These researchers expect assessment in teacher education to focus on the actual requirements of knowledge, skills, and dispositions for teachers as used in teaching and learning contexts, rather than relying on more remote proxies. Assessment tasks may include teaching work such as planning, analysing teaching materials and assessing students, as in practice, teachers have to use knowledge and skills across disciplines. Authentic assessment tasks thus require students to integrate a wide range

of knowledge and skills. As Ryan and Kuhs (1993) suggest, in authentic assessment multiple sources of evidence should be collected over time and in diverse contexts. It ensures that all prospective teachers' competences will be assessed and, more importantly, assessed many times in different contexts. To improve the reliability of authentic assessment, assessment evidence is evaluated with practical criteria by individuals with relevant expertise. The criteria to judge prospective teachers' work against should be similar to the criteria for judging the work real teachers do. Lastly, assessment practice includes multiple opportunities for prospective teachers to learn and practice the desired outcomes and for feedback and reflection to help them improve (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000).

With Darling-Hammond and Snyder's (2000) framework, STs' outcomes are considered comprehensively, and the outcomes may develop teachers' potential competencies. However, the most important contribution of Darling-Hammond and Snyder's (2000) framework is the provision of clear and specific guidance for authentic assessment of teaching. They not only build a sophisticated theoretical framework, but also provide examples of authentic assessment in several good initial teacher education programmes in the US. However, as Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000) emphasise context, the framework should be considered carefully before being transferred to another education context. Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000) views have been taken into account in this study for designing the intervention of authentic assessment for STs, analysing the collected data and discussing the results.

In addition to Rennert-Ariev's (2005) and Darling-Hammond and Snyder's (2000) framework, research by Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner (2004) is relevant to the current study. Although Gulikers, Bastiaens and Kirschner's (2004) framework was not constructed for teacher education, it was based on intensive analysis of related literature and empirical data on students' perceptions of authenticity in assessment in vocational education. Guliker, Bastiaens and Kirschner's (2004) framework has been employed in several studies with students from different majors in vocational education in the Netherlands to explore how the students view authentic assessment. This means the framework has been modified by students. Meanwhile, the current study also aimed to explore STs' views of authentic assessment. Therefore, referring to Guliker, Bastiaens and Kirschner's (2004) framework in this study was an appropriate

choice.

Gulikers, Bastiaens and Kirschner (2004) suggest five dimensions of authentic assessment: tasks, physical or virtual context, social context, results and criteria:

**Task:** the content and requirements of authentic assessment tasks. Authentic tasks contain realistic problems that students might confront later (Sambell, McDowell & Montgomery, 2013). Tasks require the integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes. They are complex and require students' ownership in finding solutions. In authentic assessment, students need to mobilise all their competencies (including prior knowledge) to solve complex, multidisciplinary and unstructured tasks.

**Physical or virtual context:** the physical context of an authentic assessment should reflect ways and places in which students can apply their knowledge, skills and attitudes in professional practice (Herrington & Oliver, 2000). With the development of modern technology, an authentic assessment environment can be set up in both digital and real-life settings (Sambell, McDowell & Montgomery, 2013) and so numerous kinds of resources may be required. It is advised that the timeline be flexible, depending on the task (Archbald, 1991).

**Social context:** a model for authentic assessment should consider social processes presented in real-life contexts. When a real situation requires collaboration, the assessment should also require this among students. When a real situation requires independence, the assessment should demand each student finish the task individually.

**Assessment result/form:** an authentic result/form is characterized by four elements: (1) It should be a high-quality product or performance that students could later be asked to produce in real life (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2004); (2) it should demonstrate students' underlying competencies (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000); (3) it should involve a series of tasks and multiple indicators of learning in order to reach fair conclusions (Archbald, 1991; Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000); and (4) students should present their finished work to others in oral or written forms, to ensure that their apparent mastery is genuine (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000).

**Criteria and standards:** it is compulsory to deliver the criteria of assessment results to students beforehand. The criteria should be connected to realistic outcomes and should concern the development of relevant professional competencies derived from criteria used in real-life situations (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2004).

Due to its clarity and appropriateness to students' perceptions, the framework constructed by Gulikers, Bastiaens and Kirschner (2004) is another main reference used to design an intervention of authentic assessment and analyse data collected with Vietnamese STs in the current study.

To sum up, there are several existing frameworks of authentic assessment constructed in pre-university and vocational courses in Western countries (Frey, Schmitt & Allen, 2012). The frameworks have been transferred to HE and teacher education by some empirical studies (Frey, Schmitt & Allen, 2012). Notably, although there are some studies related to authentic assessment in HE in non-Western settings (Bekirogullari, Tungkasamit & Junpeng, 2012; Yusof et al., 2012), there has not been any framework of authentic assessment suggested for HE or teacher education there. Hence, constructing a specific and applicable framework of authentic assessment for HE and teacher education in non-Western settings is be a valuable task in educational research.

#### ***1.4.3.3 Current implementation of authentic assessment in teacher education***

Literature on assessment in teacher education has mostly focused on assessment during practicum; assessment in university-based modules in initial teacher education is still very rare. However, there is evidence that the expansion of authentic assessment in HE has inevitably influenced the assessment practice in teacher education (Tillema, 2009). A range of teacher education programmes has adopted authentic assessment, which is reflected in the use of various assessment strategies to develop prospective teachers' competencies (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Tillema, 2009; Zeichner, 2000). A portfolio has become a common and powerful tool in authentic assessment in teacher education for gradually improving prospective teachers' competencies through each element of the teaching portfolio (Mokhtari et

al., 1996; Ryan & Kuhs, 1993). Feedback is also receiving significant attention in assessment in teacher education (Tillema & Smith, 2009). Coupled with self-assessment and peer assessment (Sluismans & Prins, 2006), feedback from multiple assessors (teacher educators, school supervisors in practicum, peers and STs themselves) helps prospective teachers to develop self-directed learning and achieve competence in teaching (Tillema & Smith, 2009).

Some studies (Cruickshank & Metcalf, 1993; Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Wilson, 1995) of assessment in teacher education reveal that traditional assessment, such as multiple-choice questions or other paper-based tests, does not assess prospective teachers' teaching competencies effectively. Traditional assessment can assess students' knowledge and a limited number of skills, but not their morality, dispositions or other characteristics of their teaching. It is also unsuitable for assessing what prospective teachers really do in the classroom (Mokhtari et al., 1996). Moreover, some (Quirk, Witten & Weinberg, 1973) argue that the criteria used to assess STs' teaching during training are less demanding than on-the-job criteria. Therefore, in order to make assessment in preservice teacher education more reliable and valid, it is highly recommended that assessment links to requirements in practice and takes place in a teaching context. In other words, authentic assessment should replace traditional assessment, because it may provide 'opportunities for developing and examining teachers' thinking and actions in situations that are experience-based and problem-oriented and include or simulate actual acts of teaching' (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000, p.524). These strategies are believed to help STs better understand variables that might influence their work in school (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Segers, Martens & Van den Bossche, 2008).

Some researchers use portfolios as an authentic assessment method to assess pre-service and in-service teachers, and it seems this assessment strategy has better predictive validity since it allows both teaching process and product to be assessed (Mokhtari et al., 1996; Xu et al., 2013). Portfolios also allow the assessment of a range of subject knowledge, knowledge of learners and learning, intellectual and problem-solving skills, pedagogical skills and curriculum knowledge (Mokhtari et al., 1996; Xu et al., 2013). In addition to portfolios, there is a variety of assessment methods available, including lesson planning, presentation, microteaching, case methods, simulation



activity and role-play (Merseeth, 1996). Case and simulation methods have been confirmed as effective assessment methods by researchers and practitioners in HE and teacher education (Cox et al., 2014; Levin, 1995; Merseeth, 1996; Van Ments, 1999). Case methods offer STs real-life situations to find appropriate solutions to (Levin, 1995; Merseeth, 1996; Segers, Martens & Van den Bossche, 2008). Case methods stimulate STs' contextualised knowledge and provide opportunities to practise analysis, interpretation and problem-solving (Merseeth, 1996). Moreover, Van Ments (1999) and Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000) suggest that simulation methods (such as simulated activities and role-play) have some crucial advantages, such as narrowing the gap between training in institutions and practice; giving opportunities for students to practice their interpersonal, communication and emotional management skills; motivating students; and changing students' attitudes. Simulated scenarios also contain real-life situations. When students participate in role-play tasks, they explore behavioural patterns and reactions to situations they may be faced with. Teachers have to cope with a range of unpredictable student behaviours and activities every day (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000). Thus, it is necessary that all prospective teachers should be prepared with a thorough understanding of educational principles and strategies, professional skills and appropriate attitudes.

Teacher educators also realise that planning teaching activities is essential for STs to maximise their success in practice (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Plans help them to formulate content, select methods, prepare aids, and estimate the time needed to conduct an educational activity (Sayeski & Brown, 2011). Education broadly consists of activities that cannot be enacted without careful planning. Using education plans to assess STs is, therefore, appropriate. Although studies of the use of authentic assessment in teacher education have limited results, some of them show the use of this strategy to improve the quality of assessment in teacher education.

In short, authentic assessment has become an alternative assessment approach in teacher education around the world. The theoretical background has been built to some extent, and some empirical studies are available despite the existing gap in both research and practice, because teacher education systems in most countries are unique (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012). Therefore, to build up a theoretical framework with empirical evidence suitable for each context of teacher education,

more empirical studies are recommended.

### **1.5 Teacher education curriculum**

In the twenty-first century, there has been a surge in what is required of teachers, including understanding how people learn and how to teach effectively. Teachers are now required to know aspects of pedagogical content knowledge and educational psychology, to understand every child and find a way to nurture that spirit. They also have to construct and manage classroom activities efficiently, communicate with their students, use technology, and self-assess their practice to improve it continually (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Thus, teacher education programmes around the world have to be redesigned to ensure prospective teachers have the capacity to do their work in schools.

There is a variety of teacher education curricula based on a specific context. According to Grossman, Hammerness and McDonald (2009), the teacher education curriculum has been divided between foundation modules and method modules. Foundation modules are meant to provide 'foundational' knowledge, which often means disciplinary knowledge for teaching, including knowledge of learners and learning; knowledge of school purposes, school and classroom structures. Method modules provide prospective teachers with the knowledge and skills for teaching particular subject matter, classroom management, and assessment (Grossman et al., 2009). All modules are important to the teaching profession. Foundational modules provide 'conceptual tools' that help teachers frame and interpret teaching practice, but they do not offer specific solutions to specific situations. Method courses, in contrast, provide 'practical tools' that help teachers develop pedagogical strategies and tools for classroom practice (Grossman, Hammerness & McDonald, 2009; Grossman, Smagorinsky & Valencia, 1999). It can be seen that both types of modules provide prospective teachers with pedagogical knowledge and skills. Pedagogy is defined as a combination of 'teachers' ideas, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and understanding about the curriculum, teaching and learning process and their students, and which impact on their 'teaching practice'' (Westbrook et al., 2013, p.7). Therefore, pedagogy-related modules (the term used in the current study) should develop prospective teachers' beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and understanding.

Several studies on teacher education programs in Europe, Australia and the US show a trend of improving professional knowledge and experiences for prospective teachers through both university-based and school-based training (Beach & Bagley, 2013; Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012). However, even in teacher education systems of developed countries, there are still gaps between what trainee teachers learn from their programs and what they really do in school (Koetsier, 1995; Smith, 2000). Therefore, it is suggested that teacher education institutions design programs that help prospective teachers develop a solid base of teaching and learning and prepare them to enact their understandings in complex classrooms with diverse students. To achieve this, one of the most effective strategies consists in simulating the kinds of settings in which prospective teachers will have opportunities to learn about teaching and form a vision of how to become teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2006). This is also why authentic learning and assessment should be promoted in teacher training programs (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

Overall, attempting to increase the quality of teacher education programmes is an international trend, filling the gap between the taught curricula and practice at school with authentic learning and assessment, considered powerful tools by scholars and educators. Therefore, trial implementations of authentic tasks in teacher training programs to explore their characteristics or measure their effectiveness can be useful for teacher education practice.

## **1.6 Conclusion**

The chapter has presented the theoretical background of authentic assessment in HE and teacher education. As there has not been any framework based on Vietnamese STs' perceptions of authentic assessment produced as yet, first of all, the study has to refer to assessment theories and prior results of research in Western countries such as the US, the UK, Australia or the Netherlands. Findings from the studies of authors such as Gulikers, Bastiaens and Kirschner (2004), Rennert-Ariev (2005) and Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000) constitute the main references of the present study. This theoretical background as well as the consideration of the context of teacher education in Vietnam is helpful to design an intervention of authentic assessment to examine how STs perceive it.

It can be seen that the promotion of alternative assessment, especially authentic assessment, has impacted on HE and teacher education all over the world, including Vietnam. Therefore, assessment in teacher education in Vietnam also requires change. As mentioned earlier, stakeholders' perceptions of assessment need to be explored to ensure success in the attempt to establish new assessment approaches. In this study, STs' voice has been heard, and the next chapter presents a review of literature on students' perceptions of assessment and authentic assessment.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND TEACHER EDUCATION**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The chapter will summarise the existing literature on students' perceptions of assessment and authentic assessment. Studies on teacher education will be also included. It will provide an understanding of how students across disciplines (including teacher education) and education systems view assessment and authentic assessment and factors influencing their views. Furthermore, by reviewing findings of prior studies on the impact of students' perceptions of assessment on their learning, the chapter also highlights the importance of research on students' perceptions of authentic assessment.

#### **2.2 Multi-dimensionality and subjectivity of students' perceptions of assessment and authentic assessment in higher education**

The meanings of perception are still debatable, sometimes the uses of 'conception' 'perception' or 'belief' are interchangeable but, to some extent, these concepts are different. Conception can be defined as mental representation of phenomena in reality (Thompson, 1992), or personal ideas or beliefs of a specific issue (Swinkels, Koopman & Beijaard, 2013). The concept of 'perception' may be used by educational researchers in their own ways (Johnson, 1994). In general, the meaning of 'perception' in education seems to be similar to 'conception'; both refer to personal understanding, ideas or views regarding something in the objective world. Human perception is a complex, multidimensional and interrelated construct (Thompson, 1992), consequently, students' perceptions of assessment reflect the students' view of assessment and include their perspective on a variety of aspects of assessment.

Researchers have conducted several empirical studies to investigate students' perceptions of assessment and authentic assessment. The findings from both qualitative and quantitative research show that students' perceptions of assessment

and authentic assessment are multi-faceted, diversified and subjective (Struyven, Dochy & Janssens (2005). Their perceptions of assessment might cover a range of issues such as purposes of assessment, validity of assessment, impact of assessment on student learning and school development, preferences of assessment methods, and fairness in assessment (Struyven, Dochy & Janssens, 2005). Each researcher might be interested in students' perceptions on one or few dimensions of assessment. This is applicable to authentic assessment. As presented in Chapter 1, educators and scholars have categorised the characteristics of authentic assessment according to their perspectives and practice. These categories share some common ideas or dimensions such as the emphasis on real-life situations, the resemblance between the contexts of the assessment tasks and the tasks in daily or professional life, the integrated requirements of knowledge, skills and disposition to solve problems in assessment tasks, students' involvement in the whole assessment process, and multi-indicators of learning (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Gulikers, 2006; Rennert-Ariev, 2005). This also means that the concept of authentic assessment covers several dimensions including task requirements, forms, outcomes, students' roles, collaboration, and the impact of authentic assessment on students' development. In other words, students' perceptions of authentic assessment also encompass multiple dimensions.

However, the educators and scholars might have different perspectives on some dimensions of authentic assessment such as physical contexts, collaboration and individualisation in authentic assessment (Archbald & Newmann, 1988; Wiggins, 1989; Gulikers, 2006). For instance, Archbald and Newmann (1998) insisted on collaboration requirements in authentic assessment while Gulikers (2006) accepted both individual and group-based authentic assessment tasks. This reflects subjectivity of the concept of authentic assessment. Assessment may be seen as highly authentic to one person, but not to another because of differences in individuals' prior experience in daily or professional life (Gulikers et al., 2008a). This means students' perceptions of authentic assessment may be different from their teachers or students from different groups. For instance, teachers determine five dimensions of authentic assessment including content of the task, physical context, social context, forms/ results and criteria whereas students agree with their teachers in four dimensions above except social context (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2006; Gulikers et al., 2008b). Therefore, an

assessment, which is authentic in teachers' views, might not be authentic in students' views. This highlights the importance of investigating students' perceptions of authentic assessment when it is implemented to ensure that students also see the linkage between the assessment and practice. Additionally, it is notable that the authenticity of assessment can be context-dependent: a task can be authentic in one discipline, but not in another. Hence, investigating beholders' perceptions of authentic assessment should be placed in a specific context such as teacher education as in the case of the current study..

### **2.3 Students' perceptions of authentic assessment in higher education and teacher education**

As presented in Chapter 1, authentic assessment has been applied widely in higher education around the world. Following this trend, students' perceptions of authentic assessment or authenticity in assessment are also studied more carefully (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2006; Herrington & Herrington, 1998) but the findings are still limited. In the following section, initial findings of research on students' perceptions of multiple dimensions of authentic assessment in HE and teacher education will be presented.

#### ***2.3.1. Demands and preference of authentic assessment methods***

There are various assessment methods such as multiple-choice tests, closed book or open book exams, essays, short-answer questions, designs, drawings, poster displays, projects, simulation, oral questioning, case studies, and portfolios (Brown & Knight, 1994). Findings from several studies with students in different countries and disciplines show that students have tendency to interpret the nature and demands of each method based on their own perspectives. Such interpretation influences their preference of assessment methods and their adoption of learning strategies. As a result, studies of students' perceptions of assessment methods are also focused in order to explore whether students understand adequately the nature and demand of each method and use appropriate learning strategies.

As for authentic assessment, students think it is more challenging than

traditional assessment with the requirements of applying the theoretical knowledge in practice by designing and developing a workplace applicable tool (Ashford-Rowe, Herrington & Brown, 2014; Herrington & Herrington, 1998). Therefore, the students have to prove deeper and more sophisticated understanding, holistic knowledge structure, and practical skills (Meyers & Nulty, 2009). To complete authentic assessment tasks, students in Ashford-Rowe, Herrington and Brown (2014) suppose that they have to demonstrate the competencies to integrate a range of skills and information from different domains. Moreover, the students also emphasise the requirements of transferring knowledge, skills and attitudes from one domain to another domain and demonstrating metacognition by critical reflection in authentic assessment (Ashford-Rowe, Herrington & Brown, 2014). It can be seen that authentic assessment is demanding in terms of adopting high order thinking skills and producing practical and useful performance and products.

Students' preference of authentic assessment methods is dependent on specific contexts. For instance, students in different subjects such as IT, Business Studies, History, Psychology, Built Environment, Social Science, Language criticise that traditional assessment methods do not enhance their learning (Sambell & McDowell, 1998; Sambell, McDowell & Brown, 1997; Sambell, McDowell & Montgomery, 2013). The students claim that traditional assessment methods motivate them to study for the examination without deep understanding of the lessons. They appreciate alternative assessment with a variety of authentic tasks such as case methods, simulation, group projects, and research on specific topics because these methods encourage deep learning although they are challenging. Nevertheless, in Iannone and Simpson's (2013) study with mathematics students have opposite perspectives of assessment as they believe that traditional assessment, especially closed-book examination, is better than alternative assessment in distinguishing their competencies (Iannone & Simpson, 2012). The findings imply that students' perceptions of assessment methods have many differences across disciplines, culture, and education contexts. Therefore, changing assessment to meet learners' needs in a specific context, researchers are suggested to look for learners' voices in those contexts. Borrowing the results of the research from other contexts without



modification may not be a useful starting point for countries looking into changing their education policies. Therefore, in the case of teacher education in Vietnam which is the context of the current study, it is necessary to conduct research on STs' perceptions of authentic assessment before implementing this assessment approach into practice.

Moreover, results from another study reveal that most students prefer to be assessed by a variety of assessment methods (Surgenor, 2013). In line with the diversity in students' preferences of assessment methods, a consideration of using multiple-method approach in assessment including traditional and alternative assessment is suggested to assess fairly and reliably students' competences (Sambell, McDowell & Brown, 1997; Sambell, McDowell & Montgomery, 2013). However, there is evidence that despite the preference for alternative assessment, students feel more secure with familiar methods (Surgenor, 2013). They might perceive that alternative assessment is high in study load and challenging in requirements of thinking skills (Gijbels & Dochy, 2006). Hence, in practice, when asked, they might choose traditional assessment methods instead of alternative assessment methods. This also indicates the need for giving students opportunities to practise new assessment forms before the new forms are officially adopted.

### ***2.3.2. Purpose and validity***

As discussed in the previous chapter, purposes of assessment include both judgmental and developmental dimension (Brown, Bull & Pendlebury, 2013; Brown & Knight, 1994). In practice, students do not always perceive both purposes. In a study in Hong Kong, a half of the students show their negative emotions towards assessment and many of them consider assessment as a mean for school, family and society to monitor their learning rather than themselves (Brown & Wang, 2013; Wang & Brown, 2014). Similar observation can be found in other countries. In developed countries, meanwhile, students tend to think negatively about traditional assessment which is seen as a way to damage their learning, encourage short-term learning and make students forget the lessons after the examinations (Sambell, McDowell & Brown, 1997). Students only see the importance of traditional assessment in grading and

ranking and rarely recognise its values in their learning, therefore they do not feel that assessment is useful for them (Sambell, McDowell & Brown, 1997). Such perceptions might lead to inadequate use of assessment to improve their learning.

Students' perceptions of purposes of assessment also imply their perceptions of validity of assessment. For instance, when students do not recognise the developmental purpose of assessment, they might not recognise the consequential validity of assessment which is defined as the impact of assessment on teaching and learning (MacLellan, 2001). In case of authentic assessment, many studies show that students realise the impact of the assessment tasks on their learning strategies (Ashford-Rowe, Herrington & Brown, 2014; Herrington & Herrington, 1998; Struyven, Dochy & Janssens, 2005). For instance, students have to engage with learning resources, collect and analyse data to make assumptions of real-life phenomenon instead of reading materials and memorising them (Meyers & Nulty, 2009).

Students' perceptions of the consequential validity of assessment are linked to their perceptions of feedback. Particularly, if students can see the value of feedback, they also realise the impact of assessment on their learning and use feedback to improve their learning (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004; Poulos & Mahony, 2008). In contrast, a significant number of students refuse completely these values of feedback (Dowden et al., 2013), therefore, feedback does not impact on their learning. An empirical study done by Poulos and Mahony (2008) explore students' appreciation of feedback depends on how feedback is delivered and how it relates to the criteria, marks and grades of an assessment. Students who prefer specific feedback point out what they can improve to gain better grades in the next assessment (Lizzio & Wilson, 2008). They also prefer clear and consistent feedback, which encompasses both negative and positive aspects as well as encouraging them to try more in learning (Lizzio & Wilson, 2008; Rees, Sheard & McPherson, 2002). These findings reveal that to improve students' perceptions of consequential validity of assessment, it is recommended that teachers should focus on providing constructive feedback to students.

Moreover, research findings also show that students are not convinced by the predictive validity of traditional assessment with their future success. Meanwhile one

of the important impacts of assessment is to provide indicators for students' prospective performance (Brown, 2013). Students underestimate predictive validity of traditional assessment because they do not see the connection between the assessment tasks and the real tasks in professional practice (Sambell, McDowell & Brown, 1997). Conversely, all students who have experience with authentic assessment recognise the connection between the assessment tasks and their professional work (Herrington & Herrington, 1998). This indicates the interrelation between students' perceptions of validity and their perceptions of authenticity in assessment.

Particularly, in some studies, through authentic assessment tasks simulating real-life scenarios, students are able to be aware of the relationship between their academic activities and daily life beyond their schools (Sambell, McDowell & Montgomery, 2013). In other words, students can recognise the value of content of authentic assessment tasks to their profession. For example, in Sambell, McDowell & Montgomery (2013), social science students are required to design leaflets for a lay audience. After the task, the students think they had to understand the material more comprehensively. Since the ways they provided information on the leaflets was more realistic, they believed that they could be asked to do the same task in the future in their workplace (Sambell, McDowell & Montgomery, 2013). Being involved in authentic assessment tasks, students have opportunities to rehearse their professional works and build up their understanding about it. In Herrington & Herrington's study (1998), with an authentic assessment task in which student teachers were situated as new teachers in school to solve a school problem, primary and secondary prospective mathematics teachers in Australia reported that real-life teaching tasks help them to develop required competencies to fulfill various roles in school, other than teaching lessons (Herrington & Herrington, 1998). In another example, engineering students are required to design communication system by working in groups (Sambell, McDowell & Montgomery, 2013). When they finished the task, they could figure out abstract theoretical material by putting it in a specific context and felt more confident if they have to face with this challenge as engineers in the future (Sambell, McDowell & Montgomery, 2013). In short, students tend to appreciate values of authentic

assessment to their future profession. Broadly speaking, in the students' view, authentic assessment has good construct, consequential and predictive validity (Sambell, McDowell & Brown, 1997). Such findings incentivise the implication of authentic assessment in HE.

However, students' perceptions of purposes and validity might be different than those of teachers. Academic staffs often see that assessment is useful for teaching and learning while students have contradictory perspective (Fletcher et al., 2012). The staffs normally value the importance of feedback in grading, ranking and developing students' motivation, knowledge and skills (MacLellan, 2001) while students only see the grading purpose of assessment. The differences between staffs and students' perceptions of assessment indicate that a valid assessment in staff's views might not be seen as such in students' ones. This reveals the need of investigating comprehensively students' perceptions of assessment practice.

### **2.3.3. Fairness**

Fairness of assessment is one of the most important issues of students. Fairness refers to an assessment that treats people with respect, avoid stereotypes and unnecessarily materials, use appropriate terminology to refer to people and represent diversity of people' competences (Zieky, 2006). Fairness also means giving equal opportunities for people to get good results, minimising bias and having high validity (Gipps & Stobart, 2009) or is able to distinguish students' competences (Scott et al., 2014).

To students, fairness in assessment is very important and they perceive it not only in term of cheating (Sambell, McDowell & Brown, 1997). Using inappropriate assessment methods with irrelevant requirements which ask students to do something irrelevant to their professional life later or does not reflect what they get during the learning process is also considered as unfair assessment (Fletcher et al. 2012; Sambell & McDowell & Brown, 1997). Therefore, students assume that alternative assessment forms are fair assessment methods because they are able to assess students' problem-solving skills, professional skills and useful for their future career (Duffield & Spencer, 2002).

Moreover, in students' opinion, diverse interpretation of assessment criteria is also another factor influencing fairness. In some cases, students also do not regard some authentic assessment methods such as oral presentation or poster presentation as fair because of diversity in interpretation of marking criteria and examiners' opinions (Duffield and Spencer, 2002). In contrast, the students appreciate multiple-choice test because it dismiss bias in marking and cover a broad range of knowledge; multiple-choice test is only unfair if the statements are ambiguous (Duffield and Spencer, 2002). This means students do not believe in objectivity of some performance-based assessment whereas they do appreciate this characteristic of multiple-choice test. Such perceptions are proved to depend significantly on the students' experience with assessment (Duffield & Spencer, 2002). If students have experience with unfair judgments in performance-based assessment, they will not trust its fairness and accuracy.

Furthermore, fairness in feedback is also highlighted by students (Rees, Sheard & McPherson, 2002). As Lizzio and Wilson (2008) and Rees, Sheard and McPherson (2002) note, students expect that negative feedback needs to be consistent to the low marks given, consistent to the predetermined criteria; and potentially invite students to ask about any comments they disagree or do not understand. These expectations of students show that they do not only need fair marks but also fair comments of their assessment products.

Moreover, in students' views, authentic assessment rewards fairly to any students who put their efforts in learning in the whole process, not only right before and during the examination. It also requires students to perform real-life skills rather than theoretical knowledge which might not be relevant to students' work after graduating (Sambell, McDowell & Brown, 1997). Authentic assessment also gives students opportunities to discuss with their lecturers about the tasks and the assessment criteria are delivered beforehand and presented clearly (Sambell, McDowell & Brown, 1997), which also improve fairness of assessment.

However, students also realise challenges for teachers in assessing students' learning process in authentic assessment (Herrington & Herrington, 1998; Frank &

Barzilai, 2002). For example, the student teachers claim that lecturers need to invest a vast amount of time and effort to check the activity of team members and their progress so that the lecturers can assess accurately and fairly the contribution of each member of the group (Frank & Barzilai, 2002). With the careful check of the lecturers, the assessment results in group-based authentic assessment are proved to be consistent across the groups of the students teachers (Herrington & Herrington, 1998).

To conclude, it can be seen that in students' perceptions, teachers have to pay attention to fairness of authentic assessment by controlling a variety of related issues such as authenticity, validity, criteria, marking process, feedback provision.

#### **2.3.4. Physical and social contexts**

Physical contexts of authentic assessment refer to ways and places where the assessment tasks take place, and resources which are provided for students so that the students can complete the task (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2004). Social contexts of authentic assessment refer to social processes that students have to confront during the assessment task (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2004). Students' perceptions of physical and social contexts of authentic assessment are numerous and different.

In Gulikers, Bastiaens and Kirschner (2006), students in a Vocational and Training Education for social work perceive that physical conditions are very important in authentic assessment, but they do not think the social context is a necessary dimension of authentic assessment. In another study of Gulikers (2006) with nursing students, these students expect that authentic assessment should be done in practice with all realistic situations to examine students' problem-solving abilities. However, they still accept the simulated physical context at school (Gulikers, 2006). Like the students in social work in Gulikers, Bastiaens and Kirschner (2006), the nursing students in Gulikers (2006) do not pay much attention to the social context. The nursing students identify the social processes in authentic assessment. They agree with both individual and group-based authentic assessment tasks, which depends on the requirements of the professional tasks in real life (Gulikers, 2006).

As for the physical condition of authentic assessment, it can be recognised from some studies that students tend to focus on time allocation of the assessment tasks

(Frank & Barzilai, 2002; Herrington & Herrington, 1998). Normally, an authentic assessment task lasts from a few weeks to a few months. Such length of time is often perceived as not enough for the completion of the task because in authentic assessment the students have to seek and analyse a great deal of data, access numerous materials to make a performance or produce a product (Herrington & Herrington, 1998). Therefore, authentic assessment is time consuming in students' eyes (Frank & Barzilai, 2002; Herrington & Herrington, 1998).

While the research related students' perceptions of physical context in authentic assessment is inadequate, empirical evidence of students' perceptions of social context is more abundant, especially with group-based authentic assessment tasks (Ashford-Rowe, Herrington & Brown, 2014; Frank & Barzilai, 2002; Herrington & Herrington, 1998; Gulikers, 2006). Students believe that without discussion with colleagues and receiving their feedback, an individual cannot complete well an authentic assessment task (Ashford-Rowe, Herrington & Brown, 2014). In the task, teachers will become a guide while students collaborate to complete each work in the task (Ashford-Rowe, Herrington & Brown, 2014). Through group-based authentic assessment tasks, students contend that they improve their awareness of the importance of collaboration in professional practice (Ashford-Rowe, Herrington & Brown, 2014). Israeli student teachers appreciate collaboration in authentic assessment and believe that team work bring a great deal of benefits to their learning (Frank & Barzilai, 2002). During group-based authentic assessment tasks, they can share ideas and learn from each other; increase their responsibility in learning; improve their social and emotional skills; and enhance their relationship (Frank & Barzilai, 2002; Herrington & Herrington, 1998; Gulikers, 2006). However, the student teachers also identify their difficulties during working in groups such as time investment to collaborate together and solve conflicts; different working styles among members; and irresponsible members (Frank & Barzilai, 2002; Herrington & Herrington, 1998). Such difficulties requires lecturers' support to improve the student teachers' collaboration skills before and during the authentic assessment tasks.

### ***2.3.5. Students' involvement in authentic assessment***

Involving students in the assessment process is a new perspective deriving from a

belief that participating assessment process will help them to clarify all dimensions in assessment (Dancer & Kamvounias, 2005; Rust, O'Donovan & Price, 2005). This perspective has been encouraged widely in authentic assessment (Wiggins, 1989). However, the empirical evidence in research related to authentic assessment is very limited. It is believed that understanding clearly and fully the whole assessment process helps students to succeed in higher education (Bloxham & West, 2004). Empirical evidence also indicates that students' engagement in the assessment process improves their learning (Rust, Price & O' Donovan, 2003).

Some researchers find that students prefer to be involved in assessment in all stages of the process (Dancer & Kamvounias, 2005; Rust, Price & O' Donovan, 2003). Students are pleased to participate in decision making in both lesson and assessment designing and support democracy in the relationship between lecturers and students. Furthermore, contributing to setting up criteria improve students' sense of 'ownership' as this implies their rights in making standards to assess themselves (Orsmond, Merry & Reiling, 2000). The initial results support the argument that students should be involved in the designing stage of the assessment criteria and standards. It is recommended that students should be trained carefully to ensure that they can use those criteria to assess themselves, or their peers (O'Donovan, Price & Rust, 2001, 2004; Orsmond & Maw, 2011).

However, interestingly, many students still want the lecturers to keep their control in learning and assessment because the students think they lack assessment experience (O'Donovan, Price & Rust, 2001, 2004; Williams, 1992). Commonly, even when involved, students still realise they cannot understand and use criteria for their assessment without tutors' explanation, exemplifying, discussion (O'Donovan, Price & Rust, 2001, 2004; Rust, Price & O' Donovan, 2003). Therefore, students appreciate the explicit written criteria as well as the workshops with their tutors because these help them to be more confident in completing the assignments (O'Donovan, Price & Rust, 2001, 2004; Rust, Price & O' Donovan, 2003).

The most common strategies of involving students in assessment are self-assessment, peer assessment and co-assessment (Dochy, Segers & Sluijsmans, 2006).



There is a wide range of studies about students' views of using self- and peer assessment in higher education showing multiple perspectives on both good and bad sides of these two assessment strategies (Bloxham & West, 2004; Falchikov, 1986). Generally, students show positive attitudes towards self-, peer and co-assessment because those approaches give them a sense of fairness when contribute to making decision of their or their peers' learning process and products (Sambell, McDowell & Brown, 1997). Students believe self- and peer assessment are fair methods to assess their competences as those who contribute less or least in the group work get lower or lowest marks and vice versa (Elliott & Higgins, 2005). Most of the students report that those approaches are beneficial, helpful, and challenging for them (Orsmond & Merry, 1996; Orsmond, Merry & Reiling, 2000). They explain that self- and peer assessment help them to think in more critical ways, work in a structured way, gain more confidence and learn more (Orsmond & Merry, 1996; Orsmond, Merry & Reiling, 2000). In authentic assessment, peer assessment helps students to compare their skills with their peers' skills (Rees, Sheard & McPherson, 2002).

However, students also recognise the downside of self- and peer-assessment. A review by Wen and Tsai (2006) shows that most of the students prefer peer assessment as they have opportunities to compare their works to others', but they are displeased with their peers' negative comments. Additionally, sometimes, students underestimate self-assessment (Mires et al., 2001) because self-marking exercise has no value or offers limit value in terms of learning opportunities. Students explain that the marking process is too stressful because they are confused about their own marking, unsure about their assessing skills, worried about cheating, failing or passing. Students also express their difficulties in marking although they have the rubrics and get their tutors' explanation (Frank & Barzilai, 2004; Rust, Price & O' Donovan, 2003). Moreover, marking others and marking them down are sometimes uncomfortable experiences with students (Bloxham & West, 2007; Elliott & Higgins, 2005). Students are sure in assessing themselves fairly but unsure about assessing their peers (Elliott & Higgins, 2005). Students may be too polite to offer constructive feedback to their peers in front of the large group (Rees, Sheard & McPherson, 2002). However, some

students also appreciate the usefulness of this exercise for the feedback given and for informing them of their weakness in the examination (Mires et al., 2001).

### **2.3.6. Criteria**

Assessment requirements are often reflected in criteria or rubrics for each task. In authentic assessment, findings from several studies reveal that students prefer authentic criteria which mean the criteria should derive from practice (Gulikers, 2006; Sambell, McDowell & Brown, 1997). Instead of being too theoretical, the criteria should be formulated in such a way that they were usable in a specific workplace (Gulikers, 2006).

Furthermore, students also realise that in an authentic assessment task, a variety of rubrics can be used because the task often require students to demonstrate several indicators of learning (Herrington & Herrington, 1998). For example, in an authentic assessment task in Herrington and Herrington (1998), student teachers are required to examine the resources and submit a written report on their proposal and to present an oral presentation at the staff meeting. The students contend that each product should be assessed by appropriate criteria. For instance, the oral presentation should be judged in terms of the effectiveness of the group's argument, the proposal's practicality and the groups' presentation skills (Herrington & Herrington, 1998).

When asked about criteria of assessment tasks, many students in Bloxham and West (2004, 2007) and Sambell, McDowell and Brown (1997) appreciate explicit criteria and state that they follow criteria to finish their assignment. Only a small number of the students ignore criteria. For students who follow criteria, these instruct them what and how they should do in their assignments to get the desired grades (Bloxham & West, 2004, 2007; Sambell & McDowell & Brown, 1997). Others report that assessment guidelines containing criteria are used as a checklist to plan what students need to include in their assignments, take notes during the lectures, make outline for their essays (Bloxham & West, 2007). Moreover, students also argue that the clear criteria also raise the notion of equity and fairness in assessment (Sambell & McDowell & Brown, 1997). This is because all assessors can reach their agreement easily and students can check appropriateness of their assessment results based on

public criteria (Rust, Price & O' Donovan, 2003). In self- and peer assessment, guidelines and explicit criteria are also considered as useful in assessing fairly student's contribution to their group works (Elliott & Higgins, 2005; Orsmond, Merry & Reiling, 2000). However, there is a contradictory voice that specific and explicit assessment criteria motivate students to complete assessment tasks technically to get marks, not to gain more understanding (Bloxham & West, 2007). This means some students only aim to 'satisfy' the predetermined criteria rather than absorbing new knowledge and developing their actual skills.

Notably, perceptions of specific criteria in an assessment task are likely to be different between teachers and students. In Gulikers (2006), students think that their teachers are too strict in their criteria of the authentic assessment task while their teachers suppose that the criteria are appropriate. The differences in perspectives regarding assessment criteria between students and teachers are also found in other studies (Orsmond & Merry, 1996; Orsmond, Merry & Reiling, 2000); this poses questions about transparency of assessment criteria and teachers' explanation and discussion with their students about criteria that help the students to use them more effectively. These findings should be referred in establishing criteria for authentic assessment.

### **2.3.7. Outcomes**

Learning outcomes refer to knowledge and skills that students acquire after a learning activity. Learning outcomes are demonstrated in grades and feedback. Much empirical evidence indicates that in students' perceptions, grades are very important indicators of success (Earl, 2003). It is worth noting that in authentic assessment, students tend to draw their attention to their acquired knowledge and skills (Harlen & Crick, 2003; Qassim, 2008) and the received feedback from their teachers and peers (Rees, Sheard & McPherson, 2002), rather than grades. Students' perceptions of feedback in authentic assessment was presented in the section 2.3.2, here students' perceptions of the acquired competencies will be discussed more.

As in an authentic assessment tasks, students are required to complete a full array of performance and products, they have opportunities to develop a variety of

knowledge and skills in different domains (Ashford-Rowe, Herrington & Brown, 2014; Frank & Barzilai, 2002; Gulikers, 2006; Herrington & Herrington, 1998; Sambell & McDowell & Brown, 1997). The most emphasised outcomes in authentic assessment are the developed professional competencies for students (Gulikers, 2006; Herrington & Herrington, 1998; Sambell & McDowell & Brown, 1997). In Herrington and Herrington (1998), appropriate 5 weeks after the authentic assessment tasks in which students are required to solve a simulated situation related to the complaint of a child's parent about tests in mathematics, six student teachers complete a two week professional practice in six schools. The six student teachers say that at school they can speak confidently and clearly about assessment and even use a variety of assessment techniques to assess young students' understanding of mathematics (Herrington & Herrington, 1998). In other words, the students can transfer their acquired competencies in the authentic assessment task into practice. This is a recognised advantage of authentic assessment.

Findings from some research reveal that students seem to enjoy the chance to perform their competencies in front of teachers and peers; or present publicly their assessment products (Ashford-Rowe, Herrington & Brown, 2014; Gulikers, 2006; Herrington & Herrington, 1998). This means students prefer public performance and presentation of authentic assessment outcomes. They may encounter some difficulties like nervousness, lack of communication skills when speaking to the audience, but they believe that they can handle such difficulties to improve their interpersonal skills (Herrington & Herrington, 1998; Rees, Sheard & McPherson, 2002).

Another outcome of authentic assessment which was discussed in the section 2.3.2 is students' change in their learning strategies. Such change is recognised clearly by students in studies with authentic assessment. Based on students' descriptions of how they complete authentic assessment tasks, it appears that they have to adopt deep learning, rather than surface learning (Ashford-Rowe, Herrington & Brown, 2014; Meyers & Nulty, 2009). Particularly, to perform or produce something in authentic assessment, students say they have to utilise high-order thinking skills to gather and analyse the required information. Additionally, they also need to critically reflect after finishing each step in the preparation of the performance and products before moving

to the next step (Ashford-Rowe, Herrington & Brown, 2014; Meyers & Nulty, 2009).

#### **2.4. Factors influencing student' perceptions of assessment and authentic assessment**

Students' perceptions of assessment or their perceptions of authentic assessment are subjective as discussed above. It is hypothesised that social and personal factors influence students' perceptions of assessment. As Black and William (1998) point out 'assessment in school, is far from merely technical problems. Rather, it is deeply social and personal' (p. 147). Therefore, to explain students' perceptions of assessment and authentic assessment, possibly personal and social factors will be examined.

##### **2.4.1. Students' prior assessment experience**

Initial findings from some studies show that students' previous assessment experiences and beliefs influence significantly their perceptions of assessment and authentic assessment (Gulikers et al., 2008a). In Surgenor (2013), fresher students in university did not have much experience with various assessment methods; thus, they were not fully aware of the requirements of each method. Hand-on experience with assessment methods is proved to impact on students' preferences of assessment methods as well (Struyven, Dochy & Janssen, 2005). Without experience with a new assessment method, students may refuse it even though that method may be useful for their learning (Struyven, Dochy & Janssen, 2005). In other words, some students do not believe in the usefulness of the new assessment approaches and methods unless they have experiences with them.

Students' prior assessment experiences also influence considerably their perceptions of authentic assessment. For example, nursing and social work students in vocational courses in the Netherlands do not prefer group-based authentic assessment tasks because based on their assessment experience in school, they believe that assessment should be individual testing to judge accurately their competencies (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2006). This means the students' prior beliefs in individual assessment have influences on their perceptions of elements of authentic assessment (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2006).

Furthermore, students' trial experience with authentic assessment also has the important impact on students' preference of assessment methods. Students may refuse authentic assessment if they have negative experience with it. For example, after students completed a group-based ungraded authentic assessment with feedback, students' preference of higher-order thinking authentic assessment was reduced due to their perceptions of higher study load of these tasks (Gijbels & Dochy, 2006). However, positive experience with authentic assessment might lead students to a preference of this approach. For instance, STs in Frank & Barzilai (2004) after completing authentic assessment forms (portfolios, reports, media product, self- and peer assessment, group-based assessment) in a project state that such assessment requires them to demonstrate interdisciplinary knowledge and team work skills, encourage their deep learning and improve their learning motivation. Therefore, they prefer to be assessed by such alternative assessment forms.

In short, to change students' perceptions of authentic assessment, it is recommended that they are given opportunities to gain positive experience with this assessment approach.

#### ***2.4.2. Students' practical experiences***

It is hypothesised that differences in practical experience cause differences in students' perceptions of authentic assessment (Gulikers et al., 2008a). Particularly, experienced students desire authentic assessment tasks containing ill-structured scenarios so that they can have more freedom to suggest solutions and mobilise all their knowledge, skills, and attitudes to solve the problems (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2004). Meanwhile, fresher students accept authentic assessment tasks which are relatively structured, have clear and explicit requirements of specific knowledge instead of an integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2004). Moreover, students who have less practical experiences agree that collaboration should be placed in authentic assessment despite their preference to individual assessment (Gulikers, 2006). Meanwhile, their colleagues with many practical experiences do not perceive collaboration is necessary in authentic assessment tasks (Gulikers, 2006). Moreover, with practical experience,

students can judge which assessment is authentic and relevant to the professional life (Gulikers, 2006).

In the case of teacher education, studies indicate that teacher trainees are likely to gain practical experience during practicum at school (George, Worrell & Rampersad, 2002), which is proved to influence their perceptions of different dimensions of teaching including assessment as well as their teaching style later. The practicum helps them to shape the view of how 'good teaching' is (George, Worrel & Rampersad, 2002) and such cognitive framework becomes the reference of their teaching later. Therefore, when investigating STs' perceptions of authentic assessment, it is inevitable to consider STs' practical experience in teaching.

#### ***2.4.3. Students' prior schooling experience***

In the case of STs, a great deal of empirical evidence indicates that all of STs bring their prior teaching belief and learning experience to teacher education courses, which influences directly how they perceive issues including teaching, learning and assessment in the courses (Stuart, Akyeampong & Croft, 2009). STs have been students in schools; thus, to some extent, they observed their teachers' work and built up the conceptions of what it is like to be a teacher (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000) or what they are supposed to do in school and how students are supposed to act in school (Kennedy, 2000). Subsequently, these conceptions influences how they interpret the content of training courses and transfer their pre-existing knowledge and skills to their teaching later (Pajares, 1992). This means STs' prior schooling experience might influence their perceptions of authenticity of teaching, learning and assessment in teacher education.

#### ***2.4.4. Culture values***

Cross-cultural studies on students' perceptions of assessment indicates clearly the influence of cultural beliefs on the students' perceptions of assessment (Brown, 2013; Brown & Remesal, 2012). In Brown (2013), a comparison of students' perceptions of assessment in Brazil, Hong Kong, China and New Zealand show that education systems with diverse cultural and social characteristics influence how students perceive

purposes, validity, effectiveness, and appropriateness of assessment. For example, Brazilian students seem to agree most with 'irrelevance of assessment' compared to three other groups. This might be explained by the introduction of quota system of enrollment to universities recently in Brazil that offers specific rates of places for students according to some criteria such as socioeconomic status, race, and trajectory. Therefore, Brazilian students might think examination is not fair.

Vietnam is a highly Confucianism-influenced country; therefore, some Confucian values have impact on students' perceptions of assessment. For example, in Confucian culture, a person who has high test scores and academic success is admired by the whole community. Consequently, high levels of diligence and effort to learning are expected. This leads to a high pressure on examination and students' perceptions of grading. Some Vietnamese researchers (Ho, 2015; Luong, 2016) believe that cultural characteristics such as examination-orientation influence Vietnamese students' emphasis on grading. Vietnamese students' preference of harmony, face saving and a desire for maintaining friendship results in their reluctance to criticise and give low marks to their peers even in fact they do not think highly of their peers' work. Ho (2015) and Luong (2016) also assume that students' extreme respect of teachers' experience significantly influences on Vietnamese students' passivity in assessment. This is due to their beliefs that lecturers should make all decisions on assessment.

Therefore, to explain students' perceptions of assessment and authentic assessment it is recommended to take all factors mentioned earlier into account and conduct empirical studies on their perceptions before adopting any new assessment approach in practice.

## **2.5. Impact of students' perceptions of authentic assessment on student learning**

It is evident that students' learning approaches and content of their learning are influenced by the ways their teachers assess them (Entwistle & Entwistle, 1991; Ramsden, 1997). However, studies on the relationship between assessment and students' learning including both exploratory and experimental research reveal complex findings which still need further research (Al-Kadri et al., 2012). Some evidence shows that assessment changes students' learning strategies (Gijbels, Segers



& Struyf, 2008) whereas others do not (Struyven, Dochy & Janssen, 2005). Several authors (Struyven, Dochy & Janssen, 2005) note that the impact of assessment on students' learning is actually filtered through their interpretation of assessment, otherwise stated, their perceptions of assessment. Therefore, investigating the impact of assessment on students' learning has to be conducted along with exploring students' perceptions of assessment.

Regarding students' learning approaches, since 1979, many researchers mention two approaches: deep learning and surface learning (Biggs & Kirby, 1983; Biggs & Tang, 2011; Entwistle, 1991; Marton & Säljö, 1997). A deep approach refers to a way that students, with their intrinsic motivation, overcome their learning tasks by trying to understand meanings of lessons, information, requirements of the task and using all high order thinking skills to complete the tasks to obtain new knowledge and skills (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Marton & Säljö, 1997). On the contrary, students with instrumental motivation use surface approach to finish the learning tasks, get sufficient grades to pass their examination with minimum effort by rote memorising without understanding in depth the lessons (Entwistle & Entwistle, 1992; Marton & Säljö, 1997). Later, few other terms of learning approach such as strategic learning or achieving learning were adopted referring to a well-organised learning process in which either or both deep and surface approach are used to get the highest possible grades (Entwistle & Entwistle, 1992). From the definitions of the learning strategies, it is visible that the way students interpret assessment influences directly on students' learning (Boud, 1995; Messick, 1987).

As mentioned earlier, students' interpretation of demands of assessment tasks and methods leads them to an adaptive learning strategy. Some researchers (Birenbaum, 1997; Iannone & Simpson, 2012; Iannone & Simpson, 2013) investigate students' views on specific assessment methods. It can be seen that students tend to interpret demands of assessment methods based on their own experience. Students may think intellectual requirements in multiple-choice tests are lower than in essay because multiple-choice mostly focus on assessing students' knowledge whereas assignment essay require higher intellectual skills such as analysis, application, and comprehension (Scouller, 1998). However, some students still appreciate the value of

multiple-choice test because it helps them to expand their understanding while with essay, they only need to dig in a narrow topic (Scouller, 1997). Such diverse perceptions lead them to find adaptive learning strategies to cope with the interpreted assessment demands. For example, students are likely to adopt deep learning to achieve a good result for an essay or report (Marton & Säljö, 1976). Accordingly, exploring how students view assessment methods is useful to understand their learning strategies for each assessment method.

In the case of authentic assessment, the review by McAlister (2000) indicates that this assessment approach motivates students to adopt deep learning and develop their professional skills. Particularly, students can see authentic assessment aims to assess their knowledge, skills, dispositions required for their future professional works, not simply for the university courses (Struyven, Dochy & Janssen, 2005). Normally, a daily life task often requires integration of a variety of knowledge, skills in different disciplines; thus, an authentic task in university also asks the students to emulate complex disciplinary ways of thinking and practicing. In some empirical studies, students appreciate this characteristic of authentic assessment. In Sambell, McDowell and Montgomery's (2013) description of an authentic assessment task in which the students had to observe the practice of social work and then create a glossary of terms for their course, the students claim that they have to use high order thinking skills and other skills as well as broad understanding to complete the task. For instance, they have to read more materials than for other tasks, observe the practice and analyse the observations, look for the link between theory and practice (Sambell, McDowell & Montgomery, 2013). In other words, authentic assessment encourages students to utilise deep learning approach.

Nevertheless, in some cases, students do not change their approaches to learning or move towards a more surface approach to learning after hands-on experience with authentic assessment (Gijbels & Dochy, 2006; Struyven et al., 2005). These findings are explained by students' perceptions of contextual elements of the learning environment such as clarity of the assessment goals, appropriateness of the workload and the usefulness of feedback (Gijbels & Dochy, 2006; Struyven et al., 2005). Particularly, if students perceive the task with ill-structured knowledge, heavy

workload, and lack of constructive feedback, they will tend to adopt surface learning approach (Gijbels & Dochy, 2006; Struyven et al., 2005). Therefore, elements of the learning environment should be taken into consideration of the design and implementation of authentic assessment.

Motivation is often divided into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to actions led by interest or joyfulness without external reinforcement while extrinsic motivation refers to actions led by external rewards or push (Qassim, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000). In some students' eyes, assessment is considered as a motivate mechanism with reward and punishment in the form of grades (Stiggins, 1994), for instance, students may try to do well in the assessment tasks to get the high marks which is considered as successes (Earl, 2003). It should be emphasised here that students' perceptions of marks are also diversified. Marks only motivate them when they really believe that marks reflect exactly their competences (Harlen &Crick, 2003; Qassim, 2008). In other words, fair marks influence students' learning motivation. Furthermore, in other cases, assessment with high demands, challenges motivates students to achieve because the assessment can bring the sense of achievement to students or widen their knowledge and skills (Harlen &Crick, 2003; Qassim, 2008). With those students, marks are not a motivated factor of their learning but opportunities to develop their competencies. The way that assessment motivate student learning is absolutely subjective, due to students' perceptions of learning achievement or their perspective of assessment outcomes.

As mentioned earlier, feedback is believed as the most influential factor to students' learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998). In particular, evaluative feedback affects negatively and positively on students' learning because they show rewards or punishments to the students in form of grades and short comments (Gipps, McCallum & Hargreaves, 2000). Descriptive feedback seems to be more useful for the students' next-step learning as it tells them specifically what they have achieved and what they need to improve, suggest them strategies to do it (Crooks, 1988; Earl, 2003). Feedback helps students to change their learning approaches if the old ones they used did not work in the previous assessment (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). However, it has to stress again that feedback is useless for students' learning if they do not perceive it as

important and helpful (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Sambell & McDowell, 1998; (Sambell, McDowell & Montgomery, 2013). If in assessment, the students only concern about their marks, only need to know their marks and end their learning at that point, feedback or assessment in general cannot support learning (Sambell, McDowell & Montgomery, 2013).

Although the current study did not focus on examining the actual impact of students' perceptions of authentic assessment on student learning, the findings reviewed above indicate the importance of exploring students' perceptions of authentic assessment in order to enhance student learning. Moreover, through the impact of assessment on student learning reported by the students, their perceptions of assessment is also possibly explored.

## **2.6. Conclusion**

With the theoretical background as well as the evidence from a large amount of empirical studies, it appears that conducting studies on students' perceptions of authentic assessment will be essential and effective to make strategic changes in the practice of assessment and student learning. Moreover, to the same aspect of authentic assessment, students in different contexts might have different views based on their experiences and beliefs. Therefore, the importance of research on students' perceptions of authentic assessment in a specific context should be fully recognised before any change in assessment practice is implemented there. In the case of teacher education, the experiences on authentic assessment in institutions that prospective or novice teachers attend during training periods impact on their perspectives and use of assessment when they become official teachers at schools (Graham, 2005).

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **CONTEXT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TEACHER EDUCATION IN VIETNAM**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Assessment change in higher education and teacher education over the world has influenced that of Vietnam. The current education reform has raised the importance of assessment change in all levels of education. This chapter will present a short review of HE and teacher education in Vietnam to provide a contextual framework for the current study.

#### **3.2 Higher education in Vietnam**

Vietnam has a long history in the development of HE, which starts from the foundation of the first national university called the Imperial Academy (Quoc Tu Giam) in 1076 (Fry, 2009). The university was located in the Temple of Literature, one of the temples which is dedicated to Confucius, which is evidence of the considerable influence of Confucian culture (Fry, 2009) on education. Once Vietnam gained independence from China, the influence of Chinese culture on Vietnamese society and culture was still strong, including on education (Fry, 2009; London, 2011). During the 1858-1954 period, French's colonisation in Vietnam resulted in the import of Western approaches into Vietnamese education system (Fry, 2009; London, 2011) and the University of Indo-Chine and three other colleges were also founded in the north of Vietnam (Fry, 2009). The Western impact was succeeded by American invasion in the south of Vietnam from 1954 to 1975 (Fry, 2009). However, it is noted that the education system at that time was designed to serve the imperatives of the French and America rather than to develop Vietnamese people and society (London, 2011). After the liberation and independence in 1975, the two education systems in the north and south were unified and influenced significantly by Soviet education that followed the choice of Communism for Vietnam politics. Due to the multiple invaders through history, it appears that Vietnam has absorbed both Western and Eastern culture. However, it is observed that the influence of Chinese culture has been more dominant than that of

French, American or Soviet cultures (London, 2011; Truong, Hallinger & Sanga, 2017). Therefore, despite the fact that recently Vietnam's government has adopted some Western education approaches, stakeholders' perspective on education are still dominated by Chinese culture (Ho, 2015; Luong, 2016). This should be taken into account when researching this educational system. In the case of the current study, the dominance of Chinese education perspectives may be a factor influencing STs' perceptions of authentic assessment.

Although since 1975, Vietnam underwent few education reforms, the most significant and comprehensive one started in 1991 (Duggan, 2001). This reform was linked closely to the economic reform called Doi Moi since 1986 (Harman, Hayden & Phạm, 2009), in which the government changed from the centrally planned economy to the socialist-oriented market one (Harman, Hayden & Phạm, 2009). In line with this economic reform, Vietnamese HE has also aimed to provide a highly skilled workforce for the national market (Tran, 2012). Moreover, the government has appealed to other sources in society to invest in education, which leads to the significant increase of the number of both private and public universities and colleges as well as the number of HE students in Vietnam (Do & Ho, 2014; Hayden & Thiep, 2007; Kelly, 2000). In 1992-1993, there were 162,000 students studying in 103 HE institutions which were mostly small with less than 3000 students in each institution and focused on teaching-only (Hayden & Thiep, 2007). By 2015-2016, there were 443 colleges and universities (excluding institutions of military security and international universities) offered places of study for over 2,2 million students (MOET, 2016a). The rapid development of the HE institutions and the significant increase of the number of students asked for a large number of teaching staff. According to the statistics in 2015-2016, there were 93,851 lecturers in the institutions. It could be seen that the lecturer-student ratio was still high and it was reported that the class size in the institutions is large (Hayden & Thiep, 2007). These features possibly resulted in the poor quality of training in HE institutions in Vietnam (Harman & Pham, 2009).

With the Vietnam's HE Reform Agenda (HERA) 2006-2020, the government plans to place efforts to innovate comprehensively the HE system with the general goal that by 2020 Vietnam has an advanced HE system that meets international

standards (Geogre, 2011; Pham, 2012; Phan et al., 2010). To achieve this goal, the Strategy for Educational Development by 2020 was introduced (Prime Minister Office, 2012) and reinforced the need of innovations in teaching, learning and assessment in HE. Of those innovations, the transformation from teacher-centred to student-centred approach, the change of teaching and assessment methods, the development of students' proactivity, creativity, self-directed learning are the most important aspects. Moreover, HERA also highlights the call for design university training curriculum in the connection with professional practice or demands of the labour market (Harman, Hayden & Phạm, 2009).

In the light of the HE reform, curricular of training programmes in universities in Vietnam have been redesigned. The Vietnamese HE system is currently under the direct control of Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) (Do & Ho, 2014; Kelly, 2000). Typically, apart from two national universities, frameworks of the training curriculum of each programme in other Vietnamese HE institutions are decided by MOET but the Ministry does not determined exactly what will be taught to students, this is the duty of each university/college (Prime Minister Office, 2003). It can be seen from the frameworks that each programme consists up to 50 modules that students are required to complete to obtain degrees. Most modules are theory-based and university-based; this results in insufficiency of application, skills development for students and heavy teaching loads for lecturers (Harman & Pham, 2009; Tran & Swierczek, 2009). To some extent, the universities/ colleges have a right to change their curricula including objectives, instructions, and assessment. Recently, the Vietnamese government has encouraged autonomy for institutions in finance management, quality assurance, promotion and salary, hiring staff, curriculum development (Do & Ho, 2014; Pham, 2012). Thus, education reform at institutional level has more opportunities to take place and any innovative plan can be implemented more quickly and flexibly than before, especially with private sector (Hayden & Thiep, 2007).

The most significant change in HE in Vietnam recently is that all universities have changed to the credit-based system. MOET produced the academic regulations of a credit-based system training in universities and college which have become

guidelines for universities to operate academic activities in HE institutions (MOET, 2007). Based on these regulations, the most important change is that the number of credit for four-year university degree dropped from minimum 210 credits to about 120 credits to reduce the study-load for students (MOET, 2007). Moreover, all university department programmes have to determine and publish their learning outcomes. The transition to a credit-based system require the universities to: 1) change the curricula which ensure that students have opportunities to acquire the needed knowledge, skills and attitudes; 2) develop instruction which are effective in helping students acquire deep understanding of necessary information and skills; 3) provide experiential learning environments which promote opportunities to practice realistic experiences for students; and 4) develop assessment approaches and methods in which emphasise on formative assessment to provide the feedback which help students to improve their learning (MOET, 2007). These policies have been seen to influence directly assessment in HE and teacher education. They have also opened a door for HE and teacher education in Vietnam to reach global standards.

Although HE in Vietnam has attained considerable achievements after several renovations, the shortage of skilled workers, the lack of work-related competencies in graduates, and the high level of unemployment among graduates signify the mismatch between employer needs and university responsiveness (Tran & Swierczek, 2009; Tran, 2013). Many educators in HE in Vietnam have suggested the importance of developing various skills such as learning skills, communication skills, problem-solving skills, interpersonal skills, information processing skills for students; until now, the results are still limited (Harman & Pham, 2009; Tran & Swierczek, 2009; Tran, 2013). Moreover, the curriculum and course contents have focused on theories (Tran & Swierczek, 2009), and the traditional instruction methods have still been dominant (Tran, 2013b). Especially, the culture in classroom has still been characterised by 'Confucian culture and the old Soviet top-down approach where teacher is often considered the primary source of knowledge' (Tran, 2013b, p.634) and students have to show their extreme respect towards their teachers (Phuong-Mai, Terlouw & Pilot, 2005). Based on the limitations argued above, it can be seen that HE in Vietnam still needs an ongoing comprehensive reform in terms of teaching, learning and



assessment. In this reform, the role of students and the development of skills for students should be more highlighted. Teacher education is not exceptional in this flow.

### **3.3 Teacher education in Vietnam**

In October 1946, teacher education was officially approved in Vietnam (Ha Noi University of Education, 2011). The government divided teacher education into three types of institutions of education: elementary, intermediate and advance and was based on three levels of education: first level (basic education) in 4 years, second level (general and specialised education in 7 years or vocational education in from 2 to 4 years), third level (university or colleges in at least 3 years). It is noted that this system only operated in the north of Vietnam where the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam held power. Since then, the establishment of other universities, colleges or faculties of teacher education expanded from the north to the south of Vietnam with several institutions and divisions in Ha Noi, Hue, Da Lat, Saigon and Can Tho regardless the impact of ongoing wars (French, from 1946-1954 and American from 1954-1975) nationwide (Tran, 1974). However, in the south, due to American's military and political interference during the 1954-1975 period, teacher education programmes were also influenced by American system (UNESCO, 2011) while in the north, the Soviet Union system were influential (London, 2011).

After 1975, like other majors in HE in Vietnam, teacher education in the whole country also followed the system of Soviet Union (UNESCO, 2011). This meant tertiary institutions were specialised and mono-disciplinary (Hoa, 2007), hence, a range of universities, colleges and junior training schools (*trung cấp*) of education (the term 'university/ college/schools of pedagogy' is preferable in Vietnam) were established to provide enough teachers for the whole education system (Loc, 2012). However, due to the severe shortage of teachers throughout the country after the war, teacher qualification was not considered important, especially in pre-school education and in remote, highland and inaccessible areas (Vietnam Communist Party, 2013). The limitation in teacher qualification has constrained the quality of education and has not been able to adapt the requirements of recent education reforms (Vietnam Communist Party, 2013). Consequently, the government urged to standardise teacher

qualification with university degree for all teachers teaching from primary to upper secondary (high) schools by 2020 (Vietnam Communist Party, 2013). The requirement of a college degree will be only applied for pre-school teachers. This policy influenced significantly the system of institutions of education. Some colleges of education has been closed or merged with other colleges and college-degree programmes have been terminated gradually since 2015 and expected to be abolished in 2020 (MOET, 2016b). According to the most updated statistics in 2011, there were 14 specialised universities of education, 19 universities with faculties of education, 56 colleges of education and 6 junior teacher training schools (UNESCO, 2011). In the upcoming academic year, MOET will reduce the quota of enrollment in teacher education programmes in all universities and colleges and these institutions are required to reform their curriculum (MOET, 2016b). This strategy is expected to improve the quality of teacher training.

In terms of training curriculum, in line with the HE reform after 2010, teacher education curriculum has been changed considerably. All teacher education programmes in universities still last 4 years and comprise two parts: general education and professional education but to get the bachelor degree, students only need to attain minimum 120 credits. General education included compulsory modules such as research methods, philosophy, foreign languages, computing, etc. for all pedagogical students. Professional education included modules of general pedagogical theories, educational psychology; professional modules, i.e. pedagogical content knowledge, teaching methodology for specific subjects, classroom management, practice at schools (MOET, 2010). The programmes were supposed to focus more on practical professional skills which help students to perform better in their teaching career. However, it seems that the aims of development of STs' professional skills still rely mostly on university-based modules because the duration of school-based practice is limited. Each institution regulates time of practicum; normally, there are two blocks of practicum in the last two years of a teacher training course. The first block lasts from 3 to 5 weeks and the second one is longer with the duration from 6 to 10 weeks. A few institutions even organise practicum in only one block with 6 weeks. This fact reflects the lack of opportunities for STs to gain practical experience in workplace. It also implies that in university-based modules, development of professional skills have to be

merged with provision of theoretical knowledge. Therefore, teacher educators need to adopt authentic teaching and assessment methods to give STs more chances to enhance their professional competences.

Furthermore, another innovation in school also influences teacher education. Since 2009, MOET produced schoolteacher standards as a base to assess teachers' performance in the whole system (MOET, 2009). This policy affects the teacher education curricular in institutions of education because the training programmes have to assure that they equip prospective teachers all knowledge, skills, and attitudes to meet those national requirements. Furthermore, the upcoming education reform in basic education also requires institutions of education to innovate their training programmes (Vietnam Communist Party, 2013). The new national curriculum focuses on competence-based education, a student-centred approach to develop students' multidisciplinary knowledge, creativity, and self-directed lifelong learning skills (Vietnam Communist Party, 2013). To succeed in these national education reforms, the government emphasises the role of teachers and affirms it is imperative to deploy innovation in institutions of teacher training (Hamano, 2010; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2008).

#### **3.4 Assessment in higher education and in teacher education in Vietnam**

The first national examination was conducted in 1075 to select the best candidates (all were male) to be mandarins in the dynasty. These examinations were very competitive and selective. Only few candidates who obtained the highest results were assigned important positions in the dynasties. Some candidates who did not qualify to be mandarins could become teachers in village schools (London, 2011). This meant the examination did not aim to select teachers but it helped some candidates to prove their academic competences and then pursue their teaching profession. Passing the examinations, gaining the qualifications, becoming mandarins were the priority and life goals of many generations in the feudal period. Under the French colonisation, education was still not opened for the whole population. With a small number of schools, colleges and universities, the examinations were also competitive and selective like in the feudal period. This situation was replicated during the period 1954-1975 in the south (London, 2011). In the next period, despite of the growth of the

education system, the importance of examination in all levels of education including HE has still persisted in Vietnam. This is considered as the root of examination-oriented culture in Vietnam education that still exists until today. The examination-oriented culture impacts significantly on all stakeholders' perceptions of education in general and of assessment in particular (Hayden & Le, 2011; Hoa, 2007; Nguyen, 2013).

Transition from an academic year based system to a credit-based system in HE institutions in Vietnam causes changes in all aspects of education practice including administration, teaching and learning strategies, curriculum development, and assessment (Phan et al., 2010). Although conditions for applying a real credit-based system are limited, for instance, the lack of teaching staff and classrooms, diversified courses, flexible curricula; the outcomes of the new system show that students gain many important competences such as independence, dynamics, confidence, and other soft skills (Pham, 2012). MOET has regulated that each module has to be assessed by formative and summative assessment (MOET, 2007). It is required that formative assessment has to contain many sessions such as lecturing and seminar participation/attendance, group work, assignment, and presentation. Summative assessment is also obligatory and weigh at least 50% of the total result of the module (MOET, 2007). This is a significant change in assessment in a credit-based system in comparison to assessment in academic year based system. Assessment in academic year based system still focused too much on summative assessment. Previously, formative assessment was ignored or occupied only 20% up to 30% of the total module result. There was not a formal regulation for formative assessment. Emphasising more on formative assessment, credit framework requires lecturers to design more assessment tasks to measure students' knowledge and skills and track their progress against module objectives. This may increase workload for the lecturers but decrease examination anxiety for the students (Regel & Mundial, 1992).

Furthermore, in documents of the module curricula designed by faculties, it appears that formative assessment and summative assessment have balance role and weight. Faculties also encourage lectures to use a variety of assessment forms, methods, and techniques to give more detailed and effective evaluation to the students. Feedback during teaching sessions is also mentioned. Otherwise stated,

formative assessment is more highlighted in the credit-based system than in old system. The credit-based framework encourage the clear specification of learning outcomes which are indicators of assessment (Trowler, 1998); therefore, the information of assessment is more publicly and specific for student. The syllabus of the modules with module objectives, outcome, content, instruction, schedule, learning material and resources, and assessment is distributed to the students in the beginning of the courses. This aims to enhance the transparency and fairness in assessment. However, because the lecturers have a right to revise the module curricula in some extend, in many cases, the assessment does not happen as the prior provided syllabus (Cấn, 2011).

Many local, regional, national conference, seminar, forum related to assessment reforms in HE have been conducted but the body of the research on this issue is still thin. There have been some brief theoretical reviews and some ideas or perspectives on assessment in HE published and presented (Ho, 2013; Nguyen, 2008). However, almost all are anecdotal rather than empirical investigation of assessment practice in Vietnamese universities and colleges. Little research in education administration focuses on administrative strategies of assessment process (Cấn, 2011). Most research on classroom assessment practice seems to be stem from master dissertations and doctoral theses which have been completed within 5 recent years by Vietnamese postgraduate students in the UK, the US or Australia (Ho, 2015; Luong, 2016; Pham, 2013). The findings in these studies show that summative assessment are still dominant (Nguyen, 2013), traditional assessment methods are adopted more frequently than alternative ones (Ho, 2015; Luong, 2016). However, there have been some efforts to alter current assessment perspectives, for example, use multiple-choice tests instead of short-essay questions to improve objectivity of assessment, and reduce the pressure of marking for the lecturers (Võ et al., 2013) or implement individual mini-project, group presentations to assess students' skills (Nguyen, 2013). Feedback is provided to students by some lecturers (Luong, 2016; Nguyen, 2013). However, because of the large number of students in each class and the large required number of teaching hours for the lecturers in universities/ colleges in Vietnam (Ho, 2015; Luong, 2016), the lectures cannot provide feedback properly for their students.

In practice, the required formative assessment sessions are cut down and conducted cursorily, the assessment methods are less diverse, mainly closed-book exams with short-essay questions (Cấn, 2011).

Assessment in teacher education in Vietnam has the same features as assessment in HE in general. Some primary studies demonstrate that generally the lecturers in Vietnamese universities and colleges of education have tried to divide assessment into several parts and use multiple strategies such as essays, exams, reports, projects, presentations, performances, laboratories or workshops, resource development, artwork, creative design tasks, quizzes and tests, journal writing, portfolio (Hồ et al., 2013; Luong, 2016). The primary application of authentic assessment is conducted in some pedagogy-related courses such as classroom management, teaching methods for specific subjects. For instance, Tôn (2010) did an experiment by using ICT for four-year STs in Vietnam National University. After 15 weeks working to finish many authentic tasks with ICT, the STs demonstrated the self-confidence of using ICT in lesson and teaching portfolio designing, as well as in teaching activities. It is possible to enhance professional skills and creativity for education students by authentic learning and assessment strategies (Tôn, 2010). These results revealed that in Vietnam authentic assessment has been adopted in teacher education although lecturers have not fully understood it (Ho, 2015). The concept and initial framework of authentic assessment have also been introduced in a few articles with a brief summary or explanation (Ho, 2013; Nguyen, 2008). However, it cannot be denied that in Vietnam written exams/ tests are still priorities in both formative and summative assessment (Đinh, 2011). The assessment mainly requests students to reproduce knowledge by rote-learning rather than encourage them to demonstrate critical thinking, problem-solving, creative skills (Harman, Hayden & Phạm, 2009) which are demands of labour market (Tran & Swierczek, 2009).

In short, assessment in HE and teacher education is regulated with significant changes. For that reason, the necessity to change teaching, learning and assessment strategies to improve students' professional and other skills has been noticed by faculties in universities and colleges. Lecturers have started to use some authentic learning and assessment strategies such as role-play, game simulation, case study,

portfolio even they have not been aware fully of theories of authentic learning and assessment (Đinh, 2011). However, there are complaint that "the assessment based on the exam designed for repeating the knowledge provided in class all hinder the efforts to assist students in developing their necessary soft skills to manage the actual communicative interactions at work and in life outside university" (Tran, 2013, p. 641). This resistance is explained by many factors which are common in HE in Vietnam or in other developing countries such as large-size classes, heavy teaching loads, theory-oriented curriculum, poorly-equipped classrooms, low salaries of lecturers, lecturers' lack of experience of new assessment approaches (Harman & Pham, 2009). Additionally, students' agency also plays a crucial role (Ho, 2015). Their autonomy, activeness in learning activities, their perspectives of hierarchy relationships in classroom, their preferences of harmony, face saving have a significant influence on the implication of new assessment strategies (Ho, 2015). However, research also reveals that assessment change is inevitable and commitment to change needs to be perceived thoroughly by all stakeholders (Luong, 2016), especially students. Consequently, further investigation on students' perceptions of assessment should be highlighted in the era of current education change.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

The review of HE and teacher education in Vietnam reports specific features of the Vietnam context which is characterised by a dominant influence of Confucian culture and a developing socioeconomic status. Although there have been several education reforms, the quality of education is still limited. Therefore, Vietnam is undergoing other reforms in all levels of education. To improve the possibility of success in the reforms, teacher education has been placed as priority. In line with the global focus on assessment to enhance teaching and learning, teacher education in Vietnam also highlights the need to embed formative assessment, alternative assessment forms in practice. The current study attempted to explore how STs responded to authentic assessment approaches implemented in pedagogy-related modules in teacher education. Hence, in the study, as mentioned in Introduction, the following research questions will be addressed:

*Overarching research question: How do STs perceive authentic assessment in pedagogy-related modules?*

+ Which dimensions of authentic assessment in pedagogy-related modules do STs think they are important?

+ Why do STs have such perceptions of authentic assessment?

+ How do STs perceive the impact of authentic assessment on their learning?

In the following chapters, the methodology of the study will be described in one chapter which will be followed by three chapters delineating the results of the study. Minor discussion will be included in the end of each result chapter. A final chapter to discuss the whole results of the study will be presented.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology of the study. In the first section, the ontological, epistemological and methodological frameworks underpinning the study will be explained. After that, the research site (University of Education) and methods will be described. Because there was an intervention with three authentic assessment tasks in the study to give STs opportunities to gain experience of authentic assessment, the theoretical basis of the intervention design and details of the assessment tasks will also be elaborated. The data collection process will be included in the description of each task. Following this, the strategies of data analysis will be outlined. In the final section, the ethics and validity of the study will be discussed, and the position and reflexivity of the researcher will be also presented.

#### **4.2 Research paradigm**

There is a range of research methodologies. Each research methodology has both relative strengths and weaknesses to fit specific research purposes and problems. According to Tuli (2010), ‘the selection of research methodology depends on the paradigm that guides the research activity, more specifically, beliefs about the nature of reality and humanity (ontology), the theory of knowledge that informs the research (epistemology) and how that knowledge may be gained (methodology)’ (p.99). Therefore, a proper consideration of paradigms (examining epistemology, ontology and methodology) was undertaken before the research activities were conducted (Tuli, 2011). There are different ways to categorise paradigms. In the current study, that of Guba and Lincoln (1994) was preferred.

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), there are four paradigms: positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, and constructivism. Positivism holds naïve realism as an ontological perspective and dualist and objectivism as epistemological perspectives (Guba & Lincoln, 1994)). Positivists assume that there is only single reality as being ‘out there’ in the world, knowable and discovered by quantitative scientific methodologies

(Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013; Healy & Perry, 2000). Positivist researchers attempt to separate themselves from the context they study and treat participants as non-reflective objects. Therefore, it is hard to adopt positivism to study social and cultural phenomena in which people always have their own experience and perspectives, as in the case of the current study.

In contrast with positivism, which is mainly related to quantitative research, the other three paradigms have close connections with qualitative research (Healy & Perry, 2000). Postpositivism modified positivism by supplementing it with qualitative techniques and the idea that 'reality must be subjected to the wildest possible critical examination to facilitate apprehending reality as closely as possible' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.110). However, postpositivists still believe in objective reality, although they accept that reality is never true and perfect (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Such perspectives are also not appropriate to the current research because this research investigates STs' perceptions, which rely on the inner world of individuals. Moreover, both positivism and postpositivism aim to predict and control phenomena, which is not the interest of the current study. The third paradigm is critical theory, which emphasises social realities incorporating historically-situated structures (Healy & Perry, 2000). Hence, researchers with a critical theory orientation often conduct long-term ethnographic and historical studies (Healy & Perry, 2000) to criticise and transform the social, political, cultural, economic, ethic and gender structures that constrain and exploit humankind (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The present study seeks to understand STs' perceptions of authentic assessment and factors influencing their perceptions without the intention to change their perceptions or the context. Thus, critical theory does not fit the purpose of the current study.

The last paradigm is constructivism, which is used interchangeably with interpretivism (Merriam, 1998), holding the belief that there are multiple, apprehendable, observable and equally valid realities (Schwandt, 1994), constructed in the mind of the individual, rather than it being an externally singular entity (Ponterotto, 2005). With the intent of investigating STs' perceptions of authentic assessment, rather than exploring the actual practice of authentic assessment, the current study needs to unpack the thoughts of the STs. Hence, the philosophical perspectives of interpretivism were seen to fit the purposes and problems of the

current study. Interpretivists also believe that people's knowledge, perspectives, and experience are constructed, developed and transferred through their interaction with other people and the world around them (Ponterotto, 2005). STS' perceptions of authentic assessment are only constructed through their participation in authentic assessment tasks. Based on this viewpoint, an intervention with three authentic assessment tasks were designed to ensure that STs had interacted with authentic assessment and were able to construct their perceptions of it. Moreover, for interpretivism in research, through the interaction between the researcher and the participants, hidden meanings can be uncovered (Ponterotto, 2005). In other words, the researcher and the participants co-construct the research findings through their interactions (Ponterotto, 2005). This led me to use interviews to find out STs' perceptions of authentic assessment. Through this dialogue, the STs' perceptions, which they may not be fully aware of (Schwandt, 1994), could be brought to consciousness. Furthermore, interpretivism assumes that people's interpretation of a reality is constructed differently due to their background, experience, personality traits and preferences (Healy & Perry, 2000). Therefore, each person's perception of a phenomenon like authentic assessment will be different. The adoption of interpretivism was believed to helpful in the exploration of the diversity of STs' perceptions, as well as the factors influencing that diversity. Interpretivists also emphasise the importance of placing a phenomenon in a particular context to interpret the phenomenon (Healy & Perry, 2000). This drove the current study to focus on typical features and characteristics of Vietnam HE and teacher education when interpreting STs' perceptions of authentic assessment.

Adopting interpretivism as the ontological and epistemological underpinning philosophy, the current study also adopted qualitative research methods, as presented in the Introduction. It should be emphasised that qualitative research is characterised by its aims, which relate to understanding society by learning about people's lives, experience, thought and perceptions (Ritchie et al., 2013). Therefore, qualitative research is a good tool to explain authentic assessment and STs' views of it. Typical data collected for qualitative research is text, rather than numbers (as would typically be found in quantitative research) (Ritchie et al., 2013). Qualitative research aims to answer questions about 'what', 'why,' and 'how' of a phenomenon rather than 'how

many' or 'how much' (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The research questions of the current study are also 'how' and 'why' questions as stated in the Introduction. The focus of qualitative data is also detailed descriptions (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The text-based data in qualitative research seems to have the most potential to reflect comprehensively STs' perceptions of authentic assessment. Furthermore, qualitative research is also advantageous in providing understanding of individuals as unique and complex (Ponterotto, 2005). STs' perceptions are complex and diverse, and hence, qualitative research methods are appropriate.

In short, in line with the research problems and research questions, interpretivism and a qualitative research approach were chosen to direct data collection and analysis.

#### **4.3 Research site- University of Education (UoE)**

The study was conducted in the UoE which provides pre-service and in-service training for most of the teachers and education administrators in the south of Vietnam. Currently, the UoE is one of the seventeen leading universities, and one of the two leading universities of education in Vietnam (University of Education, 2016). Hence, the UoE is always under the pressure to find initiatives to improve the quality of teacher education, be a model of teacher training for other universities of education nationwide and support the reform of the whole education system.

The UoE has 22 academic faculties and one academic department<sup>2</sup>. The university mainly trains students to be teachers/lecturers from kindergartens to HE institutions in 19 majors, and recently it has added bachelor courses in other 15 majors not in teacher education (see Appendix A)(University of Education, 2016). It also provides some master courses and doctoral research courses. The UoE is a large university with an enormous training capacity. In the 2016-2017 academic year, there are 12.656 full-time students and 12.978 part-time students (University of Education, 2016). However, the UoE recruits only 550 lecturers and 304 administrative staff, resulting in the lecturer-student ratio of 1:46. Consequently, all staff are under a heavy workload, especially the lecturers. The UoE has three campuses for study and one

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<sup>2</sup> An academic unit which has a smaller number of staff than that of a faculty

dormitory. As many areas in the university are under construction, one building in the dormitory was converted into study space. However, the shortage of classrooms has been still an inhibiting issue that causes the large size classes and indirectly impacts the quality of training.

The UoE has adopted the credit-based training system since the 2010-2011. All teacher-training curricula have been redesigned with the competence-based approach and has a close correlation with national learning outcomes of teacher education programmes, schoolteachers' professional standards as well as new national curriculum of basic education that will commence in 2018. Upon the most updated guidelines of curriculum development in the UoE, a four-year bachelor programme comprises of from 120 to 135 credits with up to 45 modules while a five-year programme includes from 160 to 175 credits with up to 58 modules. In addition to these modules, all students have to complete 8 credits of military education and 5 credits of physical education. The framework of each teacher education curriculum encompasses three components:

- (1) Common modules for students in all majors such as Introduction of Psychology, Psychology of Child Development and Educational Psychology, Introduction of Education, Basic Education, Educational Assessment, Curriculum Development, Communication in Education Context. Among those modules, Educational Assessment and Curriculum Development have just launched as obligatory modules from the 2016-2017 academic year.
- (2) Subject matter modules: provide subject-related knowledge for STs to prepare to teach subjects in school. These modules are specifically designed to suit STs in each major. For example, Mathematics Education STs have to study several subjects related to algebra, geometry.
- (3) Professional education modules: offer students to develop their teaching competencies including university-based modules and practicum blocks in school (8 credits). This component occupies a quarter of the total number of credits in each programme and the modules vary depending on requirements of each major. For instance, STs in Early Years Education have to study some dancing, singing, drawing modules which are categorised as essential

professional modules for them.

These components are categorised into two bodies of knowledge including General Education and Professional Education. Pedagogy-related modules are present in both bodies of knowledge. Based on this framework, it can be seen that teaching competence development constitutes a minor part in the training curricular despite being emphasised in the strategies of training issued by the UoE. The university has made an effort in professional education by adding Educational Assessment and Curriculum Development as compulsory modules since last year. However, analysis of the teacher education curricular shows that pedagogy-related modules including university-based modules and school-based practice occupy about 38 credits or 28 percent of the total number of credits in each programme. It appears that pedagogy-related modules have not been emphasised in comparison to subject matter modules which make up about 59 credits or 43 percent of the total number of credits. Especially, the practicum blocks are organised in the second term of the third and fourth year in a course. Recently, the UoE attempted to expand the practicum periods to entirely two terms instead of 12 weeks in two years as before. Nevertheless, during the practicum periods in school, the STs still have to participate in some classes in the university. This fact reflects the limitation of professional skills development in school for prospective teachers in the UoE although the administrators have perceived the importance of school-based practicum. In other words, professional skills are still developed mainly based on university-based modules. This situation happens not only in the UoE but also in other universities in Vietnam. Consequently, it is expected that skill development is incorporated in university-based modules to maximise opportunities for STs to enhance their teaching competencies. In order to fulfill this expectation, authentic learning and assessment in university-based modules are helpful.

Moreover, with the competence-developed orientation, the UoE has published the expected learning outcomes for all teacher education programmes with a list of competencies that all STs are expected to achieve upon graduation. Therefore, assessment has to be able to examine and evaluate STs' competencies accurately against the expected learning outcomes. In other words, assessment should adopt

performance-based or authentic approach because of their possibility in assessing students' actual competencies. The university academic regulation devotes a chapter for module assessment. This chapter presents in detail regulations of both formative and summative assessment in each module. In theory-only modules and theory-mixed-practice modules, the lecturer, who is teaching the module in a class, gives formative mark based on continuous assessments, class attendance, class engagement, and performance in practice sessions and mid-term examinations. In practice-based modules, the final mark comprising of formative and summative assessment are the average of all practical performances during the module. The regulation also requires that in the beginning of each module, lecturers have to inform STs of the module assessment plan with all information of what, when and how the assessments will be conducted. The summative assessment is organised by the Assessment Department. The examination questions can be extracted from question banks or designed by an assigned lecturer and then approved by the head of department. The summative examination papers or oral assessments have to be marked or assessed by two lecturers to guarantee the objectivity and validity of assessment results. The university encourages lecturers to utilise a variety of assessment methods in both formative and summative assessment. However, in the regulation in the UoE and the circulars issued by Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), feedback has not been mentioned, this reveals that formative assessment has not been focused on HE in general and teacher education in particular. Without an official regulation of feedback, it might be overlooked in practice.

The UoE is undergoing a comprehensive reform in all aspects of teaching, learning, assessment as well as managerial policies to meet the requirements of the labour market, especially those of schools. The curricular of teacher education programmes have been innovated with practical orientation and skill-developed focus. However, these curricular are still theory-laden and do not offer many chances for STs to develop professional skills. Thus, it requires a continuous reform to enhance the quality of training. Due to the needs of change in the UoE, new education approaches are welcome. Therefore, the current study with an idea of introducing authentic assessment- a new assessment approach to STs was given favorable conditions to

conduct. This is the first reason for the UoE to become the research site of the study. Additionally, the UoE is a large university, the study might find holistic and diverse views of authentic assessment of STs. Furthermore, as a leading university of education, and successful models of the UoE will be transferred to other universities of education. Hence, findings of the study possibly have a broader impact to teacher education in Vietnam. Moreover, issues of cost, time and accessibility often influence researchers' decision on sampling (Louis et al., 2011). In this study, given the time restraint and accessibility to research sites, this study focused only on the UoE where I worked full-time as a lecturer rather than multiple universities in Vietnam

#### **4.4 Research methods**

In order to give opportunities to STs to experience authentic assessment, I collaborated with two lecturers in the UoE to design different assessment tasks and implement an intervention. However, the main interest of the study was the STs' perceptions of authentic assessment rather than the process of implementation. Thus, the vital data came from the interviews that followed the interventions. Other data related to the task design and implementation were also collected but only for supplementing the interview data

##### **4.4.1 Intervention**

To find out how STs view authentic assessment, it is essential that they have sufficiently experienced this assessment approach. There was no empirical research evidence that lecturers at the UoE had the intention to use authentic assessment and/or to implement it appropriately. Consequently, in order to explore STs' perceptions of authentic assessment, a set of interventions with different authentic assessment tasks was implemented in the study.

The study borrowed the notion of classroom intervention which refers to teachers' motivation to change their own curricula, values, and beliefs (Randi & Corno, 1997). Intervention can be simply defined as "purposeful action by a human agent to create change" (Midgley, 2000, p.13). It was proven to be an effective strategy to investigate initiatives in practice (Engeström, 2011). The current study was a primary



attempt to introduce an alternative approach to classroom assessment by listening to the voice of STs who play a crucial role in the educational process. Consequently, the intervention was conducted in university-based classrooms but STs' perspectives were the focus of the research. The intervention was carried out in classrooms where it is difficult to control numerous variables (Collins, Joseph & Bielaczyc, 2004). In addition, the study did not focus on evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention; thus, it did not follow the rigorous standards and requirements of a controlled experiment (Engeström, 2011). This means that there were neither control and experimental groups nor pre- test and post- test for the intervention. The intervention simply introduced authentic assessment tasks in a formative assessment to explore how the student teachers responded to them.

There were three phases of the intervention conducted within one term in a pedagogy-related module in two classes. The reasons for conducting three phases was to provide more opportunities for the STs to engage in a variety of authentic assessment strategies and to examine the formation of their perceptions over time. Moreover, their perceptions on multiple dimensions of authentic assessment could be explored more comprehensively with the multi-layer intervention. Conducting the intervention in two classes was helpful in collecting diverse perspectives on authentic assessment from the STs and finding out potential factors influencing their perceptions.

Additionally, the intervention was designed with the focus on the participants. This intervention was associated with the notion of formative intervention which is shaped 'eventually up to the participants' (Engeström, 2011, p.606). Furthermore, in this formative intervention, 'It aims at provoking and sustaining an expansive transformation process led and owned by the practitioners' (Engeström, 2011, p.606). Given that the study did not aim to directly change assessment practice, the intervention still conveyed a new assessment approach to the participants and practitioners including the lectures and the STs in the UoE. To minimise the disruption of an educational intervention to participants in context, it is recommended that their perspective are incorporated in the research design process (Engeström, 2011). To this end, I collaborated with two lecturers to design the assessment tasks. Three

intervention tasks were decided based on the discussion and negotiation between the lecturers and me. Also during the intervention from February to May 2015, the original schedule was changed in some parts to suit the lecturers' actual teaching schedule and the STs' suggestions raised in the classrooms and in the interviews. The assessment tasks were assigned to individual STs or groups of STs from one week to over one month prior to their performance<sup>3</sup> or submission dates depending on the complexity of the given tasks.

Furthermore, the interventions were designed and conducted with reference to the literature review of authentic assessment, in consultation with the lecturers and respecting the STs' viewpoints. The details of the intervention will be presented later in this chapter.

#### **4.4.2 *In-depth interview***

Interview was selected as the main research method in the study because of its strengths in collecting both verbal and nonverbal data from participants to express and explain their perceptions of phenomena of the real world (Louis et al., 2011; Merriam, 1998). Interview enables participants to discuss their interpretation of the world from their viewpoint (Hammersley, 2013; Louis et al., 2011; Merriam, 1998). The current study valued STs' voice in authentic assessment; thus, interview is appropriate. Furthermore, during interviews, the interviewer can ask the interviewees some extra questions to clarify or expand their ideas, opinions; hence, interviews potentially produce richer and more complex data than questionnaire (Slavin, 1984). Interview is also effective to verify, validate and add comment for data collected by other sources (Lindlof & Taylor, 2010). However, one of disadvantage of interview is time-consuming for both data collection and analysis, especially with one-to-one interview; thus, the number of participants is often small (Creswell, 2005). During the intervention, some STs were invited to speak about their experience. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in Vietnamese individually in a private room. I took notes and made an audio recording of the interviews.

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<sup>3</sup> Performance here refers to all exhibition activities conducted by the STs in classroom such as role-plays, presentations, and student-led activities.

A qualitative interview is often carried out with open-ended questions without response options so that the participants can have most freedom to show their opinions and new themes of the research problem may emerge within the participants' discourse (Creswell, 2005). This also enabled the greater depth of understanding STs' perceptions and possibly brought out some new aspects of their perceptions that were not anticipated. Open-ended questions in the interviews might cause validity and reliability problems in qualitative research and it is challenged to analyse the data. Nevertheless, with open-ended questions, STs could choose how they responded to the questions, their perceptions were also expressed in their own words and vocabularies. Such flexibility was the priority of the current study; hence, open-ended questions were suitable to collect the desired data.

In the interviews, the 'funnel' strategy was utilised, in which the general questions were followed by specific ones (Lindlof & Taylor, 2010). The interviews started with general questions related to the STs' feelings about the task and then moved on to specific aspects such as the content, fairness, students' roles, group work, criteria, and results of the task. However, the sequence of the questions in the interviews varied based on the dynamic of the conversation between the interviewee and me. Apart from the prepared questions, other follow-up questions were asked to encourage the interviewees to provide more detailed explanation. During the interviews, all non-verbal aspects of communication were noted carefully because of these being important in supporting and adding nuances to the subsequent interpretation of the data (Merriam, 1998).

Table 4.1 Interview schedule

<p>Warm-up questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How do you feel after finishing the assessment task?</li><li>- What did you think about the task when the lecturer first explained it?</li></ul>
<p>Main questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Have you ever been assessed by a similar way as in the task? (Question for Task 1 only)</li><li>2. What do you think about the link between the assessment task and teaching practice?</li><li>3. Which knowledge and skills do you think helped student teachers to succeed in the task? Where were the knowledge and skills derived from?</li><li>4. How did you complete the task? Which learning strategies did you use to complete the task?</li><li>5. How did your group work go? What do you think about the impact of group working on the assessment performance? (Questions for Task 1 and 3)</li><li>6. Did you/ your group ask for help to complete the task? Who helped you/ your group and how did they help you/ your group?</li><li>7. What are your comments about the length of time allowed for the task preparation?</li><li>8. What are your comments about the facilities in the classroom and their impact on your group' performance? (Questions for Task 1 and 3)</li><li>9. What are your comments about the rubrics of the task?</li><li>10. What do you think about the idea that students should be involved in all stages of assessment including designing the task, rubrics and assessing the final assessment products?</li><li>11. What do you think about the peer and self- assessment in the task?</li><li>12. What did you learn from the task?</li><li>13. What do you think about the feedback from the lecturer and your peers?</li><li>14. What do you think about the assessment results? Are they fair and accurate?</li><li>15. What are your suggestions for the next assessment task?</li></ol>

### **4.4.3 Other methods to collect supporting data**

#### **4.4.3.1 Observation notes**

Observation is a systematic method to gather data of people's behaviour or phenomena in a particular context (Merriam, 1998). Observation is not apt to explore people's thoughts but is likely 'to provide researchers understanding of the context and can be used as reference points in subsequent interviews' (Merriam, 1998, p.119). Notably, the study did not focus on investigating the assessment tasks or the STs' achievement but on their perceptions of authentic assessment, therefore, observations were conducted only to support the interview data. Observations recorded the process of the intervention which was the context creating the STs' perceptions of authentic assessment. Observing what happened in the classroom in the intervention could be helpful to interpret more accurately the STs' responses during the interviews. Observations also helped me reflect on the performances in the classroom and raise more specific interview questions to the STs. For example, in the interviews, some STs said that they wanted to be involved in designing assessment tasks, but my observations indicated that STs did not suggest any change in the assessment plans when asked. Consequently, I asked more questions to find out STs' opinions. Additionally, reasons for the contradiction between STs' perspectives (as expressed in the interview) and reactions (as observed in the classroom) were also explored.

The intervention required STs to prepare at home and perform in the classroom. I observed STs' performance sessions and the teaching sessions where the lecturers assigned the tasks to their STs. I was introduced as a researcher and lecturer assessment in two classes; however, the STs were informed that I only attended classes when needed. When observing, I often sat in the back of the classroom and did not involved in any activities if not required by the lecturers in the classes to avoid much distraction or discomfort to students. My observations were based on the main themes which had been identified when I designed the study. In the teaching sessions where the lecturers explained the assessment tasks, the observations focused on how the lecturers assigned the tasks to their STs and how the STs reacted when receiving

the tasks. This data was useful to explain some aspects in STs' perceptions of authentic assessment such as their expectation of lecturers' guidance in assessment. The observations of the STs' performances resulted in more varied themes comprising of detailed sequences of the performances, atmosphere in the classroom, props used to support the performances, lecturers' actions, STs' collaboration in the performance, STs' engagement in the classroom discussion and the provision of feedback to their peers. The data could assist me in understanding particular references to events the STs mentioned in the interviews.

It should be highlighted here that to address the purposes of the study, the observation notes only served triangulation and expansion of the interview data to enhance the understanding of findings. Therefore, the data from the observations are not presented in any systematic way in the findings.

#### **4.4.3.2 Documents**

*Document* is a term referring to 'a wide range of written, visual, digital and physical material relevant to the study at hand' (Merriam, 1998, p.139). It constitutes a useful source of data to support observation and interview (Merriam, 1998). In the study, numerous types of documents were used to design the research plan, validate and supplement interpretations of the interview data. Before conducting the intervention, the syllabus of the selected module along with lecturers' lesson plans, course books and reference readings were collected. They provided me with necessary details to design the intervention plan with specific tasks and accompanying guidance. Furthermore, STs' assessment work such as written assignments, classroom management plans, activity plans, and peer and self- assessment reports were also gathered to shed light on how the STs completed the assessment tasks. This serves as evidence of the products of authentic assessment (Custer et al., 2000) which hinted at STs' competencies acquired during the intervention. The STs' acquisition of pedagogical knowledge and professional skills over the authentic assessment tasks was thought to influence their perceptions of this assessment approach, hence their work was included in the data set.

## **4.5 Intervention plan and data collection process**

To answer the overarching research questions, the authentic assessment approach had been chosen beforehand as a new approach in current assessment theories which proved to be effective to assess students' professional skills (Montgomery, 2002). In line with considering the theoretical bases of authentic assessment, three authentic assessment tasks were designed in order to trial these as formative assessment in a pedagogy-related module in the UoE. After that, STs who completed the tasks were invited for an interview to express their views towards authentic assessment.

### ***4.5.1 Selection of a pedagogy-related module***

The intervention was carried out in a pedagogy-related module entitled General Education which is an obligatory module for all STs in the UoE except STs in Early Years Education, Primary Education, and Special Education. Most STs enrolled in this module in the second term of their second year. The knowledge and skills from the module establish a solid base for the STs to acquire more effective subject pedagogical knowledge and skills in the following steps. The module was taught by lecturers from the Department of Education<sup>4</sup>. This module was selected because of two lecturers' willingness to work in partnership with me to conduct the intervention and because I had experience teaching and designing formative assessment tasks for the module.

The module, which lasts 15 weeks within a term with three teaching hours per week, comprises four chapters (refer to Appendix F). The objectives of the module are to provide STs with pedagogical knowledge on the general education system, teachers' responsibility and standards at school. Moreover, the module develops their professional skills such as classroom management, planning, communication, extracurricular organising, problem-solving, critical thinking, and research. The main instruction methods in the module was lecturing, questioning, and group discussion.

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<sup>4</sup> The Department of Education is in the Faculty of Psychology and Education which is responsible for running modules related to general pedagogical knowledge for all STs in UoE such as Educational Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Introduction of Education, General Education, Classroom Management, and Communication in Education.

As the module is compulsory for all STs across the university, the lecturers were asked by the Department to use the same syllabus, detailed teaching schedule, materials and summative assessment (open book exam with short essay questions). Formative assessment for the module is optional and designed by the lecturer as long as it includes both individual and group work. However, in practice, the lecturers in the department often ask their STs to carry out two formative assessment tasks: designing a classroom management plan (individual work) and conducting a simulated extracurricular event for school students in a university-based classroom (group work). Recently, the group-based task has become a compulsory formative assessment regulated by the Head of Department. This is evidence that authentic assessment has been adopted in the UoE, nonetheless, there was not any evidence that the lecturers had implemented this assessment approach effectively. Regardless of the implementation of similar assessment tasks, the lecturers did not share assessment criteria. Also the criteria which they used had not been validated by the department. In addition to the common tasks, some lecturers can add other formative assessment tasks as they desire. The weight of formative assessment (as it is called in the UoE) is 40% of the overall result of the module which means in the UoE, formative assessment was used for grading as well.

#### ***4.5.2 Choosing the intervention classes***

The intervention was conducted in two classes (called Class 1 and 2) with the intention of gaining diverse perspectives on authentic assessment. The module selected was obligatory for all STs, hence the university organised up to 20 classes with different timetables, which allowed the STs to enrol in any class based on their own schedule. Each class normally has about 50 to 80 students. The freedom in class enrolment resulted in classes composed of STs with diverse majors. Class 1 had 67 STs from 8 majors, most of them were in Military Education while Class 2 had 79 STs from 10 majors and the number of STs in each major were equivalent.

Sampling of interview was based on the participants' willingness to participate in the study. Because I intended to invite the same interviewees to participate in the interviews throughout three tasks in the intervention, I informed the interviewees that I hoped that each prospective interviewee to manage to complete three interviews in



four months but they could withdraw from the study at any point. Eventually, 14 STs (divided equally in each class - see the list in Appendix C) agreed to participate in the interviews. Fortunately, those STs were interviewed for the three rounds.. All of them were in the second year except one ST who was in his third year. In Class 1, there were three interviewees coming from the same major (Military Education) and also same group (Group 6); in Class 2, two interviewees had similar majors (Biology) and two others worked in the same group (Group 3) in their class.

### **4.5.3 Authentic assessment tasks**

#### **4.5.3.1 Theoretical background of task design**

##### **\* Elements of Authentic Assessment**

With the purpose of designing authentic assessment tasks in the intervention, a theoretical framework of this assessment approach was constructed (see Chapter 1). The intervention utilised three assessment tasks that resembled teachers' real-life tasks. Even though conducted in university-based classrooms and in a limited timeframe, all tasks had equivalent requirements and criteria which were formulated from those arising from teaching practice. STs had to present their assessment outcomes/results in the form of visible products such as written essays (assignments), peer and self-assessment reports, plays, presentations, and performed simulation activities.

Moreover, with a view to promoting formative assessment by providing more feedback for students and emphasising their role in assessment (as suggested by Wiggins (1990), Webber (2012) and Ashford-Rowe, Herrington and Brown (2014) the intervention also emphasised feedback, peer and self-assessment. The tasks aimed to collect feedback for STs' work from their lecturers and peers, both formally and informally. Additionally, STs were encouraged to offer their opinions about the tasks and the lecturers before and during the tasks. In other words, STs' voice was to be incorporated in designing the tasks. In the stage of assessing STs' work, peer and self-assessment were also included to foster STs' roles as assessors (Dochy, Segers & Sluijsmans, 2006). In general, the intervention was designed following the six

dimensions of authentic assessment: content, context (physical and social context), forms/ results, criteria of the tasks, students' involvement in assessment process, opportunities to give and receive feedback from lecturers and peers. The framework of authentic assessment developed by Gulikers, Bastiaens and Kirschner (2006) were the main reference for this intervention as presented in Chapter 1.

#### **\* Authentic assessment methods in teacher education**

Assessment in initial teacher education has some different dimensions from other disciplines in higher education because it aims to assess prospective teachers' potential competencies on teaching. Apart from the common methods used in other disciplines such as multiple-choice, short-question examination, essay, assignment, group project, oral examination; assessment in initial teacher education has some special methods. In this study, some assessment methods considered effective to develop prospective teachers' competencies will be presented.

The intervention in the current study used a variety of assessment methods including case methods, role-play, simulated activities and education planning (role-play and simulation activities can be integrated under the name 'simulation methods') (see Appendix D). Those methods were selected because of their potential to offer opportunities for STs to perform or produce performances/ products showing their pedagogical knowledge and professional skills. Most importantly the knowledge and skills should be linked closely to teaching practice. Giving priority to simulation and planning, the intervention adopted these methods in two phases. In particular, simulation methods of different types including role-play and simulated activities were incorporated in Task 1 (in accordance with case methods) and Task 3 (mixed with planning). Meanwhile, apart from being combined with simulation methods in Task 3, the STs' planning skills were also assessed in an individual task (Task 2). The reason for this combination was that one assessment method cannot fit all assessment purposes. Using various assessment methods in a task might improve the validity of assessment (Birenbaum, 1996; Brown & Knight, 1994).

Additionally, the above assessment methods were seen to be supportive of prospective teachers to formulate their practice-based knowledge and skills.

Vietnamese STs have not had many opportunities to practise professional skills because most of the teaching time in class is used for delivering theories (Tran & Swierczek, 2009). In the intervention, case methods, simulation and planning were used as assessment methods for two aims: first, to check how students received the taught materials and to see how they develop their required professional skills; and second, to improve students' realistic experience of the profession.

- **Case methods**

Case methods use cases as a pedagogical tool for teaching or assessment (Levin, 1995; Merseeth, 1996; Segers, Martens & Van den Bossche, 2008). Cases are often defined as richly detailed, contextualised and narrative documents based on real-life situations or events to encourage students to analyse those multidimensional situations or events, then, get understanding of the complexity and ambiguity of the real world (Levin, 1995; Merseeth, 1996). The emphasis on reality of cases indicates the potential of case methods in developing practical, realistic experience for prospective teachers in teacher education (Merseeth, 1996) to adapt quickly and effectively to multicultural, diverse and unpredictable settings of schools (Shulman, 1992b).

Doyle (1990) summarises two purposes of using cases in teacher education as follows: (1) provide occasions for STs to practice analysis, interpretation, and problem-solving for educational situations or events; (2) develop their understanding of teaching situations or events. It seems that through case methods, STs can acquire pedagogical knowledge and skills. In supporting such point, Darling-Hammond & Hammerness (2002) explain that when STs receive the cases containing context-specific narratives about students, teaching events or environments, they have to read, then, apply knowledge gained from research, theory and their own experience to analyse, interpret the dilemma and sagas in the cases. Therefore, they may acquire a better understanding of certain principles or prototypic dilemmas of teaching embedded in those cases. Besides, when students write the cases by themselves, they have a chance to move between levels of abstraction: to understand the relationship between concrete details and larger principles or issues of teaching. Even though case methods encourage self- reflection and individual study, cases are often discussed in

the context of group working (Merseeth, 1996). For that reason, the discussion with interactive process of review and commentary can help the writer of the cases and other participants explore more comprehensively the content and implied meaning of the cases and their connection to other knowledge in teaching (Darling-Hammond & Hammerness, 2002; Levin, 1995). Furthermore, with analysed and interpreted data from the cases, STs might find appropriate actions or solutions for the dilemmas in the cases. Through this process, they build up their realistic experience to respond to such situations in practice (Merseeth, 1996). One more supposed outcome is that normally dilemma-based cases have a variety of answers; thus, case methods can help STs realise the unpredictability, uncertainty of the teaching world and the need of multidimensional ways of thinking (Harrington, Quinn-Leering & Hodson, 1996; Shulman, 1992b).

In teacher education, cases methods are employed in many ways to teach or assess prospective teachers' competencies (Darling-Hammond & Hammerness, 2002; Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000). As examples described in Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000), cases can be used to assess STs' understanding of curriculum and instruction by asking them to configure and analyse learning experiences aimed at the mastery of certain skills and content taking into consideration student needs and classroom conditions. Cases can also be employed to examine STs' knowledge and their skills of observation and interpretation by requiring them to demonstrate their evaluation of school student learning and development in terms of strengths, interests and needs. Moreover, in cases STs are required to perform their intellectual and emotional experiences to deal with school students' behaviours in culturally diverse classrooms. Sometimes, cases can be used as examples or exemplars to illustrate theories giving general model actions in specific situations (Doyle, 1990) and explaining why those actions are appropriate (Shulman, 1992b).

Forms of STs' works in case methods may be either case reports (narratives of STs' personal experiences of a specific teaching situation or event that they experience) or case studies (STs' analysis of a specific teaching situation or event they are given) (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Shulman, 1992b). Case methods may include large or small group discussion of cases, the writing of cases or sometimes be

combined with role-play to perform the cases and its possible solutions (Levin, 1995) . In other words, using case methods for assessment is flexible in teacher education depending on teacher educators' intended goals.

It is essential to note that cases should be constructed with great care to avoid the risk of inadvertently stereotyping student or teaching situations for STs (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000). Using case methods in teacher education needs to follow logical and pedagogical process to optimise its effectiveness (Merseeth, 1991). The teacher educators must prepare not only the content of the case but also their instruction process; the STs must be active learners to construct their own pedagogical knowledge (Merseeth, 1991).

- **Simulation and role-play**

Simulation has been used in a range of discipline such as politics, business, law, teacher, medical, tourism education and training (Armstrong, 2003; Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Frederking, 2005; Giovanello, Kirk & Kromer, 2013). Simulation is often defined as a teaching and assessment strategy that involves students in a realistic learning experience by participating in actual-resembled activities (Clapper, 2010). Some research identifies three types of simulation: role-play, game and computer simulation with distinctions in composition and utility (Lean et al., 2006). Particularly students might act out the role of a pre-assigned character while interacting with other character roles in a simulated situation following a set of rules (Lean et al., 2006). In some cases, for instance when students have to do a presentation in an imitative role, role-play might not be interactive. Role-play gives more space for students to interpret the situations and act the roles in their own ways (Sutcliffe, 2002). Role-play is one of types of simulation and the notion of simulation is broader than role-play to refer all activities to 'deepen students' conceptual understanding by working within, and reflecting upon, a representation of a real environment' (Sutcliffe, 2002, p.2). However, others may categorise simulation, gaming and role-play as three distinguished strategies that share the same characteristic of replication of real settings to improve students' understanding and

skills of practice. Sometimes, they can be used together in training practice (Sutcliffe, 2002).

In this study, role-play will be discussed more extensively because it seems that role-play has been used more than gaming and computer-based simulation in teacher education context (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000). Simulation tasks in teacher education can cover all teaching activities that STs are required to complete in their course, for instance, running a parent-teacher meeting or co-curricular activity for students or delivering a lesson to simulated students (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000). In some simulation tasks, STs might be asked to play different roles, act out all behaviours and actions as scripted. It should be emphasised that a role-play task might take many days or just few minutes depending on task objectives. One of the aims of simulation, for instance, is to train STs with skills or techniques, improve their sensitization and/or try to change their attitude (Van Ments, 1999).

Situations in role-play might be simple or elaborate, familiar or strange to STs; content of the play might be described in detail or written based on the imagination of the role-players (Van Ments, 1999). The typology and guidelines of role-play in higher education in general and in teacher education in particular have not been constructed properly (Rao & Stupans, 2012). An exploratory study on the use of role-play across majors including teacher education in an Australian university has tried to draw a general typology of role-play. It is argued that there are three types 'role switch', 'acting', and 'almost real life' and guidelines to employ role-play for teaching in higher education (Rao & Stupans, 2012). According to specific guidelines, the purposes and type of role-play for teaching should be considered; the information and guidelines have to be transparent to students prior to the role-play; the role-play will be assessed for formative or summative purpose. Furthermore, the rubrics to assess the role-play are also provided beforehand; the set-up of role-play performance should be done carefully; discussion after each role-play performance is appreciated and feedback, including peer feedback, should be prompt and specific (Rao & Stupans, 2012). Further research to apply these guidelines in another context may be helpful developing a more elaborated guideline of using role-play in higher education or teacher education.

Role-play has been found to be a powerful method for teaching and assessment recently (Kollars & Rosen, 2013; Van Ments, 1999), especially in vocational training to bridge the gap between university-based training and professional practice (Lean et al., 2006). Role-play is counted in one of active teaching strategies to support traditional ones in higher education (DeNeve & Heppner, 1997; Niemeyer, Johnson & Monroe, 2014). Role-play can be used for both formative and summative assessment (Kollars & Rosen, 2013). It was found that role-play is likely to enhance cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learning as described in Bloom's taxonomy (Rao & Stupans, 2012). With role-play, it is argued that students do not simply absorb information but also discover, process and apply information (Niemeyer, Johnson & Monroe, 2014).

The implication of role-play widely in higher education across disciplines has gained positive results in developing professional skills, transferable skills, subject conceptual understanding, cooperative learning and problem-solving (McCarthy & Anderson, 2000; Rao & Stupans, 2012; Rivera & Simons, 2008; Shellman & Turan, 2006). For example, the students in Shellman and Turan (2006) study, after engaging with role-play, also reported that their subject knowledge, critical thinking, analytical skills and interest in the subject were enhanced. In teacher education, although role-play has been employed in some preservice teacher training programme (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Zeichner, 2000), there has been few empirical studies to evaluate the impact of using role-play to develop prospective teachers' competencies. The initial results of a study exploring the use of role-play to develop STs' classroom management skills show the usefulness of role-play in preparing them for the teaching profession because the scenarios of the role-play are confirmed to be similar to what the STs have experienced in their fieldwork (Niemeyer, Johnson & Monroe, 2014). However, the effectiveness of role-play is evaluated by a questionnaire completed by the STs, not by any test or exercise. For that reason, the effectiveness of role-play in teacher education is still in a need to be further studied.

Role-play and other types of simulations are believed to motivate students' learning motivation by delivering information to them in a highly interesting way (DeNeve & Heppner, 1997; Raymond & Usherwood, 2013; Van Ments, 1999). In an

intervention with role-play simulation in DeNeve & Heppner (1997), 91% of the participants put positive comments after experiencing this teaching strategy. Other research mentioned in Raymond & Usherwood (2013) also indicate that simulations including role-play enhance both students' extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. They found that simulations require students' active engagement in activities, provide prompt and instant feedback (often after role-play performance), present challenging but achievable goals, leave space of autonomy for students, encourage interaction among students and improve pleasure in learning. However, there is a claim that engagement in the competitive, group-working role-play might decrease students' motivation (De Freitas, 2006). In terms of students' perceptions, learning activities with a lack of control from teachers (role-play can be a case) are likely to demotivate some students (Hancock, 2002). Moreover, some empirical evidence show that many students have not been familiar with role-play and this might therefore raise anxiety in role-play performance (Lean et al., 2006). Due to the divergent impact of role-play to students' learning motivation literature has found so far, this issue should be explored further to identify factors which might influence to the contradiction, especially in teacher education where the research on this issues has been absent.

- **Lesson and education plans**

In teaching skill-related modules in teacher education in the United States, the first two units include planning of lessons and concept teaching (Brown, 1976). After being trained in planning skills, STs have to fulfill assessment assignments related to teaching planning. Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000) emphasised on the importance of assessing teachers' planning of teaching in practice.

Teachers analyse the needs of their students, assess the resources available, take the school district's goals into account, and decide on their instructional strategies. . . (p. 532)

This means that planning is an essential skill for teachers. For that reason, in preservice teacher education, teaching STs how to plan their lessons, class management and other educational activities should be included in training curriculum. Although



structure and criteria of lesson plans and classroom management plans are different, both are aimed to support teachers' teaching practice. Teaching planning is defined as 'a process of selecting educational objectives, diagnosing learner characteristics, and choosing from alternative instructional strategies in order to achieve certain learner outcomes' (Peterson, Marx & Clark, 1978, p.418). Meanwhile, classroom management planning might include developing a set of class rules, behaviour expectations, specifying procedures for daily tasks and improving classroom routines, preparing seating board (Capizzi, 2009; Sayeski & Brown, 2011). Two kinds of plans supplement each other so that teaching and learning activities in class are likely to take place smoothly and effectively. There is not any specific and rigid template for teaching or classroom management plans; the plans should be tailored to fit each particular class with distinguished demographic characteristics (Capizzi, 2009; Rusznyak & Walton, 2011). Although in initial teacher training, STs might be introduced to and guided to use some general approaches of planning, given some general templates (John, 2006), their lesson plans or classroom management plans have to be built 'within a practical and ideological context' (Mutton, Hagger & Burn, 2011, p.402). This makes evaluation of teachers' or STs' plans to be challenging for teacher educators and administrators.

Lesson planning is helpful for teachers to consider what to teach, how to teach and how to assess what they have taught. In classroom management, the meaning of planning is not different. Planning is to maximise the educational effectiveness of the activities in the class (Sayeski & Brown, 2011). However, regardless of its importance, very little research has been done on the effect of planning skill training in preservice teacher education on STs' performance in their practicum or professional practice later (Mutton, Hagger & Burn, 2011). The initial results in these studies have indicated that before commencing practicum, all STs need to be trained in the knowledge of planning including the role and nature of planning, approaches and process of planning. The STs should also be given examples of format or template of a plan in both lesson teaching and classroom management (Merrett & Wheldall, 1993; Mutton, Hagger & Burn, 2011; Rusznyak & Walton, 2011). The intervention of learning to plan in teacher education brings positive impacts to their professional competencies and makes them feel like real teachers (John, 2006; Mutton, Hagger & Burn, 2011; Odabasi & Gülten, 2013).

These studies also identify that in lesson planning process, STs have to overcome some challenges such as timing for planning, formulating objectives of lessons, selecting appropriate activities for certain stages of the lessons, providing effective transitions and finding sources of the lesson plan. It is also suggested that when training STs on how to plan, teacher educators should equip them with a rich knowledge of the context they might work later and a willingness to adjust their plans to suit their students. Teacher educators also should encourage collaborative planning among STs; provide specific feedback for STs' plans (Mutton, Hagger & Burn, 2011).

With classroom management training in teacher education, it seems this field has not received sufficient attention in research. The most comprehensive research on classroom management training for prospective teachers was done by the National Council of Teacher Quality to investigate the extent to which America's traditional teacher programmes offer research-based strategies to prepare trainee teachers better for their classroom management (Greenberg, Putman & Walsh, 2014). The report shows that classroom management has been taught in most of the teacher preparation programmes but instruction and practice on classroom management strategies not really given the focus they deserve (Greenberg, Putman & Walsh, 2014). This happens in other teacher education programmes in other countries (Merrett & Wheldall, 1993). Consequently, it is suggested that to develop coordinated foundational and general clinical coursework in classroom management training with profound research support; improvement in the link between what teacher trainees are taught in the university-based courses and school practice by using videotapes of real classroom and simulations (Greenberg, Putman & Walsh, 2014). Overall, to date, literature in training STs' planning skill requires further studies (Odabasi & Gülten, 2013).

- **Peer and self- assessment**

Another important point in the intervention was the utilisation of peer and self-assessment. Apart from increasing the validity and reliability of assessment, these strategies bring great benefits for students' learning as pointed out by a range of educational research since 1990s (Flachikov, 2005). Peer and self-assessment help

students improve awareness and understanding of the subject, improve their autonomy in learning, encourage them to use a deep approach in learning, develop their evaluation skills, improve their responsibilities to their group work and the likes (Flachikov, 2005; Sambell, McDowell, & Montgomery, 2013). In the intervention, both inter-group and intra-group peer assessment were used. As suggested by Pickford and Brown (2006), it is possible to reduce bias in peer assessment by using groups of students collectively or individually to assess other groups before allowing students to assess the contributions of other students within their own working group. Peer and self-assessment are valuable to prospective teachers because they would become teachers in the future and they would have to assess their prospective students. Thus, trainee teachers need to possess evaluation skills and be familiar with the assessment process (Sluijsmans & Prins, 2006). Therefore, the most important benefit of this strategy is that the STs had opportunities to be assessors. It is worth noting that peer and self-assessment in the intervention are themselves authentic assessment tasks for the STs.

#### **4.5.3.2 Task 1**

Task 1 aimed to assess STs' competencies in understanding educational principles and strategies of behaviour and classroom management and then applying those principles and strategies to solve some typical situations arising in education practice (refer to Appendix G). The task also focused on developing the STs' problem-solving, communication, collaboration and teamwork skills, as well as improving their awareness of the requirements of the teaching profession. To achieve those aims, the STs were asked to complete the task in groups with two sub-tasks: performing the play with assigned scenarios (cases) and writing an essay (assignment) to analyse the scenarios and explain why they suggested their solutions. The writing assignments were chosen because the lecturers wanted to assess STs' writing skills, critical thinking skills and theoretical knowledge which were presented in the essay. Each group was given a problematic case at school, and they had to write a full script for the scenario including the ways to solve the problem. To compare the solutions between groups and also to explore various perspectives towards one case, each scenario was assigned to two groups but the groups had to complete the task separately. After 1 week for

preparation, the STs presented their solutions or a part of their solutions using role-play and each role-play lasted 7 minutes. There were 7 groups in each class. After each pair of performances, the lecturer led the class discussion of the case and gave feedback to the two performing groups. In addition, each group also had to submit an assignment to explain why they solved the problem in such ways by using some education theories as a background. The essay was maximum 1000 words (up to four A4 pages).

The results of the task included ***the lecturer's assessment and intra-group peer- assessment***. The lecturers gave formal written feedback and marks for the group performance in the classrooms and the group assignments one week after the performance. All the members in the same group received the same marks from the lecturer's assessment but different marks from the peer-assessment. The weight of lecturers' marks is higher than peers' marks because the lecturers who collaborated with me had not fully trusted students' assessing skills. Therefore, the lecturers wanted to own the dominance in the assessment results. There were three rubrics used in Task 1 including one for role-play performance assessment, one for group assignment and one for members' contribution to group work (used in intra-group peer assessment).

The final mark of each student = ***Lecturer's mark x 60% + Peer's mark x 40%***

#### **4.5.3.3 Task 2**

Task 2 was designed to assess STs' understanding of the importance and structure of weekly, monthly, termly, and yearly classroom management plans and their planning skills. The task was also intended to develop the STs' problem-solving, communication, planning, presentation and assessment skills and to improve their perceptions of form tutors' responsibilities at school. Task 2 was carried out individually. Each student browsed a school's website, or contacted teachers/management board or trainee teachers in the school to collect information on education activities taking place in that school and in a specific class. After that the STs played the role of a form tutor of the class to design a monthly management plan. The students had one week (Class 1) or two weeks (Class 2) to finish the task and submit the plan in hard copies to the

lecturer. On the dates of submission, some STs were invited to present their plan in front of the class, answer the questions raised by other STs and the lecturer and receive feedback for their plan. The lecturer also led the discussion in class to encourage all STs to add more ideas to the presented plan. In Class 1, only the lecturer assessed the STs' work. In Class 2, in addition to the lecturer's assessment, the students self-assessed their plan and sent the self-assessment to the lecturer after the presentations of the representative students and the class discussion. Both lecturer and students used the same assessment rubric.

***The final mark of each student in Class 2 = (Lecturer's mark x 80+ Student's mark x20)/100***

#### **4.5.3.4 Task 3**

Task 3 set the assessment objectives including STs' competencies in designing a plan to conduct a simulated extracurricular event in university-based classrooms for school students. Throughout the task, the STs were expected to develop their skills in problem-solving, organising, planning, leadership, communication, collaboration and teamwork, and performance. The task was also intended to expand the STs' perceptions of teachers' responsibilities. Like Task 1, Task 3 was completed in groups. Each group of students formulated a plan for extracurricular activities (a game, a competition, a music show, etc.) for school students. They had to hand in the plan, receive the lecturer's feedback, correct the plan accordingly and obtain approval by the lecturers before the performance dates. After the plans were approved, the STs in each group played the roles of teachers and school students, prepared required props for the activities and demonstrated that plan in the classroom. Each demonstration lasted at most 30 minutes. There were 7 groups in each class to perform.

On the performance dates, each group nominated a member to be their representative to join the assessment panel for other groups' performance. Based on predetermined assessment criteria, the panel members gave comments and marks to all groups' performance except their own group. The marks were only for reference rather than be counted in the official module result. In order to preserve anonymity, the panel members only wrote down all their comments and marks in a form and hand

in to the lecturers. The lecturer summarised the comments and calculated the marks for each group and informed the summary of the comments and marks in front of the class. He also added his comments and marks in the summary. Due to time limit, in both classes, the lecturers could not give a chance for other STs to give their comments to the performing groups.

The official results of the task included the lecturer's assessment and intra-group peer- assessment. Similarly to Task 1, all the members in the same group received the same results from the lecturer' assessment (for the group performance in class and the activity plan) but different results from intra-group peer- assessment. Totally, there were three rubrics used in Task 3 comprising one for group performances (both lecturers and panel used it), one for activity plans (for lecturers' use only), one for members' contribution to group work (members in groups used to assess their intra-group peers).

The final result of each student =  $(\text{Lecturer's mark} \times 70 + \text{Peer's mark} \times 30) / 100$

#### **4.5.4 Data collection timeline**

I obtained the approval to conduct the study from the Rector of the UoE in middle December 2014. Then I was introduced to the managerial board of four faculties including Special Education, Preschool Education, Primary Education, and Psychology and Education. The reason for contacting those faculties was because their areas were closely linked with my expertise. After that, I gained the agreement of support my study from the managerial boards in the Faculty of Preschool Education and Faculty of Psychology and Education. Eventually, the latter was selected as it was exactly within my expertise. The information sheets were sent by email to all lecturers in the faculty. Two lecturers from the Department of Education who taught the General Education module expressed interest in the study. Due to my working schedule in the United Kingdom from early January until early February 2015, I liaised with the lecturers by emails and Skype to design the detailed intervention plan for the three authentic assessment tasks.

When the term started in late January 2015, the lecturers presented to STs in two classes the module syllabus that included general information of the assessment regulated by the department. The STs knew that they had to complete three formative assessment tasks (individual and group-based tasks) during the module and a summative assessment at the end of the module. However, the information of the study and details of authentic assessment tasks were not disclosed to the STs at that time due to the lecturers' intention. Until the university resumed classes after two-week Lunar New Year holiday in the end of February 2015, I introduced myself and my study officially to two classes. I explained the purposes of the study, described the intervention and interview process, and confirmed that all prospective data would be used for research purposes only. I also clarified that the assessment tasks respected the common requirements of the university, were designed by the lecturers and approved by the Head of Department; hence, all STs had to complete them. Moreover, I would not be involved in any assessment judgment in the module because it was the lecturers' responsibility. The information sheet and consent forms for observation, interview, and assessment paper collection were distributed to all STs in the classes. Then STs who agreed to participate in any part of the study returned their signed consent form. Fortunately, all STs in both classes consented to observation with note-taking, 26 STs were willing to interview and 87 students would give me their individual assessment papers after being assessed by the lecturers. With group assignments in Task 1 and group plans in Task 3, I had to obtain the consent forms from the whole groups afterwards. The STs seemed to be very supportive, and all groups were willing to give copies of their assessment papers. The intervention and interviews with STs were carried out from late February to late May 2015.

#### **4.6 Data analysis**

Over the four-month period of data collection, a great deal of information relating to student teachers' perceptions of authentic assessment was collected. The 42 interviews were fully transcribed from the digital recordings so that I could familiarise myself with the data (Merriam, 1998). The interview lasted from 15 minutes to 65 minutes and most were 30 minutes long (see an example of the interviews transcribed in Appendix E). The interview recordings and transcripts of each task were saved

separately in different folders labelled according to the interviewees' codes and classes. Before analysis, the interview transcripts were returned to some interviewees to check or change if they desired. There was only one interviewee who asked to do so and required to exclude a small piece in her conversation regarding Task 1.

I adopted a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Both manifest and latent content were highlighted (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008), therefore, both transcripts and field notes taken from the interviews were counted in the data analysis process. In addition to the interviewees' utterances, other nonverbal signs such as silence, smile, shyness, and pause (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008) were noted to interpret more accurately the STs' perceptions. The data collected in each task was analysed separated before being linked together to find out the related findings on the STs' perceptions of authentic assessment. The analysis process started with open coding after I made sense of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Coding is assigning some sort of short-hand designation to various aspects of the data so that I can retrieve specific pieces of the data (Merriam, 1998). Both levels of coding, including identifying information about the data and interpretive constructs related to analysis (Merriam, 1998), were used in this study. In the next step, the long list of codes was sorted into potential themes and the relevant coded data extracts were placed within the identified themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These themes were reviewed and refined several times to combine some similar or relevant themes into overarching themes and then create meaningful individual themes. The aim of these steps was to reduce the number of themes and explore the connections among the codes and themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After that each individual theme was defined and named (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

It is noted that the coding process was conducted in Vietnamese transcripts to avoid misinterpretation if the interview transcripts were translated from Vietnamese to English. Some nuances of meaning might be lost in the translation. After that, the list of the codes, themes and ideal extracts of the interviews were translated into English. The back-translation process was conducted in this stage so that the semantic equivalence between the Vietnamese and English versions could be achieved (Chen & Boore, 2010).



## **4.7 Considerations of ethics and validity**

### **4.7.1 Considerations of ethics**

Ethics issues were considered before, during and after the study commenced, according to the guidance produced by University of East Anglia, and authors including Oliver (2010) and Hammersley and Traianou (2012). Generic areas raising ethical issues encompass harm to researchers and participants, and respect for participants' autonomy, privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012; Oliver, 2010). The study did not contain any likelihood of physical harm to participants or me. Other harms were minimised, such as the interviews being arranged as convenient for the participants. To avoid discomfort in the participants speaking about their perspectives on authentic assessment, which might relate to their lecturers and university, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity were prioritised, as explained in detail below.

The comprehensive research information sheet and consent forms were sent to the Rector of the UoE, dean of the Department of Education, seeking permission to conduct the research. Recruiting participants for the study was completely based on their willingness. During the study, the participants liaised directly with me. The list of interviewees with their names, majors and contact details were kept confidential. Every participant was given a pseudonym. The lecturers were not informed about who participated in the study to avoid any bias in their assessment judgments or in communication with the interviewees in classrooms. This also freed the interviewees from unease or anxiety when offering opinions about the assessment tasks conducted by their lecturers. Before each interview, the interviewees were reminded of this confidentiality and encouraged to be open in the conversation with me.

The interviewees were also reassured that the recordings and transcripts of the interviews would be accessed only by my supervisors and me, and that they could withdraw from the study at any point if they so wished. They could also ask to check the content of the interviews and exclude any parts. All interviews were carried out in a private room containing only the interviewee and interviewer. The full original audio-recordings, field notes and transcripts were accessed by only me. The codes, themes

and extracts of the transcripts were given to two bilingual translators, labelled with codes. My supervisors could access some transcripts translated into English by myself; however, these transcripts only used the interviewees' pseudonyms. All data was kept in my laptop with a strong password. In data analysis and the presentation in the thesis, the specific name of the university was not mentioned and the interview participants were referred to with pseudonyms. The ethics committee approved the ethical application of the study; and thus all ethical issues for the study were considered carefully (see Appendix B).

#### **4.7.2 Considerations of validity**

The concept of validity is defined diversely in qualitative research (Golafshani, 2003). Instead of being defined as a fixed and universal concept, validity should be seen flexibly depending upon the particular research methodology and project (Golafshani, 2003). It is recommended that the term 'validity' should be replaced with the term 'trustworthiness' as more appropriate to the nature of qualitative research (Lincoln, 1995). The trustworthiness of data, which 'refers to the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation or other sort of account' (Maxwell, 2013, p.114), should also be used to assess the quality of qualitative research (Lincoln, 1995).

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), there are two significant threats to the trustworthiness of qualitative findings: the selection of data that fit the researcher's predetermined aims, perceptions and theoretical framework; and the selection of data that is 'out of the control' of the researcher. Indeed, interpretivism claims that it is impossible to separate researchers' own perceptions, viewpoints, values, identity and interests from their interpretation of the world (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Hence, the selection of data may be subjective; for example, the selection of data and the coding strategies are up to the researcher (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Moreover, during a research, researchers interact with participants and it is argued that the researchers and participants affect each other (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Arguably, while such bias in qualitative research is common,

researchers may not eliminate it completely, but can minimise it using strategies explained in the next sections (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

As Maxwell (2013) claims, improving the trustworthiness of qualitative research is not like in quantitative research. Instead of controlling threats to validity, qualitative researchers should identify and try to address threats after the research has commenced. In particular, qualitative researchers concerned about how their own values and experiences may have influenced the conduct and conclusion of the study should try to avoid the negative consequences of their subjectivity (Maxwell, 2013). One effective strategy to address researchers' subjectivity is standpoint epistemology (Lincoln, 1995). Standpoint epistemology leads the literature review, data collection and analysis. In the current study, interpretivism was selected to drive the research. Therefore, the subjectivity and co-construction of the interpretations was accepted as the nature of qualitative findings and were seen as a positive influence. I managed my subjectivity by building a solid conceptual framework and a detailed research plan. I kept in my mind the idea of being a researcher and respecting data and my participants.

I have worked in teacher education for eight years and was also responsible for teaching pedagogy-related modules for STs in the UoE. Therefore, I had much understanding of the context, the curricula of pedagogy-related modules, and the STs. I utilised that understanding to design the research, without making any specific assumptions about the findings. Based on interpretivism, I accepted that there were a variety of perceptions of authentic assessment in STs' eyes. Therefore, diversity and contradictions in their perceptions were analysed carefully and will be presented in the report. With an awareness of limited generalisation of qualitative research, I conducted the intervention in two different classes with three different authentic assessment tasks and interviewed each participant three times, to gain rich data on their perceptions of authentic assessment. Collecting rich data is a valuable way to treat threats to the trustworthiness of qualitative research because the researcher can obtain detailed and varied data to understand the phenomenon fully (Maxwell, 2013). The data of each participant was analysed separately each time before being combined, which helped to explore the consistency and any changes of their

perceptions over time. Furthermore, also directed by interpretivism, I noted that social and cultural context impacts considerably on people's interpretation of a phenomenon. Hence, although I borrowed the theoretical frameworks of authentic assessment from other contexts to design my study, during the data analysis, I still accepted emerging themes. I also attempted to discover which contextual factors influenced their perceptions and compare these with students' perceptions of authentic assessment in other contexts. Comparison is another strategy to deal with trustworthiness in qualitative research (Maxwell, 2013).

Moreover, in respect of the potential effect of myself on the trustworthiness of the data collected by interviewing STs or observing their performance in classroom (Creswell, 2005), I used various strategies. In Vietnamese culture, influenced significantly by Confucianism, students have to show the highest respect for their teachers (Phuong-Mai, Terlouw & Pilot, 2005; Tran, 2013a). To avoid the scenario that the STs might be likely to tell me only positive things about the tasks, I explained in detail that the purpose of the study was to listen to STs' voices and adjust the assessment appropriately. I also emphasised that I would not be involved in grading and giving feedback for the assessment tasks in either class. Therefore, there was no relationship between STs' assessment results and their participation in the interviews. This helped to elicit STs' truthful opinions on both the positive and problematic aspects of the tasks. The semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions followed the natural conversation between the interviewees and me; thus the qualitative data collected were completely based on the interviewees' perceptions without any interference. Furthermore, as mentioned, triangulation was used during data analysis to draw reasonable interpretations and conclusions (Maxwell, 2013). It is worth noting that triangulation did not focus on the accuracy of the interpretations but complementing and expanding the interpretation. Interview data was supported by data from observations and documents.

Additionally, to avoid missing nuances of STs' perceptions of authentic assessment, transcribing interview recordings was conducted carefully with notes of the interviewees' non-verbal indicators, such as tone of voice, laughing and pauses. Furthermore, notes taken during interviews were also used to support the data

analysis. As stated earlier, back-translation was also utilised during data analysis to assure that the meaning of STs' discourses would be interpreted appropriately and sufficiently without harm due to the translation of the interview transcripts from Vietnamese into English.

In short, Creswell (2005) recommended that to deal effectively with issues of trustworthiness in qualitative research, researchers should record their own biases, feelings, and thoughts and state them explicitly in the research report. By reflecting the whole research process, I identified the potential threats of misleading data collection, interpretation and conclusion and addressed the threats as explained in this chapter. Such reflexivity was expected to improve the trustworthiness of data, and thus enhance the validity of the findings.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the process of the study which explored the STs' perceptions of authentic assessment. The study adopted a qualitative approach. An intervention with three authentic assessment was conducted in two classes in the UoE so that the STs could gain some experience in this assessment approach and then express their perceptions of it. There were three phases of interviews with 14 STs in the research site. Other data sources were also collected to support the interview data. The results of the study will be described in the next three chapters. Each chapter will present the results of one intervened task.

**CHAPTER 5**

**STUDENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF USING CASE  
METHODS AND ROLE-PLAY AS AUTHENTIC FORMS OF ASSESSMENT  
IN PEDAGOGY-RELATED MODULES**

**5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the results of the first intervention (Task 1) with the authentic assessment approach from the study are presented. In this task, STs in two classes at the UoE studying the General Education module were required to complete a role-play performance and group writing assignment based on a given educational case study (see Chapter 4 for details of the intervention). After completing the task in the intervention, 14 STs in two classes were interviewed about the task. The following part of the chapter will describe findings, mainly drawn from the interview data, supported and triangulated with data from observations and document analysis.

**5.2 Student teachers' prior experience of authentic assessment**

There is an assumption that the previous experiences of the STs might influence their perceptions. This was the first formative assessment task in the module, although some interviewees had completed an authentic assessment task in previous modules. They had gained some experience with case studies, oral assessment, and other kinds of assessment. Presentation was probably the most popular assessment method, which almost all STs in the university had experienced.

It depended on each module, each module had different assessment methods. The most popular one was presentation; besides [this], there were individual assignments, tests in class or seminar[s]. There was no assessment that was the same as this task. (Dao)

However, not all presentations could be considered to be authentic assessment, because in some cases, the STs only needed to summarise lessons in their textbooks.

Few of the presentations that stemmed from a realistic project could be seen as authentic assessment. In addition to presentations, case study methods were used in several modules, and were appreciated as helpful to fill the gap between theory and practice.

[...] a case was given but...not group working, it was assigned as an individual assignment. We did not have to present or role-play, just wrote down our opinions and explained on paper why we gave such solutions and then submitted the assignment to lecturers. (Quan)

As Quan explained, in a previous module, cases were used without role-play (like Task 1). In that example, STs were asked to analyse the cases and write a critical essay, (again similar to part of Task 1). Regarding role-play, some interviewees gained experience with it but there were still differences between this task and other prior tasks in terms of objectives, requirements, and criteria. Nga, another ST described a task from a prior module:

When I studied the Communication in Educational Context module, the lecturer asked us to design a case and perform it. (Nga)

In Nga's case, STs had to write cases and perform role-plays, instead of being given a case by a lecturer (as in Task 1). However, few interviewees stated that they had not experienced any similar authentic assessment:

Until now, I have not experienced such assessment. Normally, we worked in groups and wrote group assignments and submitted [them] to lecturers, there was not role-play or presentation in front of the class like this task. (Khuong)

With interviewees who had experienced authentic assessment before, they often compared this task with prior authentic assessment tasks, gave more detailed opinions and showed less excitement about the task in comparison to interviewees who had no experience of authentic assessment. From this point, it can be seen that prior experience of authentic assessment influenced STs' perceptions of it.

### **5.3. Student teachers' perceptions of content of authentic assessment**

#### ***5.3.1. Links between authentic assessment and professional practice***

The interviewees talked much about the links between Task 1 and teaching practice. All interviewees stated that the content of Task 1 was realistic and closely linked to their future profession. 'It is practical'; 'It is useful for my career in the future'; and 'It is directly related to our work later' were the most common comments. Dealing with school students' disruptive behaviours, communicating with parents, collaborating with school managers and colleagues to solve problems in schools are daily activities and duties of all schoolteachers, and the interviewees were aware of this.

As prospective teachers in high schools, definitely, we have to face with these situations and we have to take responsibility to deal with them every day in the future. (Duong)

Consequently, they conceded that the cases from the task reflected realistic situations and that finding effective solutions was challenging. This was confirmed by some interviewees when they recalled their own school time. STs' prior schooling experience and the indirect teaching experience they gained from others impacted their perceptions of authenticity in the task. A student told a long story about her younger brother:

A case in the task was absolutely the same to my younger brother's case. [...] His teacher had to invite my parents to his school to inform [them of] his faults and discuss how to deal with him. My parents almost gave up, but his teacher succeeded. (Thao)

In Thao's statement, it can be seen that her personal experience helped her to perceive the authenticity of the task. In other cases, few interviewees saw the diversity of situations in practice due to a variety of assigned cases. However, they said that reality was more challenging, serious and complicated than the assigned cases. A student talked about his experience related to high school students. The experience



was gained from his part time job as a home tutor and from his family included many teachers.

In practice, high school students even use more horrible words in communication with their teachers. [...] we know that in Vietnam nowadays, students use violence towards teachers and in return teachers use violence towards students, and so on. (Thien)

It could be seen that both Thien's experience as a home tutor and the teaching experiences of others directed his perceptions of Task 1. The interviewees also recognised that they were able to suggest many solutions to each case, reflecting the diversity of solutions available in practice. Additionally, this also indicated STs' ownership of their own solutions and they appreciated the authenticity of the task.

I think in professional practice, each person may face different situations. Even in the same situation, each person has his/ her special personality and other things, and so they have different solutions. (Luong)

Luong saw the usefulness of the task for his teaching later. However, interviewees still expressed high expectations of the links between tasks and teaching practice, and a few suggested some possible ways for lecturers to strengthen this connection:

I think the task should be more realistic by asking STs to come to high schools, then they interview high school teachers about actual cases happening in the schools and what they think about those cases. (Dao)

Dao's suggestion implies a full perception of STs regarding assessment in pedagogy-related modules. Students expressed major concern about the reality of the task and expected to maximise their practical experience. It seemed that the students' perceptions of the authenticity of the task were affected by their own experiences, especially in their school life. The authentic assessment task made them attend more closely to challenges in teaching practice. It also made them aware that they should prepare carefully during their training period. Notably, STs also expressed a desire to be given harder and more realistic situations. This meant they perceived that authentic

assessment was challenging, but still desired to participate in it to improve their teaching. This also showed their determination to be competent teachers.

### ***5.3.2. Integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes in the authentic assessment task***

The task combined a group writing assignment and a role-play performance, requiring solutions to real-life problems, derive from both theory and practical experience. Thus, interviewees said that to complete the task, they had to integrate multidisciplinary knowledge and skills.

Regarding knowledge, firstly, an authentic assessment task needs to stay relevant to STs' prior knowledge including academic and everyday life knowledge or common sense. In this task, everyday knowledge was appreciated more than academic knowledge. In the interviewees' opinion, since the cases given in the task reflected practical issues in real life, in order to handle them, they had to mobilise their understanding of school life, human relationship, and social context. One case related to a schoolgirl making disrespectful jokes about her teachers:

We need to have practical knowledge, such as that of relationship between teachers and students, and students' friendship...With teenagers, due to their close relationship, they often use colloquial words to communicate with each other. (Dan)

When analysing the given case, Dan used his schooling experience and that of others people. Like Dan, Thanh shared his own experience during his high school time.

When I was a student in grade 11 or grade 12, I ignored all of my teachers' advice. I think it was hard to change a high school student. (Thanh)

Based on his schooling experience, Thanh thought improving disruptive behaviour was impossible. In addition to practical knowledge, the STs used knowledge from psychological, educational and other social modules. Most interviewees asserted that in order to complete the task, they had to integrate knowledge across disciplines to give an effective solution. A ST mentioned that it seemed that interdisciplinary

knowledge gave them more comprehensive and effective solutions to problems in schools.

Broadly speaking, teachers have to have educational, psychological knowledge and so on. They have to have theoretical background to deal with difficult situations because they cannot give the solutions subjectively [just] according to their own experience. (Dao)

For that reason, the interviewees assumed that general pedagogical knowledge was essential for all prospective teachers. The theories in the General Education module that the STs were studying was perceived as useful and relevant to the cases in Task 1. It was evident that the interviewees were aware of the requirements of knowledge, not only to finish the task, but also to perform teachers' responsibilities at school.

As for skills, the majority of the interviewees mentioned problem-solving and collaboration skills. In their opinion, these skills were essential for the task because the STs had to collaborate to analyse the case, find solutions, write the script and rehearsal the play. Moreover, other skills such as information literacy, creativity, analysis, synthesis, public speaking, presentation, debate, leadership skills were identified. Public speaking was also mentioned as a core skill of the teaching profession, because the STs said if they could not speak confidently and coherently in front of their peers, they might not perform well with prospective students. One interviewee offered a typical explanation for using multiple skills in the task:

As for the performance, collaboration and problem-solving skills were placed in the highest priority. Besides, the role-play task also required information literacy skills, and creativity skills. As for the essay, it was necessary to use some skills such as problem-solving, language, and critical writing. After finishing the performance, we needed listening and reflective skills to get feedback and correct our performance. (Luong)

The statement indicated that STs seemed to fully perceive the skills required for the task, and for dealing with real situations in teaching practice. Generally, the skills

comprised cognitive competencies, meta-cognitive competencies and social competencies.

In short, most of the interviewees appreciated the authenticity of the task. However, a few had reservations about the authenticity of some cases and the solutions they found. They were not sure that they might encounter such situations in the future, and were unsure that their solution might be effective in practice.

The task required us to show how we solved the problem, but in the case, the teacher only persuaded the student by only talking with her. It was not effective in practice because no one listened. (Thanh)

This quote revealed that authenticity was subjective. Based on some STs' practical experience or teaching beliefs, they might see an assessment task as inauthentic, in disagreement with their lecturers and peers. Moreover, the quote also indicated a limitation of authentic assessment tasks which are conducted in university-based classroom. The tasks are still simulated situations, to some extent, they are still different from the practice.

#### **5.4. Student teachers' perceptions of the context of authentic assessment**

##### ***5.4.1. Physical context***

Physical context here refers to time allocation of preparation and performance as well as facility conditions to support STs to complete the assessment tasks.

##### ***5.4.1.1. Time allocation of preparation and performance***

STs had one week to prepare for the task performance in class. Some interviewees said that a week was enough if they cooperated well and each member could finish their assignments. A few interviewees suggested that the task should be completed in one teaching session in class, giving each group 10 to 15 minutes to discuss the solutions and then performing their solution to the class immediately. They suggested this because teachers have to react instantly in real life.

I would deliver the task for each group, let them prepare in 15 minutes and perform in front of the class because in practice, we have to react with cases immediately. (Thao)

This was an interesting view which endorsed some STs' insightful perceptions of authentic assessment and their high expectations of the authenticity of assessment in pedagogy-related modules. The STs wanted the timeframe of an authentic assessment to resemble the timeframe of the real activity.

However, a few interviewees complained that a week was too short. Luong compared it with the preparation time allowed for tasks in other modules.

In my opinion, this task was quite rushed [...] while my prior tasks were given at the beginning of the module, we picked up the topic [...]we still had a long time to think about those tasks. (Luong)

He felt he had to finish many tasks at the same time and his group could not find the time to discuss and practise for Task 1. Supporting Luong's view, some interviewees considered two facets of authentic assessment: workload and value. They were aware of the usefulness and effectiveness of such tasks to their future career, but, in one semester, they had to study many modules with a great deal of assessment and thus could not spend much time on one task. A typical comment was:

During that week, I had formative assessment in three modules [...] I expect to be assessed in this way but the assigned educational case in the task should not be such complicated and time of preparation should be extended. (Hoa)

The authentic assessment task was seen as demanding because it comprised many sub-tasks and multiple assessment criteria. From these points, it could be inferred that the STs perceived the value of authentic assessment, but were concerned about their workload; thus giving them extra time to complete the task might be helpful.

#### **5.4.1.2. Resources**

As observed in class, some groups used additional props to aid their performances, such as costume and music. The rooms were too small for 60-80 students. The lecturers asked STs to remove some tables from the rooms, but they were too crowded. However, in the interviews, most of the interviewees did not mention location, props or equipment. It seemed that they thought using props for a play was a requirement, and they accepted the poor condition of the classrooms.

As for resources supporting the completion of the task, most of the interviewees spoke of referring to books, articles, and online resources. However, they did not give details and so it appears that they relied mainly on the module textbook because access to resources was limited.

We did not find references because we were busy with learning schedule [and] part-time jobs, and we did not know where we could find references. (Thien)

Such statements show that many STs did not understand the role of resources. They mentioned getting advice from their former teachers in high schools and senior STs in upper classes in the university. Some interviewees emphasised the importance of practical experience from real teachers, rather than theories in books or lecturers' notes. This suggests that they may feel successful completion of an authentic assessment task relies mostly on practical experiences rather than theoretical resources. In general, the physical context was essential in authentic assessment, but the STs in this intervention did not emphasise it.

#### **5.4.2. Social context of authentic assessment**

The task was completed in groups, so it required STs to collaborate. All interviewees discussed their group-work: some were satisfied with how their group ran, while others were not. All interviewees insisted that collaboration skills were essential in life, in general, and in the task in particular.

When working in [a] group, the most important thing is getting along with our peers... The result of group work in a group with good collaboration will be better than a group without unity and responsible members. (Khuong)

Khuong indicated that if the groups had cooperated better, they would have done better in the assessment. Other interviewees agreed that through collaboration, they could raise more ideas and pick out the best ones. They strongly believed that one person could not do better than a group.

The task allowed us to share our opinions with each other. We could judge our opinions to ensure they were reasonable or able to give better solutions (Lien)

By collaborating, they learnt from each other, and each person also had a chance to reflect on his or her own opinions. The interviewees' view was that collaboration brought not only academic benefits, but also social ones such as joy in making more friends or understanding their friends better after the task. In other words, STs established social relationships during the task. A few interviewees were able to notice changes in their social skills, especially communication skills and collaboration skills from working in groups. They found that when working together, they could not avoid conflict, diversity in opinions, background and personality. To overcome these obstacles, they learnt to communicate with, accept and respect others.

With group working, we learnt solidarity, patience because when we discussed in group, some members were really conservative, high-ego. Whenever I raised ideas, they rejected right away, at first time, I felt uncomfortable. Now, I understand them more, and so it's fine. (Thao)

All these transferable skills and professional attitudes were confirmed as helpful for prospective teachers in their future profession because they had to collaborate with both colleagues and students at school. In Thao's statement and other comments, there was a range of obstacles that STs had to resolve to complete the task. Conflicts, members' lack of contribution or irresponsiveness resulted in some groups' poor performances. However, all obstacles listed above revealed the STs' lack of

collaboration skills. Therefore, improving the results of group-based assessment could be achieved through developing STs' collaboration skills.

Although not asked about the roles of group leaders, some interviewees paid attention to this issue. They appreciated their leaders' contribution to the group work:

I could see my group leader was really enthusiastic. Without him, our group's activities would be hard to be completed. If the group leader had not actively arrange works, meetings, we would have not finished the task. (Hong)

In general, STs felt that leaders took responsibility, but members played crucial roles in completing groups' tasks.

In addition to the interaction among members in groups, there was class discussion after each couple of performances. All interviewees appreciated this, which will be discussed in the next sections. The class discussion could be considered a social context for STs to share their opinions across the groups and gain general feedback from peers and lecturers. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, to complete the task, some interviewees reported that they sought help from their former schoolteachers, senior STs and schoolteachers. It seemed STs approved the teaching community to develop their understanding of teaching work and build up a relationship with that community.

##### **5.5. Student teachers' perceptions of authentic assessment criteria**

In this task, STs were assessed in both the role-play performance and the group writing assignment. In addition, individual contributions was also assessed by peer and self-assessment. There were three rubrics: one for role-play performances, one for essays and one for individuals' contribution in group-work. When asked about the rubrics, several interviewees confirmed that the rubrics were the most detailed they had ever seen and used them to grasp the criteria and standards of the assessment. It seems they found that the rubrics indicated what lecturers expected of them. For that reason, the rubrics were like a compass to guide STs to complete the task.



Knowing the assessment criteria helped members in the groups work more actively because they were aware of standards, marking scheme [...], they would recognise the importance of each criterion so that they could focus on them. (Duong)

With the rubrics, they knew what they should focus on and how they should carry out the task. Several interviewees praised the fact that the rubrics corresponded to the module objectives and guided their learning. More importantly, the STs also realised that a detailed and clear rubric was an effective tool in assessment, which was a useful lesson to replicate in their teaching in the future. Hoa said:

I realised this way of assessment were good. The task rubrics were more specific, detailed than those in others modules I used to study. [...] They were great, worth for us to learn to use [in our teaching] later. (Hoa)

She insisted that she would use such rubrics to assess her students when she becomes a teacher at school, from which we can infer that STs prefer specific, clear, reasonable and objective rubrics. The interviewees explained their reasons for this preference. Firstly, multiple criteria could reflect multi aspects in STs' competencies as Hong said:

The task was described in detail, the rubrics included many criteria; thus, this assessment helped us to know exactly our competencies. (Hong)

It was likely that the STs desired to explore their professional competencies. With peer assessment and self-assessment, the rubrics were appreciated because they supported STs in making judgments. When the STs assessed their peers or themselves, relying on the rubrics, they knew which aspects of performance they should focus on. However, the detailed rubrics also made some STs worry because the rubrics were too demanding:

At the beginning, members in my group and the group leader complained that the lecturer demanded too much and there were too many criteria. (Hong)

The STs were anxious that they might not meet all the criteria and get high marks:

As for the criterion of group meeting participation, the lecturer should divide it into more specific levels and use quantitative scales. For example, if a member were late in the group meeting, how much percent of the total mark would be deducted? (Bich)

This quote indicates that the STs were not in favour of a rubric with too many criteria, but preferred that each criterion included several levels of performance, as in the current rubrics. Additionally, few interviewees expected the rubrics to be more quantitative, which meant the description of each level of the criteria should include not only qualitative indicators of performance, but also quantitative ones. This implies that, in STs' opinions, quantitative rubrics might be more accurate in assessing students. The STs also explained that they lacked assessment experience, and thus might not interpret the qualitative description accurately, resulting in bias in peer and self-assessment and reducing the ability of the rubrics to direct their learning. The interviewees also suggested that the task and rubric should be delivered at the beginning of the module in order to guide their learning better. Furthermore, there was some evidence showing that interviewees did not fully understand the criteria.

The rubrics were rational but unfortunately, the lecturer did not explain them to us, for example, the criterion of references...I could see no group had references, we did not understand it, so we lost marks. (Hoa)

Like Hoa, other interviewees in Class 2 also complained that their lecturer read aloud the rubrics but did not explain them thoroughly. As a result, the STs' performance and essays did not meet some criteria. This showed that in the STs' perceptions, unclearness of assessment criteria might have hampered their performance. Moreover, they also desired criteria to be explained and discussed clearly.

The interviewees did not add any new criterion to the rubric. However, some of them suggested changes in the weight of each criterion. The interviewees' views were diverse due to their perceptions of the roles of each criterion. For example, the vital requirement in the task was working in groups, and thus it was rational that the rubrics focused on collaboration. A ST stated that:

I think they [the criteria] were objective and accurate to assess the performances because they reflected collaborative learning, if any group did not cooperate well together, all members had to get low results. (Luong)

Luong agreed that with a group-based assessment like Task 1, collaboration should be the vital criterion and the groups would consider the weight of criteria when correcting their performance. Moreover, many wanted to reduce the weight of the criterion of role-play competence because, as they stated, they were not professional actors or actresses, and the reality of the solutions was more important.

Regarding the criteria of role-play ability, we should reduce its weight because we are students, our role-play skills may not be good enough as our expectation. Sometimes, we are too nervous, we forget the scripts. We are not professional. (Thao)

In STs' views, competent role-playing was not a vital skill for prospective teachers. In line with reducing the weight given to role-play ability, they suggested to increase the weight given to how realistic solutions were. They felt that, for prospective teachers, problem-solving competencies in dealing with students' disruptive behaviours should be assessed mainly based on the reality of solutions. Furthermore, they also suggested increasing the weight given to joining class discussion and giving feedback, because this criterion reflected STs' critical thinking and public speaking, which they considered to be essential competencies.

It [the criterion of joining class discussion] was important because when other students raised questions, if we gave answers right away, we would be good. This was not like solving a problem that we had time to think at home. (Thanh)

This reemphasised STs' perceptions of professional standards in teaching. They understood that problem-solving and language skills were the core teaching requirements. This was reinforced in the STs' views of the rubric for the group writing assignment, for which a few thought the criteria of language and presenting arguments were the most important aspects.

I think the solutions may be good but if you do not know how to write, how to use written language to express your ideas, they may be understood incorrectly or people cannot understand your ideas. (Hong)

In general, STs' perceptions of criteria were expressed explicitly. They perceived that the criteria had to be relevant to professional teaching standards and the weight of each criterion had to reflect its influence on STs' success in the task.

## **5.6. Student teachers' perceptions of their involvement in authentic assessment**

### **5.6.1. Assessment design stage**

The task was designed for the purpose of involving STs in the assessment process as much as possible. The lecturers worked with the researcher to produce guidelines including task objective, task requirements and all rubrics. On the dates of delivering the Task 1 to all STs, the lecturers asked their students to raise any questions or comments about the task. The lecturers proposed revising task guidelines (except the content of the educational cases and assessment methods) based on the STs' suggestions. However, the STs had no comments at that stage, and the reasons for this were explored in the interviews.

All interviewees were pleased to be involved in the assessment process, but they had different perspectives on the stages, aspects and level of the involvement. Only a few insisted that STs should be involved at all stages of the assessment process, while others felt that only some stages or aspects were appropriate. Interviewees supported their involvement in the assessment because they preferred democracy in class. For example, Thien said that "I think democracy is good, I prefer democracy because it is fair". They also believed that considering both lecturers' and students' opinions would make assessment fairer. The interviewees thought STs should be allowed to describe their preferred assessment methods. An interviewee recounted his experience from previous modules in which his lecturers allowed the STs to choose the most suitable methods for them.

If the assessment suited our ability, we would be more motivated. The levels of difficulties in all assessment methods had to be similar. Anyone could choose which one they liked most [...]. I thought this way was more adequate. (Dao)

The STs argued that their assessment results might increase if they were authorised to choose their favoured methods. As mentioned earlier, some interviewees thought they could contribute to the content of the cases in the authentic assessment tasks by interviewing high school students and teachers about real situations happening in their daily school life. It seemed that STs preferred to work on situations that they were interested in. If they found those situations more likely to happen in practice, they might be more motivated to find solutions for them.

I think that there are some realistic situations we can submit to you and then the whole class will discuss about them...It means you allow us to collect the situations in high schools...(Hong)

Moreover, by visiting schools, they would gain more understanding about school context, teachers' work and students' characteristics. This involvement in assessment expressed STs' expectations of the connection between assessment at university and school practice.

Concerning assessment criteria design, most of the interviewees agreed that lecturers should ask them which criteria they preferred and let the whole class discuss it before making the final rubrics, because they believed that if they were able to contribute to the rubrics, they would understand the criteria better.

If STs suggest the criteria, they can follow them during assessment process to get better result. [...]. It was alright if the lecturer set up the rubrics, but sometimes the STs did not agree with the rubrics (Dao)

This assumption was strengthened by other interviewees, who expressed confusion about the criteria. Therefore, they did not strictly follow the criteria and lost marks. However, the STs were also aware of the shortcomings of STs' involvement in

assessment. For instance, discussion is time-consuming and it was difficult for them to reach a consensus.

I am confused that if the lecturers appreciate democracy, their students will discuss or debate together longer and it will take a longer time for assessment process. (Thien)

As described by Thien, open discussion still required lecturers' control to reach a decision swiftly. Additionally, there was another perspective which proposed a balance between STs and lecturers in designing the criteria. The interviewees believe that lecturers should predefine rubrics and then asked their students for comments. It was noted that in practice, STs did not offer the lecturers their opinions when asked. Some interviewees explained that the time allocated for task guidance in their classes was short and they needed longer to form a view. Also, some students supposed that designing assessment or making judgment in assessment were the lecturers' privilege, duty and responsibility.

The lecturer could ask, [but] sometimes they did not need to ask the STs because when he delivered the task, he explained the objectives and assessment process, I think the lecturer would be the one making [the final] decision. (Lien)

This implied that the STs were still influenced by the notion of 'teacher-centred' learning. They also believed that the lecturers had more experience and were more qualified to make rational judgments, which revealed STs' lack of confidence.

In short, in the intervention STs did not contribute to the design of the task and criteria. However, in the interviews, some interviewees still expected to be encouraged to show their ideas about task and criteria design. A few expressed concern about the STs' bias and lack of fairness in assessment if they were given freedom to suggest assessment tasks and criteria. These issues will be discussed more specifically later.

### **5.6.2. Peer and self-assessment**

In the task, peer assessment was used twice: on the dates of performance, when the groups gave comments to each other without grading; and then later when group gathered and assessed each member by giving both feedback and a mark. It is clear from the interviews that all STs desired peer-assessment in classes and in groups, and they all perceived both its advantages and disadvantages.

All interviewees appreciated the class discussions after each pair of performances, and most of them found this useful for both current learning and their future career. STs had the opportunity to give and receive feedback from other groups; share their opinions and experience; understand the cases and solutions more clearly; and practice a range of skills.

I preferred to raise realistic issues and discuss together to presenting what was written in the books. In that case, nothing was worth listening, staying at home and reading book might be more useful. Discussing in class was more interesting and useful. (Thanh)

Interaction between STs is believed to be an effective learning strategy. A few STs also noted that, through the discussion and debate, lecturers could assess the STs.

I think it (class discussion) was great: the lecturer could see both group's, each student's competencies. All their competencies could be exposed, and their critical thinking, problem-solving and debate skills were improved significantly. (Thien)

Class discussion was helpful for not only student learning, but also for lecturers. Moreover, there was another useful side to peer assessment in class. According to a ST, because of the requirement to give feedback to other groups, all the STs had to pay attention to all the performances. Another ST suggested the discussion and assessment could be expanded to an online forum so that all STs could post their comments about other groups' performance, and then online engagement could be a criterion in the rubrics for assessing STs' contribution.

Regarding intragroup peer-assessment, some interviewees commented that to evaluate group work, STs should be involved in assessing the process of task completion, because they knew most about what happened in their groups.

The contribution of each member was exposed in group activities, everyone knew it clearly, they could assess accurately. (Lien)

Nevertheless, all of the STs were aware of the disadvantages of group peer assessment. The results of group peer assessment were often biased because of personal relationships. For example, one group gave the authority for assessing individual contributions to their group leader.

The group leader did the assessment for all members in my group. We did not have a chance to assess. (Khuong)

Khuong explained that his group merely accepted the views of the group leader. Some interviewees also commented that they strongly believed that group leaders could assess objectively and accurately member's contribution to the group work because the group leaders could follow all members' work. However, a few interviewees expressed that even though they appreciated the group leaders' effort, there was still bias.

Experienced leaders know how to divide tasks to [suit group] members, but actually if all members do not attempt or cooperate for the common [good of the] work, the leaders will not able to do anything. (Bich)

In short, even though lecturers provided the form and criteria for group peer-assessment, STs still worried that if they gave their peers low marks and negative feedback, their friendships would be damaged. This also affected the fairness and equity of assessment in the same way as did STs' respect for their group leaders.

As for self-assessment, in the task, STs were allowed to assess their contribution to the group work. STs drew attention to peer-assessment and said little about self- assessment. Many STs liked self-assessment and supported these new



assessment strategies. All STs perceived both advantages and disadvantages of self-assessment, seeing the advantages as improving their self-reflection skills.

We read the rubrics by ourself, we had to reflect our working, was it good? If we over-assessed ourselves, we felt ashamed. (Thanh)

Thanh claimed that STs did not overestimate their own abilities. However, other interviewees thought subjectivity and inaccuracy were significant disadvantages of self-assessment, most comments in this area related to fairness and equity, which will be discussed in the following part. Some interviewees felt they did not have enough assessment experience or skill, and one interviewee asserted that it was impossible to approve of STs' self-assessment in general. This suggested that the STs could offer comments about their performance, but should not be allowed to mark themselves.

Each student can comment about his performance in front of the group or class, then the lecturer assess him because only the lecturer is the most honest, objective assessor. (Duong)

Again, the STs showed doubt about making judgment in assessment. It was worth noting that, based on some interviewees' description of peer assessment and self-assessment in their group, it seemed that STs did not follow the lecturers' guidelines closely. This might cause more bias in self- and peer assessment, and their practical experience on self- and peer assessment appeared to influence their perceptions of it.

## **5.7. Student teachers' perceptions of fairness and equity of authentic assessment**

The interviewees emphasised fairness and equity of assessment in the task and these dimensions comprise a wide range of issues.

### **5.7.1. Requirements and criteria establishment**

Many interviewees' comments focused on the opportunities to perform better in the assessment task. They raised issues about the content of the cases, the task requirements, preparation time, how the lecturers delivered the task and organised

the groups, pressure of performance, and the inconvenience of the performance location.

Regarding the way the task was assigned, some interviewees felt that the lecturers should let their STs choose the cases freely. In their opinions, the cases varied in content and some were harder than others to resolve. Some students suggested they be allowed to choose the case randomly, or that staff give each group a few cases to choose from.

The lecturer should give each group two or three cases to choose. If they had had a chance to work with a suitable case, they would have worked better.  
(Khuong)

They believed that this strategy would offer STs more opportunities to show their best competencies, which was also regarded as an aspect of fairness and equity in assessment.

Preparation time for the task was also considered relevant to fairness and equity because many interviewees commented on the short preparation time. Although some of them said a week was enough, most of them would have been pleased if the lecturers had extended it, or delivered the task to the STs at the beginning of the module.

I think...the task should be delivered earlier to the STs because our timetable was different, it was hard to find a suitable time for group meetings, so the task should have to be informed earlier ...so we can have enough time to do better.  
(Quan)

The limitation of time as well as the workload from other modules shortened their preparation time. The inconvenient size and poor equipment in the classroom was also mentioned as an excuse for the STs' disappointing performance.

Adjusting criteria to assess accurately STs' required competencies was another expectation. For example, some felt that role-play should not be emphasised because it was not an essential skill for teachers. Anxiety issues during performance should also

be considered in assessment. This also revealed that nervousness was a natural challenge of authentic assessment in the case that students had to perform in front of others.

### **5.7.2. Group work assessment**

STs spent a great deal of time in the interviews speaking about collaboration and concerns about fairness and equity in group work. The most frequent comment was about unequal contribution among group members, but they also mentioned the large size of groups with insufficient workload to share equally among the members.

There were 10 members in my group working together in the task 1. Actually, it took us only 2 days to complete the task but we have wasted a huge amount of time on arguing during our group meetings. Apparently, the task did not require [so] many people. (Dao)

Dao's comment reflected a common problem at the UoE, which was the large-size classes. If lecturers had divided the large classes into smaller groups, the number of groups would have increased, which would have resulted in more time needed for group performances. Therefore, the lecturers had no choice in creating large groups. However, the large number of members in each group caused unfairness in group work.

Another element influencing group performance was group members' responsibility for group work. The interviewees shared numerous unhappy stories: some members worked hard to deliver a role-play and essays, while others did not even participate in the group meetings, or never asked about their groups' work. Others joined the group meetings, but never contributed any ideas or opinions.

In the last group meeting, only four or five members came while others did not turn up to our meeting [...] when we performed in front of the class, we could not utilise the whole group's strengths, we only used two members for two main characters. (Thao)

Some members' irresponsibility has been blamed for the groups' poor performance and products. For this reason, a few interviewees proposed that the task should comprise final results produced by both groups and individuals. For example, the whole group might perform a play, but each member could then write an essay about the given case with their own opinions, thus engaging all members in the assessment work.

As for essay, I would ask the STs to complete it individually...the STs' working efficiency would be improved but the results would be more accurate, and reflect exactly their competencies. (Khuong)

A mixture of group work and individual work was believed to be a suitable strategy to minimise unfairness in assessment. STs did not trust that group-based assessment was fair. There were also comments about the leaders' unfairness in delegation. Some members had to take more responsibilities than others. This might derive from a lack of leadership skills, or they might assign light duties to their friends.

### **5.7.3. Peer and self- assessment**

The most emphasised dimension was fairness in peer and self- assessment in groups. STs felt that, in regard to assessing the whole group-works, lecturers could have more experience and accuracy in judgment; nonetheless, when assessing STs' contribution in a group, no one was better than himself or herself.

[Peer and self-assessment] showed some fairness in assessment because the lecturers could not know exactly each ST's contribution in groups. (Hoa)

This meant that for a few interviewees, when the STs worked in groups, they could track the contribution of each member. In self-assessment, the STs also knew more clearly how much effort they put into a task and thus what mark they deserved. This perception implied the STs' desire to take their effort into account during assessment.

However, almost all interviewees said they could not trust STs' assessment results because, regardless of the lecturers' guidance and control via the rubrics and anonymous assessment slips, STs' subjectivity and bias still existed. Peer assessment

for group performances also received few complaints regarding fairness. For example, a student was displeased with questions received from other groups. Unfairness in intragroup peer and self-assessment was also mentioned extensively. There was critique of some STs' irresponsibility in their assessment of their peers and themselves, which had been done without serious consideration.

Some members did not care about peer and self- assessment [...], they were not serious in making judgement. (Quan)

Similar to the cases mentioned by Quan, some STs also perceived equal assessment results were unfair, but accepted them because this maintained the relationships within the group.

Our friends in the group got either low or high marks, this was not my business, I was not affected at all. (Thanh)

Thanh's statement revealed that some STs seemed not understand thoroughly the meaning of peer assessment. Those STs did not recognise that peer assessment aimed to improve the fairness of assessment, develop their assessing skills, familiarise them with assessment culture and promote their deep learning, as when assessing others' work, students have to understand assessment tasks and criteria clearly. Several interviewees expressed dissatisfaction with the assessment group results being shared equally among individuals regardless of the different individual contributions.

They were timid to give low marks to irresponsible members, I told them to give honest judgements because it was [done via] anonymous assessment slips, but they were still afraid of doing it. (Nga)

This meant STs knew it was unfair to give high marks to irresponsible members, but, as mentioned earlier, they had concerns about damaging their friendships. They suggested some strategies to resolve this issue: for instance, all STs could complete their assessment slips and send them directly to their lecturers so that no members in a group would know their counterparts' judgment. Another suggested strategy was that on the assessment slips, they would be required to provide comments without

marks and thus might be more comfortable in their assessment because comments would not influence their peers' official module results. All these suggestions reinforced the STs' perceptions of the impact of relationships on peer assessment. It also implied their considerable concern about marks. However, a few interviewees still believed that the fairness of peer and self-assessment could be achieved with specific and clear criteria.

When you assess, you need to rely on some criteria, standards, then the assessed members cannot object to that assessment result. (Thao)

It appeared, in the interviewees' perceptions, that the best way to limit bias was to provide clear and high-quality rubrics.

#### ***5.8. Student teachers' perceptions of outcomes of authentic assessment***

Learning achievement is the students' acquisition of knowledge and skills after a learning activity, reflecting how many objectives have been achieved. One of the most frequent comments was that after competing Task 1, the STs got not only marks and feedback but also professional knowledge and skills. According to the interviewees, in comparison to other types or approaches of assessment, authentic assessment helped them memorise knowledge in the module more easily.

I think it (the authentic assessment task) was realistic, I could remember all knowledge of the module in a long time because they became easy to remember for me. (Hong)

Like Hong, other STs confirmed that they retained theoretical pedagogical knowledge better after the task. They said that although the lecturers had delivered the lessons in the lectures, the STs could not understand comprehensively the theories until asked to apply the pedagogical knowledge to the given cases in the tasks.

Experiencing a whole authentic assessment process in association with peer and self-assessment helped the STs build up their language and assessment skills, which are crucial for all teachers.

The lecturer gave us detailed feedback about our performances and essays, even spelling and language using, these were good points for me to learn [...] When I was in high school, we never had group-work assessment. In the future, I will use group-based assessment with my students. (Hoa)

Hoa insisted that the assessment experience in this task would help her teaching later and she really appreciated authentic assessment in developing her professional skills.

Case methods and role-play were used in the task to assess the ST's learning achievement. The STs had to produce two outputs in the end of the task, including a group essay and a play, which were assessed based on specific, detailed rubrics. Therefore, the STs thought the assessment by their lecturers was objective and accurate. The STs did not comment much on the essay, but focused more on the role-play. Bich showed her agreement with her lecturer's judgment on her group's performance.

After our performance, I thought... alright...we made some mistakes, the lecturer made judgement exactly based on our performance, this was rational. (Bich)

Bich meant that in role-play, it was obvious to see both good and bad points in each performance. Moreover, all STs in the class observed it and gave feedback, thus, the lecturer could make a fair and accurate judgement. In other words, a public demonstration of learning seemed a reliable way to achieve fairness in assessment.

As mentioned earlier, the interviewees felt that completing the task required them to integrate a variety of knowledge, skills, and attitudes; hence, they believed the assessment methods used in the task assessed their competencies more holistically. More importantly, the task asked STs to find solutions to real professional situations. Consequently, STs had a belief that the authentic assessment results could

reflect accurately their professional competencies and predict their future performance. STs appreciated both the constructive and predictive validity of authentic assessment.

Furthermore, the task required STs to write an essay, a script and perform the play instead of absorbing theories by rote learning and answering theoretical questions. Therefore, case methods and role-play seemed to help STs learn more effectively.

Learning by visual and doing makes it easy for people to understand theories than only listening to lectures. I think this is an advantage of this assessment approach. (Bich)

These assessment methods were able to not only assess the STs' competencies reliably, but also supported their learning efficiently. A few interviewees also said that they were pleased with the results of their group and themselves because they learned a lot.

As for self-assessment, I felt that I did my best for this task regarding giving ideas, opinion to contribute for my group, participating of class discussions...As for role-play [...] I devoted all my competencies and finished the task. (Khuong)

To these STs, participating in all activities in the task developed their professional skills and they perceived that the authentic assessment task served the purposes of both assessment and learning. However, both case methods and role-play appeared to be both interesting and challenging assessment methods. The STs said that in the essay, developing arguments based on both theoretical background and practical experience was thought-provoking. Most groups got mid-range marks for their essays with feedback showing that they did not meet a range of criteria. Therefore, the STs realised case methods were more demanding than writing an assignment. As for role-play, shyness about performing in front of people seemed to constrain some STs' performance. The unexpected performance of the STs could be explained by the fact that case methods and role-play were new to many of them. One ST expressed disappointment with his group' performance in both essay and role-play.



As for essay, in my opinion, we structured the essay well but the arguments were not good. As for role-play performance, three main actors and actress put a great deal of effort to learn the script but they performed unnaturally and rigidly. (Quan)

These comments revealed that some STs thought that role-playing competence influenced their assessment results significantly and this was unfair. For that reason, a few doubted the reliability of role-play in assessing prospective teachers' competencies. As mentioned earlier, the STs did not agree that role-playing competence should be emphasised in the task. Therefore, they suggested that to solve this problem, the weight of the role-playing criterion in the rubric should be reduced.

Based on STs' concerns about collaboration, criteria, and fairness mentioned above, it appeared that not all of them were satisfied with the marks or feedback they received from their lecturers or peers. In general, most interviewees stated that they expected to get both marks and feedback for their performance and other works. Marks helped them to grade their performances and products, and provided quantitative information on their competencies, but they understood that marks were not the final purpose of learning, especially at undergraduate level.

At undergraduate level, if we are pressured by [wanting high] marks, our learning will not be effective because as undergraduate students, we focus mainly on getting knowledge and skills, marks are not important. (Quan)

However, considering some interviewees' statements, it could be inferred that in their perception, marks were still important and motivated their learning.

I am still sad with the results because my group had the worst mark in the class, some members did their best but could not cover all [...] other[s] did not put their effort in the task, I was shocked with the given mark. (Thien)

In Thien's case, the given mark disappointed him, but it also helped him to understand that to succeed in the group-based assessment, all members had to put effort into it. In the STs' view, using the assessment result to improve learning was more important

than the mark. This perception was reinforced by the fact that when the STs were asked to choose between a mark and feedback, they would choose feedback. It seemed they were fully aware of the value of feedback to their learning.

I prefer to get feedback than mark because when I get feedback, I can correct my faults, gradually I can get better results with higher marks. (Hong)

They preferred to get feedback from lecturers and peers because the feedback was more useful in terms of recognising their shortcomings and enabling them to improve their learning and competencies. Most interviewees accepted both positive and negative feedback as long as they were honest and constructive. One interviewee even preferred critique over compliments, because he thought the critique was more honest and useful.

I do not like compliment[s], please feel free to criticise me [...] I will know what I should correct myself. I am a group leader, if I do something wrong, all members can criticise me straightforwardly. (Thanh)

Thanh's statement emphasised the STs' expectation of constructive feedback to improve their performance, particularly from lecturers. Most were in agreement with lecturers' feedback; only few interviewees felt that the lecturers did not acknowledge their effort or obstacles encountered during the task. Interviewees also recognised the negative effect of unfair feedback, especially from lecturers.

When you give a wrong compliment, it may not affect negatively to the receiver, but when you give an inappropriate critique, the receiver may get angry or hurt, it will be so sad. (Thien)

In other words, STs expected both fair and constructive feedback from their lecturers and peers. They also perceived that in order to provide such feedback, the lecturers and the STs had to consider each assessment carefully and holistically.

## **5.9. Student teachers' perceptions of the impact of authentic assessment to their learning and professional identity formulation**

### **5.9.1. Learning strategies**

All interviewees (except one) said that the method of assessment in Task 1 impacted their learning strategies. They gave examples to show their different learning strategies responding to different assessment methods. For instance, in multiple-choice test, they studied individually by learning the content of each lesson by heart and tried to remember details; sometimes, they relied on good luck and did not need to study hard because they could choose randomly the answers among the options if necessary. In open-book tests with short essay questions, some of them said that they did not need to put their effort into studying and reading the module materials beforehand because they could bring all materials to the assessment rooms.

When doing multiple-choice test, I had to remember many details accurately, I [found it] was easy to confuse the details. (Bich)

However, their learning strategies completely changed when the assessment methods were case-based and involved role-play. In Task 1, most of the STs had to seek out references from books, articles, online resources. They needed not only to read the material, but to dig into the materials. It appeared that, in authentic assessment, STs needed to use a deep learning approach.

We spent our time to find reference sources, practiced to play the roles. To order to complete the essay, we had to give ideas and opinions so that the group leader could generate them. (Hoa)

In Hoa's description, it appeared that STs used analytical, synthesising and decision-making skills to fulfil the task. These skills are all high-order thinking skills. Additionally, many STs sought advice from real teachers or senior STs in practicum.

My group had to ask some advice from a high school teacher, she was my high school teacher that I had a close relationship [with]. Then, we had to ask

another senior ST who was studying in our university to get advices to solve the problem in the task. (Bich)

After referring to books and advisers, the STs gathered with other members of the group to discuss and share opinions and ideas, learning from each other. With role-playing, they had to write a script and practice many times before performing in front of the class. They aimed not only to complete the task, get good marks and feedback but also to improve themselves and prepare for their future career. All these purposes are equally important.

### **5.9.2. Learning motivation**

Case-based and role-play assessment task also affected STs' learning motivation, especially with the current module (General Education). These assessment methods created an exciting atmosphere in the classes, motivated the STs to learn, helped them understand the real cases more easily, and were retained in their memories. Apparently, those methods brought a variety of benefits to the STs and motivated them. One ST described his feeling when he participated in the task:

If I am allowed to choose, surely I will choose assessment with role-playing because playing a role helps assessment become more realistic. Moreover, the atmosphere in the class is more exciting, the knowledge become easier to be understood. It is really helpful for us later (Duong)

Notably, the newness of role-play as an authentic assessment method also motivated the STs. Upon receiving the task, several interviewees consider it a new, strange and challenging and were curious about how it would go and how to do it well.

This was the first time we participated in this assessment method, [...] it was attractive, generally, new things are always attractive. [...] We are STs...we are young, so we are free to show our competencies...this assessment was good (Dan)

It appeared that the STs wanted to experience new assessment methods, especially methods allowing them to show their potential competencies. During the

performances, the STs had a chance to engage in different activities such as analysing the situations in the plays, discussing, and giving feedback to the performers. The interviewees expressed that they did not feel that it was an assessment session: it had been more like a learning session and they had been able to learn useful knowledge, skills from the assessment. Through the class discussions and feedback from the lecturers and peers, the interviewees reflected on themselves, recognised their shortcomings, corrected their faults, and understood what and how to develop their professional competencies, which motivated them. However, not all of the interviewees had such positive feelings at the beginning: half of them felt anxious upon receiving the task because in their opinion, case methods and role-play were challenging and they did not have enough experience with such assessment strategies. Their feelings improved during the task, notably on the performance dates.

Generally speaking, there was a complicated emotional process, but after many group discussions and practice with other members in the group [...] I was so happy and felt exciting to experience my future role. (Hoa)

It seemed after going through the task, the STs recognised its value to their teaching profession, which was motivating for them. A ST explained clearly his preference.

The task made me busy but it was not as stressful as other types of assessment, we could divide the task into the sub-tasks allocated among members and then generated members' products. Moreover, when we were doing something practical, we were more active. (Dan)

From Dan's statement, it could be seen that the authenticity of the assessment was the main element to motivate STs. As mentioned earlier, some STs faced difficulties with performing in front of the audience in their class.

On that day (the date of performance), [...] my friend told me that she was too nervous, she did not know what and how to say at that time. (Hong)

This difficulties might stem from the STs' personal traits or unfamiliarity with performing. It was worth noting that in teaching, it is inevitable for teachers to

demonstrate their knowledge and skills in front of their students. The STs seemed to perceive this, and understood that they had to overcome this challenge in the task.

In short, it appeared that the STs' traits and assessment experience influenced their perceptions of the authentic assessment task; some of them felt the role-play task was challenging, whereas others were excited about it. Anxious STs appreciated the task less. In this intervention, some STs had bad experiences of group work (as above) such as personal conflict during collaboration, and so did not enjoy group-based assessment.

### **5.9.3. Professional identity formulation**

During the interviews, the STs tended to link the task with teaching as a profession. The interviewees strongly believed that they would meet situations similar to those suggested in the task as teachers, and this was a chance for them to experience professional issues and find solutions, to prepare for future problematic situations in an educational context.

Regarding the task with the cases that we were required to solve, they were realistic and useful for our future work. If in the future, I have to face them, I know how to solve them because I used to experience them. I will be more creative and flexible. (Khuong)

In other words, the interviewees found the task meaningful and worthwhile. More importantly, it improved their confidence in doing teaching work later. Interviewees also showed their understanding of the required professional skills for teachers in schools. They insisted that they developed useful skills during the task.

Firstly, we have to develop skills to understand school students' psychological characteristics, skills to communicate with them. It is necessary that teachers need to believe in their competencies and always respect their students ... (Hong)

Hong showed her philosophy of education, gained during the task. This is also an aspect of professional identity. Another characteristic of authenticity in the task

recognised by most interviewees was that role-play allowed them to experience many roles and a range of emotions. This contributed to their professional development as well, as when playing different roles, they placed themselves in other people's positions, especially that of school students. Accordingly, they knew how people thought and felt and how they might react. As a ST explained:

When we really understand other people's feeling, we will be able to solve the problems in the cases. If we only see from teachers' perspective, we will be subjective [...], when we experienced in roles of the students, we can think like the students, we could solve the problems more reasonably. (Dao)

It seemed the task helped Dao to formulate his teaching beliefs. He believed that if a teacher would like to do well in his responsibilities, he has to place himself in his students' shoes. Moreover, as Dao claimed, role-play was a realistic rehearsal for STs to practice their social and emotional skills. Their emotions in the plays might be true, thus, learning how to control emotions in the performance might be helpful for prospective teachers to control their emotions in the future. It appeared that role-play was effective in the development of professional skills for teacher trainees.

Some interviewees suggested changes to the task to increase the complexity of cases because they felt that teaching work might be more challenging in practice.

I think the lecturer should consider more complicated and harder cases for us because in my opinion, those cases [in the task] were easy to be handled. They did not reflect completely the complexity of practice. (Thien)

Thien's comments indicated his perceptions of teaching context, which impacted his expectation of the assessment tasks in pedagogy-related modules. With the motivation of gaining as much useful and practical experience as possible, other STs also focused on the authenticity of assessment. For this it can be seen that the STs' determination to reach their career goal influenced their perceptions of authentic assessment. Furthermore, some interviewees had a different awareness and attitude to teaching after playing imitative roles in a school context, because, in the task, if they

were not fully aware of a teacher's responsibility or did not take seriously the given situation, they could not solve it completely and effectively.

The most valuable lesson I got in the task was that a teacher will not only need professional knowledge and skills to educate their students but also communication skills, patience and good problem-solving skills while need to be able to keep [a] good relationship with their students. (Hoa)

Some interviewees said that they did not think teachers' tasks in school were so challenging and complex. However, after going through the task, the STs understood that to fulfil all responsibilities of a teacher, they had to develop a range of knowledge and skills.

## **5.10. Discussion and conclusion**

This part aims to summarise and discuss some key findings regarding STs' perceptions of authentic assessment in the first intervention with case methods and role-play methods. In this discussion, the possibility of using case methods and role-play in formative assessment in teacher education will be examined. More general discussion of STs' perceptions of authentic assessment will be presented in the discussion chapter.

### ***5.10.1. Student teachers' perceptions of cases and role-play as authentic assessment methods***

The literature review of case methods and role-play (see also Chapter 4) recommends these methods in assessment and development of teaching competencies for both preservice and in-service teachers. Case methods bring real-life situations in varying contexts to university-based training programmes and role-play brings opportunities for prospective teachers to experience real-life situations to maximise their readiness for the teaching profession (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Merseth, 1996; Niemeyer, Johnson & Monroe, 2014; Rao & Stupans, 2012). In this study, the results from the interviews with STs at the UoE showed that after experiencing case methods and role-play in an authentic assessment task, they really appreciated these



assessment methods in assessing and developing required teaching competencies. From the STs' perspective, both judgmental and developmental purposes of assessment were achieved in this task.

Regarding the judgmental purpose of assessment, it seemed the task could assess professional teaching competencies against the module objectives in STs' opinion. A majority of interviewees stated that the content of the cases in the intervention was realistic and relevant to their future profession. They strongly believed that they would have to deal with such situations as teachers. Based on how interviewees described completing the writing and role-play tasks, it appeared they went through a similar process to real teachers when solving problematic educational situations. The STs said that, upon receiving the task, they had to seek out educational and psychological theories and practical experience from real teachers and senior STs, and apply the collected information to analyse the given cases and find possible solutions. This meant in the task, as the STs stated, they put themselves in the roles of schoolteachers in realistic educational situations; thus, if the STs performed well, the assessment results should reflect their teaching potential. These perceptions revealed STs' appreciation the authenticity of the content of the task.

As for developmental purpose, STs recognised which skills they need to succeed in this task and what they needed to improve. The task offered STs opportunities to develop their teaching competencies. Most of the interviewees mentioned skills in problem-solving, analysis, communication, public speaking/presentation, debating, writing, research, role-play, and collaboration. Additionally, the task required them to integrate interdisciplinary knowledge such as subject knowledge, education, and psychology to give an effective solution. This integration is a core requirement of authentic assessment in teacher education, as suggested by Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000). In this case, STs appreciated this integration as a chance to develop holistic teaching competencies. Furthermore, most interviewees said that through the assessment results they got from the lecturers, peers and their own reflection, they recognised clearly and specifically which teaching competencies they achieved and which they did not achieved to meet professional requirements. This finding supported the use of case methods and role-play in

authentic assessment of teaching to replace traditional paper-and-pencil-based assessment.

Moreover, in the task, STs were assessed by a group essay and role-play performance with three rubrics describing multiple levels of performance and criteria. As analysed in the interview data, the criteria were supposed to cover a range of requirements of pedagogical knowledge and skills as well as other academic understanding and transferable skills. All criteria were believed to reflect required knowledge and skills to fulfil teachers' responsibilities in school. Indeed, it is expected that assessment criteria in professional courses are similar to on-the job requirements (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000). In this intervention, STs highlighted the importance of the criteria relating closely to the reality of the given solutions in the cases, collaboration in group working, debate in the common discussion, and presentation of argument in the essay. It was clear that those criteria reflected problem-solving skills, verbal and writing language skills, which are crucial for teachers (Zeichner, 2000). By using the rubrics with multiple levels and standards borrowed from the real teaching profession, STs at UoE thought case methods and role-play were likely to assess their teaching competencies accurately.

A more important aspect of using case methods and role-play in assessment in teacher education is their potential in developing STs' competencies gradually through the assessment process (Merseeth, 1996; Niemeyer, Johnson & Monroe, 2014; Shulman, 1992a). Interviewees claimed that the task offered an opportunity for them to experience realistic professional situations; learn how to solve problems in those situations; and therefore deal with such situations in other educational contexts in the future, in a timely and effective fashion. This finding reflects the value of case and role-play methods, which are believed to fill the gap between training at university and actual working (Merseeth, 1996; Rivera Simons, 2008). All cases used in other teacher training programmes result from realistic situations, issues in school curriculum or daily practice (Kleinfeld, 1998); hence, case methods help develop prospective teachers' understanding of practice, offering them effective ways to handle problematic educational situations (Kleinfeld, 1998). Meanwhile, role-play allows 'STs to demonstrate particular abilities in ways that include or closely simulate teaching

contexts or events' (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000, p. 534). This is why using case and role-play in teacher preparation programs can enhance prospective teachers' competencies (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Merseeth, 1996; Zeichner, 2000).

Nevertheless, a few STs in the intervention were unsure of the authenticity of the content of some cases and the solutions they found. They were not sure if they would encounter such a situation in the future and if their solution would be effective in reality. Similar concerns were also found by Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000): case studies in teacher training have to be constructed and handled with great care to avoid building STs' stereotypes of specific educational situations, which might give them the inappropriate assumptions (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000). Moreover, some STs were confused when inspecting two facets of authentic assessment: workload and value. They were aware of the usefulness and effectiveness of such tasks to their future career, but since the authentic assessment tasks comprised too many sub-tasks and multiple assessment criteria, they struggled to complete the tasks properly. This confusion is likely to derive from the nature of role-playing, which requires practice and rehearsal and therefore is quite time-consuming (Van Ments, 1999). Providing STs with specific guidelines and support can help decrease the amount of time devoted to the role-play and improve student performance (Raymond & Usherwood, 2013). Consequently, using case methods and role-play in teacher training should be considered thoroughly and prepared carefully to get the best outcome. Notably, as Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000) state, it is impossible to use case methods and role-play in assessment frequently and they are not supposed to replace other assessment methods. Each assessment method has both advantages and disadvantages. Teaching competencies are complex constructs that need to be assessed by a variety of methods (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Zeichner, 2000).

#### ***5.10.2. Student teachers' perceptions of their roles in assessment by case methods and role-play***

Some interviewees stated that they would like to be involved in the design stage of assessment process because they believed that this could help them understand the objectives, requirements, and criteria of the assessment task better. With the first

intervention with case and role-play, they suggested that they could collect real cases in schools and bring those cases to the task. For them, this could improve the authenticity and usefulness of the task to their future profession. Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000) and Kleinfeld (1998) describe the experiences of teacher training programmes in US, in which lecturers ask their students to write the educational cases themselves. This strategy is useful to develop STs' understanding of issues in a school context.

The interviewees also appreciated peer and self-assessment, believing that they could acknowledge their peers' and their own learning processes. Thus, their voice (if included in the final assessment results) would enhance the reliability and fairness of the assessment. They were aware that each assessor could explore several aspects of students' learning process and products; hence, more assessors would give more accurate judgments. This is also an advantage of self- and peer assessment (Dochy, Segers & Sluijsmans, 2006). It seems that STs preferred peer assessment to self-assessment, especially during the role-play performances. With peer assessment, they could get instant verbal feedback and discuss the feedback to gain further understand. The oral and instant feedback in role-play seemed useful for all STs. Indeed, reflection is an important stage in the role-play process (Van Ments, 1999) and so for these students, in assessment tasks using case methods and role-play, self- and peer assessment are appropriate strategies.

Nevertheless, the interviewees also identified some problems in peer and self-assessment within their groups. Close relationships with other members within the group made STs reluctant to give comments and marks. This seemed to be a common problem in peer assessment, as described by (Dochy, Segers & Sluijsmans, 2006). Moreover, in some groups, group leaders were given full power in assessing their members whereas some group leaders were criticised for their unfairness in delegation. There were a few claims that the tasks were not sophisticated enough to require up to ten members in a group. This made it difficult to assign specific work to each member and judge the individual contribution; thus, interviewees suggested that instead of the group writing the assignment together, each member might write their own essay. Rivera and Simons (2008) also suggested using both individual and group

work assessment in role-play simulations to prevent unequal division of responsibilities. In self-assessment, STs were also suspicious of the objectiveness of their self-judgment. They did not think they had enough experience in assessment, especially in marking. A few interviewees suggested that self-assessment should be used for self-reflection without marking. In some other empirical research, the findings also find that marking is challenging for students (Bloxham & West, 2004; Orsmond, Merry & Reiling, 2000).

## CHAPTER 6

### STUDENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ASSESSING PLAN IN PEDAGOGY-RELATED MODULES

#### 6.1 Introduction

In Task 2, STs were required to make individual monthly classroom management plans<sup>5</sup> for an optional class in an optional school. On the date of submission, some STs were invited at random to present their plan to the whole class, take questions from the lecturer and peers, and get feedback. In Class 1, due to the lecturer's disagreement with self-assessment, STs were not asked to self-assess their plans. Meanwhile, in Class 2, STs could do self-assessment according to the lecturer's agreement (see Chapter 4 for details of the task). In what follows, STs' perceptions of Task 2 will be presented. The main dimensions in their perceptions of the task were similar to the dimensions in Task 1, and so some results of STs' perceptions in Task 2 similar to those in Task 1 will not be presented in this chapter.

#### 6.2 Student teachers' perceptions of content of authentic assessment

##### 6.2.1 *Links of authentic assessment and professional practice*

Like Task 1, most of the interviewees stated that the content of Task 2 was realistic, closely linked to their future profession because they knew all teachers in state high schools in Vietnam have to take the roles of subject teachers and form tutors. Designing classroom management plans<sup>6</sup> is a form tutor's responsibility as a ST said:

It was useful [for my future teaching]. Later, definitely I will become a teacher. At that time, I have to do the role of a form tutor, I need to design the weekly, monthly plan to follow my classes and report to the school managerial boards.

(Lien)

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<sup>6</sup> In Vietnamese secondary and high schools, most teachers have to take two roles (as a subject teacher and a form tutor) at the same time. Form tutors make weekly, monthly and yearly plans for their assigned class. The plans include weekly, monthly or yearly objectives, strategies to deal with students' existing misbehaviours and detailed plans of co-curricular activities for the class.

Other interviewees also had such statements like Lien. Due to this perception, some appreciated the value of Task 2 more than Task 1 for its authenticity.

Task 2 linked [more closely to] the work I might do in the future in the schools as a form tutor. [...] It reflected truly teachers' competencies. (Hoa)

They thought in practicum and teaching practice they might not always encounter such challenging situations, but designing a classroom management plan was required, nevertheless. Such perceptions stemmed from the process through which STs sought information in school to fulfil the task. They realised that there is diversity in educational contexts and it is necessary for high school teachers to be flexible and creative in planning. Such plans might vary in format, as described by an ST:

I called my form tutors in my previous high school. It was a school for gifted and talented students, so it was distinguished, they said they did not have a form of monthly classroom management plan like other schools [...]. They had a whole year plan and then just add some activities in each month. (Nga)

Therefore, the task helped STs to expand their understanding of the school context. Furthermore, STs also recognised that each month in an academic year had a theme that all extracurricular activities would follow, and some idea of the requirements, challenges and obstacles that they might face in reality in designing a classroom management plan, so it was good for them to practice in this module.

### **6.2.2 *Integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes***

Task 2 also asked STs to integrate their knowledge, a variety of skills, and an appropriate attitude. Regarding knowledge, interviewees stressed both academic and social knowledge. An ST explained:

We had to know the steps [and] strategies to design a classroom management plan. [...] We had to know education[a] principles to set up suitable implementation plans for specific activities. Moreover, we needed to have psychological understanding to know high school students' identities, and plan reasonable activities for them. (Thao)

It seemed that STs expanded their understanding of the form tutors' role and the importance of students' extracurricular activities in high schools, which helped them shape the plans. Moreover, psychological expertise was also essential to suggesting appropriate activities.

STs also needed to utilise their understanding of school context. This required them to collect information from real schools and classes. They supposed that they lacked experience related to school context, even though all of them have been high school students. Consequently, STs looked for information about schools from different sources, recalled their experience with their form tutors in secondary and high school, as below:

I learnt some experience from my former form tutors [...] I tried to recall the way my teachers organised activities for us, how these activities impacted us and considered them as a useful experience to do this task. (Thao)

Thao's statement revealed the importance of STs' prior schooling experience in authentic assessment. In addition to this experience, STs needed to find examples of classroom management plans online resources. They may also find information about school activities on school websites or by contacting former teachers, senior STs or students at high school for information. Therefore, a majority of the interviewees thought communication skills and information literacy skills were helpful. Moreover, some skills were required for this task such as time management, problem-solving, creativity, synthesis, analytical and writing skills. These skills reflected cognitive competencies, meta-cognitive competencies and social competencies, as in Task 1. In particular, time management skills helped STs gather the required information, as Luong emphasised.

This was a big task, the plan that we had designed had to include many logical, linked activities. To hold an activity in one day, we had to prepare [for] a week, follow a strict schedule, if not, we might destroy the activity. [...] The most important skills were time management. (Luong)



As Luong explained, time management skills were also applied to the plans to arrange activities in a logical order on an appropriate timescale. Moreover, problem-solving helped STs find the quickest, most convenient and effective ways to complete the task. Writing skills helped them to present their plans logically, clearly and in accessible language.

Critical thinking skills were important, but we needed to present well our thought[s] in writing, we had to write in a way that helped us to understand and remember it easily. (Dao)

Dao emphasised the importance of both critical thinking and writing skills for STs. Furthermore, this was an individual task: STs could not rely on others as in a group assessment task. The task required a serious and hardworking attitude, as Bich said:

We had to have knowledge and more active, effortful working attitudes than in task 1 because task 1 was a group task, we had the support from the group but in this task, we had to find the information and complete the plans by ourselves. (Bich)

This statement also hinted at the STs' concerns about fairness of assessment. It seemed that with some STs, individual tasks were more motivating and reflected more accurately each individual's effort and competencies.

### **6.2.3 Student teachers' ownership**

Almost all the interviewees supported the idea of freedom to choose any class in any school to design their classroom management plans. They were also unrestricted in how they found the required information of the class and the school. They could also choose the most convenient school and class, or the easiest way to complete the task:

I preferred to be free in choosing a school and a class [...] I asked information [...] my flatmate who was doing her practicum in a high school. (Hong)

However, this freedom brought both advantages and disadvantages for the STs' learning when they reflected on it afterwards. The task gave STs freedom in choosing

any month they preferred. They realised that this strategy gave them the opportunity to make a plan that reflected most STs' understanding, planning competencies and creativity. However, after the presentations, they found that most of STs in their classes chose November and March. Only few chose September, October or April, and no-one chose January, February, May or December, and therefore they lost the chance to listen to classroom management plans for other months, while in practice they will have to do the whole year. A ST explained this disadvantage:

The disadvantage of this strategy was that most of the students chose the easiest month[s] to do. Later, when they will become real teachers, if they will be required to do complicated months, they will be in trouble. (Thien)

Therefore, a few interviewees suggested that the lecturers should assign the months at random. Another ST said that he would rather the lecturers assign a specific school for all the STs to visit and design individual plans based on a specific class in that school.

The lecturers should assign a specific class.[...]. Give STs freedom to choose a class, it was not realistic, some STs make up a class and then designed the plan. (Thanh)

Thanh believed that there were some STs who struggled finding a school and a class. There was another notion that lecturers could provide descriptions of a sample class for all STs to design plans for, as some STs falsified a class's descriptions to design their plans, which constrained the authenticity of the assessment task. In short, STs appreciated the freedom in the task, but they still expected the lecturers to take control to maximise their professional development. This expressed the students' fundamental perceptions of the teaching profession, but also hinted at the imitations of STs' learning autonomy.

### **6.3 Student teachers' perceptions of the context of authentic assessment**

#### **6.3.1 Physical context**

##### **6.3.1.1 Time allocation of preparation**

In Class 1, STs had a week to prepare plans, while STs in Class 2 had two weeks. Regarding this period of time, there were two opposing viewpoints. Some interviewees said that a week was enough for them to complete the task, but others (mostly from Class 1) complained that a week was insufficient. Many STs felt there was too much assessment for other modules at that time, which made them unable to concentrate on this task and the results did not fulfil their expectations. Indeed, the time given for preparation to the STs in this task is equal to the time given to real teachers, and high school teachers also have the same pressure of time in writing a classroom management plan each month. At this point, it was noticeable that STs did not like these on-job requirements. STs felt lecturers should be less demanding while assessing them during training courses. This also connected to their professional identity, in that STs had not seen themselves as actual teachers.

##### **6.3.1.2 Resources**

The resources for STs to complete the task were similar to those available to real teachers. All interviewees said that they needed general information about a school, a class, the monthly plans of the school, and reports about activities of the class when writing their classroom management plans. These materials might be published on the websites of the schools or delivered in hard copies directly to form tutors. However, some school websites were devoid of such material:

I surfed the school website but they did not update anything...I felt the school website was underdeveloped. (Hong)

Accordingly, STs had to ask for a help from senior STs, high school teachers and administrators to access information. Additionally, some STs had the chance to refer samples of the monthly classroom management plans. They appreciated these resources for clarifying how to present a classroom management plan.

### **6.3.2 Social context**

The task was completed individually. In practice, form tutors also have to make their own classroom management plans independently because each form tutor is responsible for his/her own class. STs were aware of this and were happy to do the task individually, considering this a good chance to show their potential competencies. When designing a classroom management plan, teachers also have to contact others, such as the school managerial board, subject leaders and leaders of the student associations in order to ensure that their plan is aligned with other plans. They may share and discuss their plans with their colleagues before applying them. In other words, the teachers are required to interact with other people when designing a classroom management plan, and the STs were also encouraged to follow real high school teachers' procedures, collaborating with school staff and peers.

#### **6.3.2.1 Collaboration with people in school**

As explained above, STs had to gather material from a real class in a real school to design their plans. The guidelines suggested some ways to obtain the information needed, and most interviewees said that they followed these suggestions. Interviewees' comments showed that they were also aware of the requirement to interact with other people to design a classroom management plan. They really appreciated help from senior STs, high school teachers and students during the task.

When getting the task, I referred [to] some senior STs' experience. They gave me some advice about steps of designing a classroom management plan, activities in schools...I also contacted my former teachers [...] I got some useful and valuable advices from the teachers and senior STs and I completed the task. (Duong)

From the above statements, it appears that senior STs were the most accessible and valuable advisers for STs in this study. At the time, senior STs were in their practicum in schools; thus, they knew a lot about school contexts. Senior STs provided guidance, school plans and other documents, as well as contacts through which STs could approach teachers and school students. Dan told about his good luck in this task:

Recently, I made friend with a senior ST who is in practicum. She asked me to help her in a camping trip with her class. I had a chance to meet the high school students in that class...so I knew all their activities...I also had a close relationship with the form tutor in the class...so I learnt a lot experience there for my plan. (Dan)

In addition to senior STs, a few interviewees asked for help from former teachers, while others consulted current high school teachers they knew. Mining the experience of experienced teachers is a good way to develop professional competencies for novice teachers. In this task, a STs recognised how useful this was:

I got some experience, when I made the plan, I asked few of my previous teachers in my high school, they were enthusiastic to guide me to focus on some main issues, ignore some others to practice required skills for our high school students. (Nga)

It appeared that through the task, STs gained indirect teaching experience from several sources. The task made the STs more aware of the importance of connection to people in schools. To build up their teaching expertise, they found that learning from experienced teachers or senior STs in practicum was a useful strategy.

### **6.3.2.2 Interaction with lecturers and peers in class**

STs did not have many opportunities to present their plans to get direct feedback from their lecturer and peers, as only some STs were selected randomly to present their plans and then got feedback. The lecturers also led discussion to expand the debates and comments beyond the presented plans. Interviewees appreciated the presentations and class discussion after each one.

[The presentations and discussion] were useful and necessary because each of us chose a different month. When listening the presentations presenting the plans of other months, we could refer to reflect [on] our plans and supplement our understanding of activities in those months. (Quan)

As Quan said, because each student was only required to design a classroom management plan for the month of their choice, they did not have much understanding of the other months, whereas they will need to consider all twelve months in the future. For this reason, the presentations and class discussions helped STs learn from each other.

I got many different ways to complete the tasks from the presentations, the contributed ideas from other people in the class after each presentation added more ideas for my plan. (Khuong)

Khuong added that while listening to others' presentations of their plans and the lecturers' and peers' comments, the STs could reflect on their plan, recognise their shortcomings, consider their self-assessment, and finally revise their plan if required. The interviewees also enjoyed the lecturers' reviews after each discussion because they generated more ideas about designing a plan for that month.

The lecturer gave very useful feedback, the STs could recognise their strengths and weaknesses, and then she reviewed [the] main activities and how to organise them in that month so that the STs could use those experiences [...] later. (Thao)

Some interviewees expected lecturers to extend teaching sessions for them to present more plans and discuss them further. This suggests the STs really appreciated the chance to share experiences with both lecturers and peers, and so hopefully they will do the same when working in school.

#### **6.4 Student teachers' perceptions of criteria in authentic assessment**

The task had only one rubric for both the lecturers' assessment and the STs' self-assessment. The criteria were set up according to the structure of a classroom management plan. Each student was given a hard copy of the task guidance, including criteria. Similar to Task 1, almost all STs claimed that the assessment rubric was the most detailed they had ever seen. This indicated the characteristics or requirements of the output (the classroom management plan) at different levels. It reflected multiple

indicators of a classroom management plan. The criteria corresponded to the requirements of a real classroom management plan, and the weight of each criterion also reflected its importance in practice. Thus, most of the interviewees did not suggest much change to the rubric. There was a range of evidence from the interviews showing that STs perceived the link between the criteria of the assessment task and a similar real task in school. Moreover, most of the interviewees also said that, as the rubric was so specific, they could use it to assess their output themselves after getting the lecturers' and peers' comments on other STs' presentations. Dao noted that, "The rubric was rational, just looked at it, I could mark my assignment 7 points". STs found a specific rubric very helpful in assessment. However, there were still some opposing views from a few STs who felt the rubric was too demanding for novices in teaching. Luong suggested keeping three criteria only to make it less challenging.

I think it should have been more logical, scientific if the rubric included sufficiency and variety of activities, reasonability of implementation process, and creativity in activities. I think this would be more suitable for the novices like us. (Luong)

In other words, from some STs' perspectives, the criteria used to assess prospective teachers in training courses should be less demanding than on-job criteria. Nevertheless, later, Luong added that it might be possible to use two rubrics: one for the lecturer with three criteria as he suggests above, and another for the STs' self-assessment with the full list of criteria. It seemed he felt that the detailed rubric was useful to guide the STs to design the plan, but worried that the detailed rubric would expose the shortages in his plan and decrease his mark. Thus, STs voiced their preoccupation with marks, even though they did not state it straightforwardly.

## **6.5 Student teachers' perceptions of their involvement in authentic assessment**

### **6.5.1 Assessment design stage**

In this task, the lecturers designed all task content and criteria, but spent more time than in Task 1 to deliver and explain the task and criteria to the STs. When asked about involving STs in task design, the STs said it was a good strategy expressing fairness and

democracy in classroom. STs were invited to give their opinions on the task, but they did not suggest any change directly, as in Task 1. STs' actual contribution to assessment design did not improve. Most of the interviewees explained that they appreciated both task and criteria; that the delivery process of the task was logical and well-organised; and therefore they had no changes to suggest. Many STs' statements on this topic were repetitive ('the steps in the assessment process was logical, rational'; 'the process was well-organised'; 'it was a scientific process, we cannot change anything'; 'I absolutely satisfied with the assessment steps' and so on).

However, listening carefully to the interviewees, there were some points on which STs had suggestions on how to change the task and they did not absolutely agree with all areas of the task requirements and criteria. For example, a student mentioned above that the rubric was too detailed; another suggested remove one criterion, and combining two others; another said that he was not happy with some points in the criteria, but was afraid of speaking out. Others expressed that the STs' hesitation in objecting to others' ideas prevented them contributing their opinions:

Normally, when we worked together, it was hard for us to suggest our opinions orally and directly to someone. (Dan)

Based on the STs' reaction to being asked to get involved in task design and their reluctance to do so, it appears that the STs were not really aware of or interested in their role in the designing stage of an assessment task, feeling that this duty belonged to the lecturers and their voice could not be taken into consideration.

### **6.5.2 Peer and self-assessment**

The interviewees' appreciation of class discussion after each presentation showed their support for peer assessment in the task. Unlike Task 1, peer assessment was used only for giving feedback (there was no mark given), and thus peer assessment aimed purely to improve the presenters' plans. For this reason, STs felt less pressure in peer assessment and all interviewees said that they absolutely agreed with peer assessment. They had more opportunities to experience with the role of assessors and improve their assessing skills to aid their teaching works later. Furthermore, both



presenters and listeners got useful experience through the feedback in peer assessment.

However, in practice, as observed, STs did not give much feedback to the presenters: only a few STs were enthusiastic while other STs kept silent. The interviewees did not explain this, but it could be guess that STs' shortage in assessing experience might be relevant. When asked about self- assessment, only a few interviewees objected to it. Some STs were aware that assessing skills were an essential and compulsory skill for all teachers; thus, becoming assessors in the training time was a good opportunity for them to develop these skills.

This strategy (self- assessment) was reasonable. All teachers have to have ability of making assessment to assess their STs accurately. (Hong)

Therefore, self-assessment is actually an authentic task for STs. Other interviewees added that self-assessment could provide more information to help lecturers make more appropriate judgments as they could include comments about their own assignments, allowing lecturers to better understand STs' ideas in their assignments and do their assessment quicker.

When the lecturers read our comments in the self- assessment slips in which we pointed out our achievement and limitations, they could assess our assignments quicker. If not, they had to read our assignments more carefully. (Lien)

Another advantage of self-assessment was that it required STs to reflect on their assignments. They stated that this helped to reinforce the mistakes in their memories and thus they would not repeat these in the future.

However, the disadvantages of self- assessment were also recognised by most of the STs, as in Task 1. Generally speaking, in the STs' opinions, with self- assessment, fairness, reliability and accuracy in assessment might be impacted because of the STs' subjectivity. Moreover, the STs' lack of assessment experience might also affect to their judgments (these aspects will be explained clearer in the next section). Some

interviewees worried about the bias in the STs' self-assessment, but still accepted it provided the weight of self-assessment in the overall result was low (the maximum percentage suggested was 20 percent). In short, the STs supported the notion of their involvement in assessment via self-assessment, but also expressed concerns around subjectivity and inexperience resulting in unfairness and inaccuracy of assessment results.

## **6.6 Student teachers' perceptions of fairness and equity in authentic assessment**

### **6.6.1 Requirements and criteria establishment**

In Class 1, the STs had only a week to complete the task and knew that the other class had two weeks, so some students felt this was unfair and negatively impacted their results. Moreover, as with Task 1, several interviewees mentioned pressure and workload of other assessment tasks in other modules at the same time, which influenced directly the quality of their assessed work. Additionally, most of the STs saw the choice of month, class and school as a fair feature of this assessment because they could make choices that played to their strengths. Dan explained this:

With the freedom in choosing a month, some who did not have much experience with activity organisation, they could choose a month with less extracurricular activities [...] (Dan)

To Dan, the freedom in the task might result in differences in the quality of the plans designed by different STs. One or two interviewees worried that the different contexts in different classes or schools led to different plans and it might be difficult for the lecturers to compare the plans and might bias the assessment results.

We had to accept that each school had different features: some did not have strengths in both academic quality and extracurricular activities. We just needed to define suitable objectives for the school STs to achieve, it was not necessary to require to organise all activities as the rubrics. (Bich)

Consequently, Bich suggested the lecturers be flexible in assessing their plans. The STs' concern about the detailed rubric was an aspect of their perception of fairness in

assessment. From their point of view, too many criteria equalled too many requirements, so it was hard for the STs to meet them and the rubric might impact on their mark. Some interviewees implied that the deficiency of authentic learning and assessment in other modules from the first year of the teacher education programme limited their ability to perform this task.

I did not suppose to be assessed in this way [Task 1 and Task 2]. It was interesting and useful for me but it was really new, I had not got used to it. [...] I think we would have been assessed in this way from the first year to avoid strangeness. (Quan)

Like Quan, other STs also expected to have more opportunities to get used to authentic assessment forms. In short, in the STs' perception, the factors which supported or restricted them to perform best in the task were the dimensions of fairness and equity in assessment.

### **6.6.2 Peer and self-assessment**

As described above, in this task, peer assessment was conducted via feedback only and did not impact on the final marks. It is likely that, for this reason, the STs did not mention fairness and equity in peer assessment, but paid more their attention to fairness and equity in self-assessment. Some interviewees perceived self-assessment to be fair because it took both lecturers and STs' voices into account. A few interviewees supposed that self-assessment was useful to assess the assessment process (while lecturers were better placed to assign marks) because STs knew most clearly how they had conducted the task and how hard they had worked. Combining assessment of students and the process itself in a single assessment may lead to fairer assessment. Coupled with the clear, specific rubric and class discussion, the interviewees strongly believed that they could assess their own assignments.

We should use self-assessment because we had a long process to complete our assignments, we could assess exactly our real competencies. Before doing it, there were some presentations and discussions, [so] we could know which limitations of our plans were. (Bich)

From Bich's view, it could be seen that involving STs via self-assessment was a strategy to improve the reliability of the assessment results. However, as found in Task 1, STs also determined that the assessment results given by STs were subjective and inaccurate to some extent, due to bias and lack of assessment experience. Therefore, all STs wanted self-assessment to carry a low weight because, in their opinion, the higher the weight given to self-assessment, the greater the bias. It seemed that the STs really worried about the reliability and accuracy of self-assessment marks, as well as marks in general. As in Task 1, STs supported peer and self-assessment, but were still concerned the inaccuracy of marks given by their peers and themselves.

## **6.7 Student teachers' perceptions of outcomes of authentic assessment**

### **6.7.1 Learning outcomes**

There were mixed emotions toward the results of the task. Some interviewees were satisfied with what they did and their final products. At the time of the interviews, they did not know the results of lecturers' assessment, but they believed that they had done good assignments and were pleased with the knowledge and skills they gained during the task (as with Task 1).

Again, the interviewees could identify invisible but long-term useful results of the task. The task allowed STs to place themselves in a teacher's shoes to learn more about teaching work in practice and to do the work that all form tutors have to do. This task helped them expand their understanding of school context.

I had to go to school [after the task]. I did not remember much about theories but I remembered a lot of the practice because I observed the school practice, naturally it went in my mind. (Hong)

The discovery of diversity in high schools, classes and STs helped them learn about the flexibility of classroom management plans as mentioned earlier.

I think each school, each class has a different context, we may have a common form of classroom management plan but depending on each context, we need creativity and flexibility in the plans to suit the context. (Quan)

For that reason, they had to actively make their own plan from their understanding and experience with a specific context. Moreover, the professional knowledge and skills gained during the task were appreciated.

By task 2, I had gained knowledge of how to manage [and] supervise a class, how to make a classroom management plan in the role of form tutors in high schools. I practiced the planning skills, goal-setting skills, activity organising skills, skills of assessing students' competencies to assign them tasks appropriately. (Dan)

Dan's opinions were shared by many interviewees. They supposed that for teachers, emotional-social skills were core professional skills, without which they could not understand, communicate with or influence students. They did not practice all these skills in the task, but nevertheless it helped them to see the importance of those skills.

Additionally, assessment skills were also developed in the task using peer and self-assessment. STs agreed that these were compulsory skills for all teachers and this assessment experience would be helpful for them later.

Later it will be easier for us in assessing, discovering our students' mistakes, designing rubrics so that we could look at them to assess the students' products. (Dao)

Such statements indicated that STs gained realistic experience that made them believe they could do better in the future. STs connected the task with the requirements of teaching. The contribution of the task to their professional skill development was acknowledged, which made them appreciate the authenticity of Task 2.

### **6.7.2 Marks and feedback**

As mentioned earlier, STs still thought marks were important. However, they also confirmed that they were interested in realistic and useful experiences.

The importance was not the current marks, but our skills of designing classroom management plans later. (Bich)

Bich defined herself as a teacher-to-be, and thus expected to gain realistic experience from the task rather than high marks. Therefore, she appreciated feedback from the lecturers and peers. Moreover, from oral feedback during the presentations and discussion in class, STs had the chance to reflect on their assignments and compare them to the plans presented. A few interviewees emphasised their respect for the lecturers' feedback rather than that of their peers.

I would have been happy if the lecturer were interested in my assignment. If there were some negative feedback, I would have asked the lecturer and my peers to explain and debated with them. The lecturers' feedback was most valuable, the peers' feedback should be considered as minor reference source.  
(Luong)

In Luong's opinion, the lecturers had more experience in assessment; they could give more accurate, comprehensive, intensive judgments than other STs. When asked about STs' preferred format of feedback, some interviewees selected public, common feedback.

I prefer to get public and common feedback in front of the whole class. If we had more time, we would have invited more presentations to get the feedback to correct them [...] Getting more feedback from other STs was better.  
(Khuong)

Like Khuong, other interviewees also expected to get broad experience and judgment from different people. They explained that through the presentations, the lecturers and other STs gave their oral and public feedback and each student could learn more than getting the feedback for only his/her work anonymously.

## **6.8 Student teachers' perceptions of impact of authentic assessment on their learning**

### **6.8.1 Learning strategies**

Most interviewees said that the way of assessing Task 2 impacted significantly on their learning strategies, as in Task 1. They described clearly how they completed the task.

Most of them had to look for information in real contexts, online resources and advice from real teachers or STs. After that they synthesised and analysed the data and used it as background for making their own classroom management plan as a real high school teacher.

With multiple choice, before the exam dates few days, I only needed to review what we had learnt in the module. In this module, we had to think critically. We had to brainstorm for a week to look for ideas, contact people, then write the plans. (Luong)

From Luong's statement, it can be seen that he had to put more effort into this than an assessment with multiple choice questions, but in the end, he got a more realistic experience of his profession than in other assessment methods. With other more traditional tests, it appeared that the STs did not use a deep learning approach. They spent less time than on authentic assessment tasks, and only used a surface learning approach. Even when mentioning the same skill used in this task and other assessment approaches such as information and literacy skills, the STs still indicated that they used these skills in different ways.

With other written assignments, we had to find theories in books, but in this task, we had to find information in the real context to complete our assignments. (Quan)

Like Quan, most of the interviewees indicated that they changed their original learning plan for this module. Nga noted that, at the beginning, she thought this module was similar to the Introduction of Education module before: it was a theoretical module, thus she had intended to employ surface learning for the current module. Nevertheless, after two authentic assessment tasks in the module, she changed her perspective.

After the assessment tasks, I could see that to learn effectively, I had to try to understand the theories better because the requirements of the task linked to practice, so I had to understand the lessons, [...], I read many materials but not for knowing by heart, this was for solving practical task. (Nga)

Nga started to change to deep learning after two authentic assessment tasks. Some interviewees reported the tasks changed their learning routine, while others said that they had become more active learners after two tasks on the module. This could suggest that the STs did not change their learning strategies simply in response to the assessment tasks, but to develop their professional competencies.

It changed me from a passive, theoretical learner to an active, practical learner. This module was really realistic, practical for STs to succeed in their teacher roles. (Thien)

It is evident that STs' goal of a teaching career goal influenced significantly their perceptions of the authentic assessment tasks.

### **6.8.2 Learning motivation**

After two authentic assessment tasks, most interviewees commented that they changed their perceptions of the nature of the module. Originally, they thought this module focused on theories and they only needed to listen and take lecture notes carefully, trying to understand the theories to write essays, and their learning motivation in the module was similar to other modules. However, they then realised that to meet the requirements of the assessment, they had to apply the theories to solve practical tasks or present something useful and helpful to their future career. Thien was an example.

At the beginning, I thought this module would be theoretical, sophisticated but until now, I felt it was so active, motivated, useful for the STs, it was truly a module providing professional knowledge and skills and right attitudes for teaching career. (Thien)

In an agreement with Thien, many STs said they were motivated to learn in the module because they knew all things they did in the tasks were good preparation for their work later. The meaning and value of the assessment tasks in improving the STs' learning encouraged them to put effort and time in to complete the task. Hoa told about her excitement during completing the task.



I felt learning this module was so exciting, more exciting than other specialised modules in my major. [...] After I graduate, it [the experience the STs gained in the task] would be helpful for me to do the role of a form tutor. (Hoa)

Hoa and other interviewees' statements indicate that a good way to motivate STs in learning and assessment was giving them a chance to discover by themselves the meaning and connection between their learning and their future career. This strategy appeared to develop an intrinsic motivation to learn and form a professional identity.

### **6.8.3 Professional identity formation**

STs improved their perceptions and attitudes of the teaching profession during the task. Most of the interviewees said that they used to think teaching included light and less stressful work. However, after doing the authentic assessment tasks, coming to schools and communicating with schoolteachers, they had a different view.

After completing the task, I could see that teaching profession was laborious [...] After spending few nights to compile the plan, I confirmed that teaching profession was a hard, tiring career. (Dan)

Such statement was repeated by several interviewees. The STs also claimed that they had gained a more comprehensive perception of a teacher's role in the classroom. They did not only teach subjects, but also organise all extracurricular activities. STs expanded their understanding of the form tutors' responsibilities. The form tutors managed all activities in the classes.

Because when I was a school student, I saw that my form tutors' works were easy and light, they only assigned the tasks to the monitors but actually, now I know those tasks still required the form tutors' supervision, without form tutors, the class could not be improved better. (Nga)

From Nga's statement, it could be seen that her prior schooling experience led to an insufficient understanding of teachers' work. However, the assessment experience with this authentic task helped her to gain more insight into the teaching profession.

...what we practiced in Task 2 was a good preparation for our practicum next year and our future career...so I could do well, be confident ... would not make faults.[...] I was much more confident. (Dan)

Furthermore, with the gained knowledge and skills, they felt more confident to be teachers in the future. In STs' perceptions, confidence played a very important role in teaching profession. Consequently, Task 2 was really meaningful to them.

## **6.9 Discussion and conclusion**

Planning skills are believed to be important skills in teaching professional standards (Darling-Hammond, 2006). However, assessing planning skills has not received much attention in research. This intervention tried to use an authentic assessment task to assess the STs' planning skills and to explore how they responded to this assessment strategy. Based on STs' perceptions of assessing planning skills with authentic assessment, the Vietnamese teacher educators could understand how STs shaped their learning strategy for their assessment and professional development.

### ***6.9.1 Student teachers' perceptions of assessing planning skills***

Planning skills are included in many sets of teaching professional standards for teachers around the world (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Department for Education, 2011; Mutton, Hagger & Burn, 2011). In the Vietnamese teaching professional standards for secondary and high school teachers, lesson planning (Standard 8) and educational activity planning (Standard 16) are mandatory standards (MOET, 2009). Based on the interviews with the UoE STs after the second intervention, it was noticeable that the STs were also aware of the importance of planning skills for the teaching profession. Some even thought that this task was more useful and authentic than Task 1 as it gave them a chance to practice and improve their planning skills. The product of the task was a classroom management plan which was visible, realistic and potentially useful in their teaching practicum and practice. In other words, in STs' opinion, prospective teachers' planning skills should be developed and assessed in teacher education. A similar perspective is found in Mutton, Hagger and Burn (2011) where STs in England believed that learning to plan is an important element in learning to teach. Therefore,

the findings found with Vietnamese STs reinforced the importance of assessing teaching plans in teacher education.

The STs in the current study also perceived that their planning skills had a close connection with their theoretical understanding. STs realised that in order to produce a good classroom management plan they had to utilise a spectrum of knowledge. They realised that their understanding of educational psychological theories was useful in identifying high school students' needs and finding the optimal strategies to manage them. This general pedagogical knowledge is mentioned in some theories of educational planning and needs to be provided for STs in teacher education (Rusznyak & Walton, 2011; Sayeski & Brown, 2011). This general pedagogical knowledge is constructed gradually throughout teacher training programmes in both university-based pedagogy-related modules and practicum (Grossman & Richert, 1988). Normally, the university-based pedagogy-related modules scaffold STs' pedagogical conceptions, which will guide their performance (Grossman & Richert, 1988). In this intervention, UoE STs recognised that they had had pedagogical bases acquired from the pedagogy-related modules to design the classroom management plan. Nonetheless, they were not confident in their understanding of the pedagogical theories and the practicality of the plan. The authentic task helped them to reinforce such pedagogical understanding and create a more solid base for their teaching competencies to adapt to the requirements of the teaching practice. This means that, to assess prospective teachers' planning skills, it is desirable to include the requirements of their theoretical pedagogical understanding.

Notably, STs perceived that the theoretical pedagogical knowledge alone was not enough to design the plans: understanding of a real school context was more important than the theoretical pedagogical knowledge, because the diversity of schools and students might require different plans, as found in Rusznyak and Walton (2011) and Capizzi (2009). Broadly speaking, planning a lesson or classroom management cannot be separated from a specific lesson, topic, class or group of students (Mutton, Hagger & Burn, 2011). STs said that they might be introduced to contextualisation of classroom management plans in the lectures, but it was only after this task that their perceptions of the contextual factors was reinforced. This was also

why the STs appreciated the freedom to choose a specific site for the task: they had a chance to expand their understanding of diverse school contexts as well as improve their flexible and creative thinking. Correspondingly, using an authentic assessment task such as Task 2 was appropriate to develop STs' practical understanding of school contexts and prepare them for future teaching.

However, STs also realised that contextualisation of a classroom management plans is likely to complicate the evaluation of the plans because they are judged based on their practical effectiveness under consideration of differential and particular contexts, as emphasised by Capizzi (2009). For that reason, in this intervention, the STs were also concerned about how the lecturers would assess their plans fairly and accurately. Some thought the lecturers might need to have a broad understanding of school contexts, educational activities and different forms of plans. The STs expected that, based on descriptions presented at the beginning of each plan, the lecturer could identify its practicability. Although there was a concrete rubric to assess the plans, the STs felt lecturers should use their assessment experience to apply the criteria flexibly.

Furthermore, pedagogical theories related to planning emphasise that planning is a complex process, and thus assessing planning skills requires numerous criteria. Planning includes a range of decision-making steps such as analysing students' needs, setting goals and objectives, selecting content and teaching methods and assessing the efficacy of the lesson (Mutton, Hagger & Burn, 2011). These steps could be identified by STs during the process of completing the classroom management plan in this intervention. In each step, STs recognised that there was a need to use different skills, such as goal-setting to determine educational objectives for the class; organisation to design activities for the class; management skills to assign tasks to school students; and interpersonal skills to engage school students. STs perceived that planning skills included a variety of sub-skills. This perception might be helpful for them to shape their personal professional development. Additionally, assessing STs' planning skills is required multiple criteria covering the different stages of planning. Rusznyak and Walton (2011) suggest a scoring rubric to assess a lesson plan, with seventeen criteria covering three domains (instruction, organisation and assessment) to enable

assessment of teachers' lesson-planning skills. The scoring rubric of the classroom management plan in this intervention also contained various criteria.

In STs' opinion, the multiple-criterion rubric had both advantages and disadvantages. They could see the usefulness of the detailed rubric in improving validity, reliability, fairness of the assessment and in supporting their learning, peer and self-assessment. They stated that relying on the rubric helped them grasp what the lecturers expected of them and assess their own plans and those of their peers. Consequently, they favoured a detailed scoring rubric. However, some STs said there were too many criteria and the expected levels of performance were too demanding for prospective teachers, which might influence their assessment results. Some STs were anxious about getting low marks. The STs defined themselves as not-yet-qualified teachers; hence, they wished to be assessed against less demanding criteria, again hinting at STs' perceptions of professional identity.

Indeed, STs' perceptions of assessing planning skills gained from Task 2 developed their teaching professional identity gradually. STs claimed in interviews that the authentic assessment task gave them a chance to access a real profession context and realistic tasks. They could see teaching was a high pressure profession with a range of demanding requirements, but also a valuable job to support students in schools. They acknowledged that they had to build up other essential skills, such as planning. Moreover, the task also helped STs recognise the importance of cooperation with their future colleagues, as they had to ask for help from more experienced teachers. At this point, STs' initial engagement with future professional community was established, which is very important to their profession development as found by Timoštšuk & Ugaste (2010) and Sutherland & Markauskaite (2012).

### ***6.9.2 Student teachers' perceptions of individual authentic assessment***

Most frameworks of authentic assessment highlight collaboration among students, which is why an authentic assessment task is often group-based (Bergen, 1993; Herrington & Herrington, 1998; Wiggins, 1989). However, the data seems to show that STs preferred to be assessed individually because they perceived that in practice, all secondary and high school form tutors design classroom management plans on their

own. STs knew each form tutor is responsible for a class with distinct demographic characteristics; thus, that form tutor has to make different plans for their own class to improve their students' competencies and behaviours. Indeed, other researchers used to argue that authentic assessment had to rely on realistic tasks in daily life (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2004), which means that authentic assessment can be group-based or individual, depending on the form of the task in practice (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2004). STs in this intervention showed that they understood the individualism and distinctiveness of educational plans in practice and therefore appreciated the individual form of this authentic assessment task.

Another reason for STs' preference of the individual task in assessing their planning skills is their perceptions of fairness in assessment. The STs felt that the individual task increased the accuracy and the fairness in assessing their teaching competencies because the plan they made reflected their individual effort and competencies. They assumed that Task 1 (which asked the STs to finish a group task) had limitations in assessing individual contributions made by the members of a group, which led to unfairness in the assessment results. The assessment literature suggests that individuals' competence should be measured most effectively by individual tasks because the assessed person has to finish the task using their own knowledge and skills (Webb, 1993). There is evidence indicating that some students are only able to solve problems with their peers' support (Webb, 1993). This means group-based assessment might contain bias in assessing each individual's competence. Group-based assessment has been used for decades and promotes students' deep learning and team working; however, assessing individuals' contribution and competence in group tasks fairly and reliably is still a challenge (Elliott & Higgins, 2005; Freeman, 1995). Some empirical research shows that students' negative experience with group work might affect their perceptions of fairness in group-based assessment, which can result in students' underestimation and dissatisfaction with group-based assessment (Elliott & Higgins, 2005). In this intervention, STs had some negative experiences with group-based assessment in Task 1 (see Chapter 7) and seemed to prefer the individual assessment in Task 2.

From the data in Task 2, the STs also showed their preference for purely formative peer assessment. Different from Task 1, peer assessment in this task was only for oral feedback. The STs preferred peer assessment with oral feedback only to the peer assessment with both mark and feedback because they did not have to worry about fairness in assessment. They also felt less anxious when giving comments than when marking. A review of peer assessment (Dochy, Segers & Sluijsmans, 2006) indicates that criticising friends, especially grading their friends' work, is difficult for students. The STs thought that marking their peers' work could be risky and unfair because they did not have enough assessment experience (Dochy, Segers & Sluijsmans, 2006; Ohaja, Dunlea & Muldoon, 2013). Without marking, their assessment is focusing on improving their peers' work by giving constructive comments, thus making the atmosphere in the class less tense than peer-marking (Ohaja, Dunlea & Muldoon, 2013). However, there is also some evidence from research that when a mark is not included in peer assessment, students might not put effort to do peer assessment carefully and seriously and recipients of the marks might disregard them (Hanrahan & Isaacs, 2001). From the data in this intervention and other research, it can be pointed out that peer assessment with feedback only has both advantages and disadvantages. It can put less pressure on the students, but can also make them take the peer assessment less seriously, which can jeopardize the accuracy and fairness of the peer assessment and the whole assessment results of the task of which the peer assessment is a part.

Summarising the discussion so far, it seems that STs appreciated the implementation of individual authentic assessment strategies to assess their planning skills. Although there were numerous challenges in term of the validity and fairness of the assessment tasks, in STs' opinion, this assessment strategy improved their teaching professional competencies and identity, gave the prospective teachers good preparation for their future teaching.

## CHAPTER 7

### STUDENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF USING STUDENT-LED ACTIVITIES IN ASSESSMENT OF PEDAGOGY-RELATED MODULES

#### 7.1 Introduction

In Task 3, STs were required to develop and implement an action plan for extracurricular activities<sup>7</sup> in university-based classrooms. The STs were given over a month to prepare, due to the complexity of the task. Each group had thirty minutes to perform the activities and they could seek support from other STs in other groups. Their performances were judged by the lecturer and a panel comprising a representative from each group. However, the panel only gave feedback for peers' improvement and group competition, rather than contributing to the final assessment results of the performance, which was done by lecturers. This strategy was decided by the lecturers in both classes because they did not fully trust STs' assessing skills, especially in a complex task like Task 3. The lecturers wanted STs to have more opportunities to practise their assessing skills. However, they still concerned that STs' lack of assessing skills might make biases for the results if STs would have been given the authority to grade their peers' performances. In each group, peer and self-assessment were applied to assess each member's contribution to the group work. The researcher observed that all groups in Class 2 were more thorough in their preparation than those in Class 1. Most of the performances in Class 2 were more creative, exciting and engaging, while there was no outstanding performance in Class 1 and one performance did not meet the requirements of the task. These might affect the interviewees' emotions about the task and consequently impact on their answers.

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<sup>7</sup> Extracurricular activities in this study refer to those for high school students. The STs in the UoE were required to organise imitative extracurricular activities for high school students and the activities took place in the university classrooms with the participation of the STs and the lectures only.



## **7.2 Student teachers' perceptions of content of authentic assessment**

### **7.2.1 *Links between authentic assessment and professional practice***

As in Tasks 1 and 2, most interviewees stated that Task 3 was practical, realistic, and useful for their future profession. Task 3 reflected tasks that all form tutors in Vietnamese state high schools have to do as an integral part of the National Curriculum. Some STs expressed:

Later if I become a teacher, definitely I have to play the role of a form teacher. We will not only do teaching but also organise various activities to release stress, learn new knowledge. They are necessary activities for high school students. (Hoa)

Like Hoa, other interviewees were aware that formulating and implementing monthly action plans for extracurricular activities was obligatory for all form tutors and they appreciated the opportunity to practice these activities. They also recognised the value of extracurricular activities to the development of high school students:

It [the task] linked closely to the teaching profession. When I come to high school later, I have to organise extracurricular activities for our students to relax and learn new knowledge and skills. (Nga)

In their view, in addition to learning a range of subjects, high school students need to be equipped with social skills, expand their understanding of social issues.

A large number of STs thought that the specific requirements in this task were achievable and believed that if teachers can manage the task, they could manage it as well. Here, STs' aims to become teachers influenced their perceptions. They thought that if they wanted to succeed, they would have put effort in to meet teachers' standards. On the other hand, a few STs felt under pressure, given that it was the first time they performed the task, which involved a range of activities, roles and duties.

The task was achievable and interesting. However, my group struggled with how to make our performance natural, attractive and exciting. (Thien)

The issues of Thien's group were common in both classes. Some STs had experienced extracurricular activities while at school; thus, they knew it was time-consuming for teachers to complete extracurricular activities. Presumably, because teachers have to spend a great amount of time preparing, they were suspicious of the application of the task in practice later, as a ST noted:

I have not seen any teacher who was able to organise such perfect activities. If they wanted to do it, they had to prepare many things: ideas, content, etc. whereas they also had to teach their subject, so it was impossible to do such planning. (Dao)

Here, it could be seen that Dao's prior schooling experience influenced his perceptions of the task. In short, the ST appreciated the practicability of the task for future teaching, but there was concern about its implication in practice due to its complexity and the time-consuming preparation required.

### ***7.2.2 Integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes in authentic assessment***

When doing the task, the STs recognised all the competencies they needed to carry out extracurricular activities. Like other assessment tasks in the module, they needed to integrate a variety of knowledge, skills and attitudes to complete it.

Extracurricular activities in Vietnamese high schools follow ten themes related to different issues in society, and each month had a different theme. For example, in September, the theme was 'National industrialisation and modernisation'; in October, the theme was 'Love, marriage and family'. Thus, STs had to mobilise knowledge in multiple fields such as education, psychology, history, geography, sociology, economics, and health. For example, to conduct an activity related to Vietnamese traditional culture, a group chose the topic of music in various Vietnamese ethnic groups, seeking information about traditional music, history and culture, as Nga described.

We had to find out a range of information; for example, my group dug out sources of information about Vietnamese tradition culture. (Nga)

The members in Nga's group had to seek for a wide range of information to fulfil the task. This also helped them to expand their understanding in different fields.

The task was completed in groups; thus, it was not a surprise that the STs said the key to success was good collaborative skills. They also used many other transferable skills of event organisers such as event planning, time management, leadership skills, problem-solving, creativity, game design and so on.

In addition to professional skills, it was required STs had to have the competencies of a master of ceremony in an event, organisational skills, engaging audiences to make an exciting atmosphere. (Hong)

Most of the STs emphasised skills of executing events such as master of ceremonies skills, public speaking, presentation, supervising, and IT skills. Some STs noted that they linked their prior experience in high schools to extracurricular activities to complete the task. A few STs gained management and executive experience from social activities they had joined in the university and they stated that this experience became advantageous for them in this task like Task 2.

I think to succeed in the task, we needed creativity. The person who had many creative ideas definitely had had experience in social activities: they used to organise community or group events, activities. (Dan)

Again, STs stated that they had to utilise a wide range of knowledge and skills to complete Task 3. This reflected their perceptions of requirements of integrating multiple knowledge and skills in authentic assessment.

### **7.2.3 Student teachers' ownership of authentic assessment**

As in Task 2, STs could select the class, the specific topic within the theme, and the form of activity, such as a public seminar, game show, music show, quiz show or a competition. The STs did not state clearly in the interviews what they thought about this level of freedom; however, it was apparent from their descriptions of the process that they were satisfied with it. Extracurricular activities were fairly diverse, enabling teachers to design them to their preferences, as long as the activities were attuned to

the pre-defined educational objectives and students' intellectual and social competencies. In addition, the activities should be attractive to students.

With this task, I felt relieved and comfortable with it. I feel that later when I become a teacher, I would be free to do what I wanted; I would not be restrained by any model as long as I could deliver the main lessons to my students. (Luong)

Luong and other interviewees believed that they could design diverse extracurricular activities in the future for their students. Nevertheless, a few STs felt restricted by the themes, because of the limitation in their understanding of the specific topics or activities within the themes. The STs' limitations in their perception of their freedom in choosing the topic might negatively impact their performance, even though their lecturers explained this freedom in their lectures.

### **7.3 Student teachers' perceptions of context of authentic assessment**

#### **7.3.1 *Physical context***

##### **7.3.1.1 *Time allocation for preparation and performance***

Both class had over a month to prepare for the task, in addition to a week-long national holiday. Many STs blamed this holiday for disrupting their group-work, thus negatively influencing their group performance, because STs did not have sufficient time to meet up for rehearsal or some members in some groups neglected their duties (especially in Class 2). Concerning preparation time, there were mixed views. Some STs said that it was enough for them to complete the task.

One month was enough for my group to discuss, make the plan and practice for the performance. (Quan)

While some interviewees said it was possible to finish the task in a shorter period of time, this may affect the quality of their performance as it indicated STs believed an authentic assessment task should take longer to complete than other methods of assessment. However, some STs commented that a month was too long. Feeling they

did not need to rush, some groups put the assignment aside till near the deadline. A few groups said they only started working on the task late because members were busy with other modules or they felt they were able to handle the task in less time.

Actually my group had just started to do the task recently. [...] We had group meetings two or three times to finalise the plan. On last Wednesday, we had a rehearsal and last Thursday, we performed it. We did not need much time.  
(Nga)

The case of Nga's group was quite rare. STs had a similar amount of time to prepare for the task as a real high school teacher, who must finish an extracurricular activity every month.

The time of performance for each group was restricted to 30 minutes, although a real period in high school is 45 minutes. Since STs knew this limitation, they accepted this time allocation. Nevertheless, one student shared if they were allowed more time, it should be better since each group could explain why they designed their activities in such a way.

### **7.3.1.2 Resources**

Regarding resources facilitating STs to complete the task, STs were able to access resources similar to those available to teachers. This depended on each group's topic and activity. A 'teacher-like' procedure was identified, starting with receiving information about the themes, consulting sample action plans of extracurricular activities, selecting the topics and then seeking the required information on the topic.

As several groups desired to have a lifelike performance, they invested in props and facilities such as presentation files, loudspeakers, costumes, gifts, playing cards and instruments. A few STs stated that extracurricular activities were time-consuming and costly in terms of preparation. After concluding that 'In comparison to the first two tasks, this task required us to invest more time and money', Hoa described her group's preparation for the task.

On the final day, my group leader and I looked for props to support the activities. My poor group leader; she came home for the holiday but still did not forget to find the props for my group's performance. (Hoa)

From observing STs' performances in both classes, it appeared that props effectively aided performances. Groups that carefully prepared props impressed the audiences and panel more than those who did not. In the interview, although the STs did not state directly their perceptions of the importance of the props to their performances, the way they prepared for the task showed great interest in this factor.

### **7.3.2 Social context**

Similar to Task 1, this task was completed in groups based on the assumption that a form teacher has to organise extracurricular activities with his/her class. Collaboration, as a result, was a prerequisite. All STs spoke about their group work. Whether satisfied or not with their own group, all STs agreed that collaboration contributed significantly to the success of the task, greatly affecting the process and results. As mentioned, this task was more complicated and challenging than Task 1, thus calling for all members' participation. The more members contributed to the group work, the better ideas they could mobilise.

I could see the result of this task reflected the collaboration in the groups. [...] If a group had any unresponsive members who did not follow the group' working process, or they conflicted together in communication, they would fail in the task. (Luong)

Based on their experience of working in groups over two authentic assessment tasks, the STs drew up specific requirements of collaboration (see Chapters 7 and 8). The role of group leaders was mentioned again by the interviewees. Some STs appreciated their leaders, while some were disappointed. Thien explained why, in this task, his group did better than in the Task 1,

We had a long time to work together; the leader observed and assessed the members' potential or strengths; she assigned them the tasks appropriately. My group leader was intelligent: that was why we succeeded. (Thien)

Like Thien, several interviewees also reported that their groups collaborated much better after few months together. Nga described the case of her group.

In Task 1, we had experience with group work; Task 2 required us to complete work individually but we still met in groups to share ideas. I also got more experience in leading group work, so in Task 3, my group was more cooperative. Before that, a few members often showed their ego too much; later, they were more friendly and cooperative together. (Nga)

However, surprisingly, other interviewees said that although members in their groups had been working with each other for almost a term, some of them did not have a sense of collaboration and solidarity. A greater number of STs in Class 1 were disappointed with their group work than in Class 2. This explained partly why the performances in Class 2 were better. It seems that some STs' collaboration skills had not improved significantly during the authentic assessment tasks. As in Task 1 and 2, STs also asked for help from other people such as senior STs and schoolteachers to organise activities. Nonetheless, they also emphasised that in this task, collaboration and creativity were the main factors in their success.

#### **7.4 Student teachers' perceptions of criteria in authentic assessment**

Each ST was given a hard copy of the task guidance and criteria, including details of task delivery date. They were advised to put forward any changes before the performance date by emailing suggestions to the lecturers. However, only a few STs contacted the lecturers for clarifications and no changes were suggested. As in Task 1 and 2, almost all interviewees commented that the assessment rubric was the most detailed they had ever seen. This indicated characteristics or requirements of the assessment products, including an action plan for the extracurricular activity and the

performance, and STs' contribution to group work at different levels. It reflected multiple indicators of assessment. Most of the interviewees highlighted that, thanks to the specificity of the rubric, they could use it for peer and self-assessment. A small number of interviewees proposed that the commentaries describing each level of proficiency in each criterion should be more detailed and specific. This facilitated the STs in assessing their peers and themselves. Dao suggested some revisions:

In the rubric for the activity plan, the criterion of the objectives was described too generally. [...] It was easy for us to misunderstand. (Dao)

Given collaboration being highlighted in the rubric, two interviewees suggested this should be more heavily weighted and a few STs recommended the criterion for props and the criterion of 'excitement and engagements of the performance' be adjusted. These suggestions stemmed from STs' perceptions of the importance of specific criterion after doing the task. Therefore, STs' perceptions of the criteria reflected their perceptions of teaching requirements and standards.

## **7.5 Student teachers' perceptions of their involvement in authentic assessment**

### **7.5.1 Assessment design stage**

Similar to Task 1 and 2, STs were also invited to contribute to the task but they did not suggest any changes before the performance dates. In interview, most STs expressed appreciation for the task and criteria. STs stated the delivery process of the task was logical, well-organised; thus, they did not have many suggestions.

The process was logical, reasonable and well-connected. We do not suggest changing any step. (Dao)

In the interviews, again, the STs did not object to the notion of STs' engagement in task design. However, unfortunately, they did not take full advantage of this opportunity, as in the two previous tasks, for similar reasons as before.



### **7.5.2 Peer and self-assessment**

Being used to peer and self-assessment after Tasks 1 and 2, the STs did not comment much about the advantages of these assessment strategies. Analogous to the first two tasks, all STs expressed their willingness to engage in assessing the assessment products. What was new in the task was the panel, as a type of peer assessment. Almost all STs appreciated the idea of using a panel including representatives from all groups to assess performances in the class.

It was good because it showed that the lecturer and STs had different viewpoints. For example, [...] the lecturer said that in their performance, the quiz should be easy to motivate people but I thought it was too easy; all people knew the answers. (Nga)

From Nga's case, it could be seen that although most STs acknowledged there were biases in the student members of the panel resulting from their lack of experience in assessment and their personal emotions, perspectives and relationship, they generally believed that more assessors could bring more reliable judgments. Hong supported Nga's opinion.

I could see the panel gave objective comments because they wrote for the lecturer, generating and speaking out for the whole class; they wrote according to their perspectives. (Hong)

In practice, the panels' assessment was used to rank the performances in each class but was not counted towards the final mark. In interview, when STs were asked about the possibility of including this result as part of the final mark, most agreed but some STs suggested it should weigh less than the lecturers' assessment. This stemmed from the fact that STs believed that lecturers were more experienced and objective.

As for intragroup peer assessment, many interviewees concluded that after a long time cooperating with peers in assessment tasks, STs were able to assess their peers in a more objective and accurate manner than Task 1. This meant that to

improve the STs' perceptions and skills of peer assessment, asking them to do peer assessment during the courses would be a useful strategy.

Through each task, our group has grown up and worked better, so all members had the most honest and objective assessment of each other. In Task 1, they had not assessed their peers objectively. However, through each task, they worked together, they made fair, consistent assessments of each member.  
(Duong)

Self-assessment was not mentioned much in the interviews, but all STs agreed with it, as in Tasks 1 and 2. Some STs continued to believe that group leaders were able to assess each member's contributions to the group work objectively and accurately. In general, when talking about peer and self-assessment, the interviewees did not show their concern about how to proceed. Rather, they paid more attention to the fairness and equity of peer and self-assessment. These findings seemed beyond the lecturers' expectation when they decided to implement peer assessment. The lecturers expected to improve all STs' assessing skills throughout the tasks by self- and peer assessment.

## **7.6 Student teachers' perceptions of fairness and equity of authentic assessment**

### **7.6.1 Requirements and criteria**

The interviewees did not discuss fairness and equity in detail. Generally, they felt the time for preparation was appropriate, and agreed with the random assignment of themes to the groups. However, a few STs thought the themes had different levels of difficulty. In their opinion, it was easier to choose a topic, select relevant information and adopt attractive forms with certain themes than others, which was unfair for some groups. Therefore, STs suggested that the lecturers and panels be flexible in their judgments. For example, concerning props, STs suggested that lecturers should consider the differences in the groups' varied prop requirements.

Some groups needed more props than other groups. It was up to the characteristics of the groups' performances. As for the props of the

performances, each group had different requirements for props; some groups did not bring anything, while some groups brought unnecessary props. (Bich)

A few STs also recommended that criterion-based assessment by lecturers and panels should be flexible because each performance had particular objectives, forms and characteristics. In general, in the STs' perceptions, fairness and equity in authentic assessment task had to be reflected in appropriate requirements and criteria so that the STs can perform to their best.

### **7.6.2 Peer and self- assessment**

With regards to the panels' assessment, most interviewees appreciated it, except one student who felt the panel and lecturer under-evaluated her group. Most STs felt the results were objective and fair, and a few STs believed that the judgments from the student panels were more reliable than those of lecturers.

If we generated all members' marks and took the average, these results were more reliable and objective than the lecturers' marks alone. (Khuong)

Khuong's comment indicated his view that more assessors could make more reliable and accurate judgments. However, some STs had concern about the objectivity and reliability of ST assessment. Again, bias in STs' judgements was unavoidable because of their personal relationships in both inter- and intragroup peer assessment. This also happened with self-assessment. Responsive and active members provided responsive assessment of their peers and themselves, whereas the irresponsible did not. Thus, several STs proposed that lecturers should check the objectivity and accuracy of the peer assessment and self-assessment. Fortunately, as mentioned above, some STs stated that practising peer and self-assessment in the first two tasks helped them to make more objective and accurate assessment. They explained rationally and clearly that they got used to assessing, based on the rubrics. Moreover, it seemed that the STs understood better the meaning of peer and self- assessment, so bias in judgments was reduced. Thien spoke about the peer assessment in his group,

It was more objective because we got used to this strategy. In Task 1, we had just met and we made some mistakes in peer assessment and assessed unfairly, but in Tasks 2 and 3, we became familiar with this method of assessment; moreover, we gained the perspective that 'I deserve to get this mark', and so we made more objective assessments. (Thien)

Correspondingly, they believed that the results of peer assessment in Task 3 would be the fairest and most reliable among the three tasks.

## **7.7 Student teachers' perceptions of outcomes of authentic assessment**

### **7.7.1 Learning outcomes**

A few interviewees in Class 1 were dissatisfied with their own performances. Some were dissatisfied with all the performances in the class because they expected to learn from the creative and interesting performances rather than bad ones. In other words, they wanted to see good examples of the extracurricular activities that they could follow later.

After watching the performances, I was disappointed. [...] If we had carried out those activities in high schools, the STs there would not have been engaged. (Hong)

In contrast to Hong, several interviewees said they were not pleased with the marks they got, but happy with their performance because they got useful experience for future work and were able to establish better relationships with their peers. Luong's group won the prize for the most interesting performance as voted by the audience, but received a low mark.

The marks were not important with me because after the task, all members in my group got closer together. [...] I came to enjoy my group and other groups' performances. (Luong)

Based on those statements, it could be inferred that in STs' perceptions, the outcomes of the authentic assessment tasks were not only the marks and feedback, but also the

experience they had. The STs believed that the task supported their professional skill development effectively. They also saw the specific requirements of the task reflected the real job requirements well. In particular, to organise extracurricular activities for a class, it was essential that teachers present a paper-based plan with specific objectives, schedules, tasks, and names of people assigned to each duty. Then, teachers collaborated with and guided their students to organise the activities. During the task, the STs had to undergo all the relevant steps like real teachers, so their skills in organising extracurricular activities were improved.

Playing the role of the prospective teachers, we will have to manage classes. Each month will have a specific theme and a few hours of extracurricular activities, and this task helped us to improve those professional skills. (Quan)

Interestingly, interviewees discovered that teachers needed to have good collaboration skills, not only to work with their colleagues, but also with their students. To succeed in this task most of the STs said that teachers had to build up good relationship and communicate effectively with their students to engage them. Collaboration skills were not considered general transferable skills, but essential professional skills.

Leaving aside the requirements of knowledge, teachers who want to fulfil the task have to be good at communication, build a close relationship with their students to understand them and collaborate with them. (Thanh)

With Task 3, some new professional skills were developed for STs, and some old ones were reinforced. Therefore, the interviewees appreciated the task.

### **7.7.2 Marks and feedback**

Noticeably, on the dates of the interviews, the STs knew the marks and feedback for their performances and peers assessments. Although the overall results of the whole task for each student had not been finalised, the STs could work out their results. This meant that interviewees' focused on marks when discussing issues such as collaboration, lecturers or STs' assessment and fairness. While STs appreciate

feedback, they still considered marks an important part of the assessment as stated in Task 1 (see chapter 7). Furthermore, several STs supposed that peer assessment with strict marking would help the STs be more active and responsible in group work.

Perhaps we would not work together anymore but the marks [in peer assessment] would be a warning for those with an irresponsive learning and working attitude. (Dan)

When it came to fairness and equity, STs mainly argued about fairness or unfairness in term of marks, rather than feedback. However, since STs perceived that the aim of authentic assessment was to improve their competence, they preferred feedback to marks. Feedback could give specific and detailed indications as to how to improve, and several interviewees expected more specific and clear feedback from the lecturers and panels after Task 1, so that they could revise and improve.

## **7.8 STs' perceptions of impact of authentic assessment on their learning and teaching professional identity formulation**

### **7.8.1 Learning strategies**

As for the process STs followed to complete the tasks, the groups gathered to discuss the specific topic that fitted the theme; selected the activity; researched information; developed the plan; assigned specific tasks to all members; prepared props and rehearsed. Interviewees noted that this process was totally different from other methods of assessment. Instead of memorising materials, STs had to think creatively and critically to find ideas, then prepare and practise actively activities to perform to audiences. All STs except one acknowledged that the method of assessment in these three tasks had a significantly influence on their learning strategies. Lien talked about the changes in her learning habits:

It would be better to define specific learning objectives via a time management chart, so when the test dates come, I will not need to be rushed and stuff all the lessons into my head like before...The task helped me learn that whenever I do anything, I should have a plan. (Lien)

Lien's statement indicated that the task changed not only her learning strategies but also her soft skills. Like Lien, other interviewees also described a change in their learning strategies, from a preference for individual learning over group learning. It was evident that many STs had change their learning strategy to deep learning after completing three authentic assessment tasks.

### **7.8.2 Learning motivation**

This was not the first time STs experienced authentic assessment in groups, so the task was not new to them. While some interviewees said the task was achievable, others found it challenging and stressful because it required more preparation and included a great deal of sub-tasks. A few STs in Class 1 were disappointed with some of the performances (finding them boring), while most of the STs in Class 2 were excited. For example, Dao in Class 2 described the emotions of his class (and his own emotions) during the performances.

Excited! If the task required a presentation, it would have been boring. The performances with games and activities motivated both the performers and the audience. The atmosphere in the class was so exciting. (Dao)

Catching the audience's attention, creating an exciting atmosphere and receiving positive feedback from lecturers and peers were motivating factors to STs. Some interviewees said that they came to the assessment sessions with enthusiasm to watch the performances and perform, as in Task 1.

Similar to Tasks 1 and 2, the usefulness and authenticity of the task motivated STs. They commented they understood that this would be the main task they had to do in their future job, so if they did not make an effort, they may incur difficulties when becoming teachers. Therefore, the main motivating factor for STs was the meaningfulness of the authentic assessment, not just its joyfulness. Moreover, the outcomes of such authentic assessment task, therefore, might be potentially good indicators for the prospective teachers' competencies as a teacher.

### **7.8.3 Professional identity formulation**

The majority of interviewees said that after three authentic assessment tasks, most changed their perceptions of the nature of the module. As mentioned in the interviews in Task 1 and 2, the STs originally thought this module focused on theory and they only needed to take careful notes and write essays. However, later they realised that to meet the requirements of the module, they had to apply the theory to solve practical tasks or present something meaningful to their future careers.

After completing the task, the STs also thought that to effectively design and organise extracurricular activities, along with many other tasks in schools, teachers had to make a great deal of effort. For that reason, the STs also felt that the authentic tasks helped them change or expand their perceptions of the teaching profession. The task also helped STs to build up their understandings of the requirements and standards of teaching competencies, and the STs said that they did not know that teaching involved meeting a wide range of requirements.

The tasks were the opportunities for me to know which competencies I had, and the level of my professional skills, so that I could focus on them to improve later. (Dan)

In short, the STs recognised that the authentic assessment task was good preparation for the teaching profession.

## **7.9 Discussion and conclusion**

Task 3 was a group-based task combining mixed assessment methods including assessing plans, role-play, and student-led activities. In the following section, STs' thoughts on the advantages and disadvantages of using student-led activities to assess and develop teaching competencies for STs will be discussed. Moreover, aspects of assessing a complex group work under the STs' perspective will also be considered.



### ***7.9.1 STs' perceptions of assessing organisational skills in extracurricular activities***

Upon completion of the task organising extracurricular activities, it appeared that STs perceived organisational skills as essential for the teaching profession, and therefore are also essential for the teacher education programme. Interviewees appreciated the authenticity of the assessment task, finding it useful and relevant to their profession. They realised that the task replicated a compulsory task for all high school form tutors as prescribed in the National Curriculum (MOET, 2006). All requirements of the task for the STs were identical to those for form tutors in school and the STs supposed that in teacher training, they should be expected to complete the same tasks as form tutors.

It was asserted that the authentic task facilitated STs obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the value of their future profession. STs believed that extracurricular activities were important for high school students and therefore they need to acquire organisational skills to support their students. Extracurricular activities are proved to support students' academic achievement, transferable skill development (Paul & Baskey, 2012; Sitra & Sasidhar, 2005), mental health improvement and social network expansion (Darling, Caldwell & Smith, 2005). Although the STs in the UoE did not see all these values in the extracurricular activities, they could identify the effect of those activities on high school students' mental health and transferable skill development. Such perceptions made them better appreciate the task.

Appreciating the authenticity of the assessment task in the intervention, the interviewees could identify specific teaching skills that had improved throughout the task. The STs believed that they had gone through all the stages, from conception to completion. As the STs noted, setting goals and objectives for extracurricular activities was the first skill the STs practiced. Following goal-setting, STs produced a detailed proposal for the event, including educational objectives, content and forms of the activities, timelines, props and aids, cost, and people involved in the event. The STs had another chance to improve their planning skills after the planning task in Task 2. Later, the STs collaborated with other members in their group to prepare and conduct the event. All these steps followed the guidelines for teachers in the National Curriculum (MOET, 2006; Nguyen, Nguyen & Chu, 2009). Upon completion of the task,

STs could practice a wide range of skills, namely, time-management, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, and organising. Moreover, experiencing peer and self-assessment also helped the STs to gain useful assessment skills (Sluijsmans, Brand-Gruwel & van Merriënboer, 2002; Sluijsmans et al., 2002). From STs' perspectives, it was obvious that the task both developed their perceptions of teaching competencies and improved their teaching competencies. While literature in education research often focuses on the effect of extracurricular activities on students' development, this study has discovered that it also affects teachers and/or STs. For STs, conducting extracurricular activities improves teachers' professional skills, although further research is needed to confirm this finding.

In addition, the interviewees also realised that the task required them to integrate a variety of knowledge, skills and disposition, which might be demanding for STs. Extracurricular activities in Vietnam included a range of activities related to a specific theme that in turn covers a variety of areas, such as culture, education, psychology, law, history, geography and health. Therefore, to organise such activities, the STs had to deepen and widen their knowledge in different fields. Moreover, school-based extracurricular activities might not be limited in type (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005). Indeed, in this intervention, STs also conducted diverse activities such as simulated public seminars, game shows, music shows or competitions, and cultural exhibitions. Correspondingly, STs had to employ a wide range of skills to organise the activities. However, the majority of the interviewees commented that they did not master those skills sufficiently to perform the task well. Other research showed that even new teachers who completed their initial training often struggled to handle all teaching tasks in their first years, especially with extracurricular activities (Renard, 2003). There is a suggestion that it is better not to ask new teachers 'to advise or coach extracurricular activities until they have at least two or three year of experience in classroom' (Renard, 2003, p.64). On the one hand, this indicates that organising extracurricular activities is difficult for STs, and on the other hand, highlights the importance of authentic instruction and assessment in teacher education to prepare prospective teachers for the future.

Furthermore, according to the interviewees, planning and organising an extracurricular event is demanding, not only because of the integration of knowledge, skills and disposition, but also the assessment workload. The task encompassed numerous activities that required much preparation. It should be noted that, because the task simulated a real task that took place at university, the STs had to play both the roles of schoolteachers and high school students. In practice, schoolteachers also cooperated and guided their students to prepare and conduct the event, but the schoolteachers played the role of a coach, rather than participants. This difference between the university-based assessment task and the real task might add more workload and pressure for the STs during training. Renard (2003) found that new teachers always take longer time doing teaching activity than experienced teachers. New teachers are also more likely to experience more stress and anxiety because of the workload and their lack of experience (Renard, 2003). Therefore, STs' concern about the assessment workload was understandable.

Material costs are a general disadvantage of authentic assessment (Hoepfl, 2000). Interviewees mentioned the importance of props to the success of their performance. They believed that the more appropriate the props were, the more likely it was that they would give a successful performance. Extracurricular activities require the support of a range of equipment and materials (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005). The interviewees did not emphasise the cost of the equipment and materials; however, it can be drawn from the researcher's observations of their performances and their descriptions of the props of some performances, that conducting simulating extracurricular activities was costly. Moreover, they also expected that the university would have better equipment in the classroom, such as sound systems, microphones, whiteboards and projectors. In this sense, the importance of physical context in authentic assessment was identified clearly by STs.

Moreover, in STs' perceptions, assessment criteria were another issue that needed to be considered carefully in assessing STs' organisational skills. To complete an extracurricular event, teachers have to make a detailed plan and then put the plan into practice. For that reason, to assess prospective teachers' competencies in carrying out extracurricular activities, it is desirable to assess all the stages: planning, practising

and conducting the activities. In this intervention, STs were assessed on both their plans and final performance of the activities. The criteria for the plans were established on the basis of real extracurricular activities plans. Similarly, the criteria of performance rubric were set up based on the requirements of extracurricular activities in National Curriculum (MOET, 2006). The interviewees acknowledged the authenticity of the rubrics, so they accepted all the criteria without suggesting any changes, except for the expectation that the rubrics should be described in a more quantitative manner. The STs thought that the qualitative description of the criteria resulted in confusion and they wondered how their performance would be assessed accurately and fairly. The obstacles of interpreting assessment criteria seem to be students' common issues (Orsmond & Merry, 1996). In particular, in peer and self-assessment such rubrics led to great bias in the assessment results because STs lacked assessment experience, as concluded by other research (Ohaja, Dunlea & Muldoon, 2013; Orsmond & Merry, 1996).

In this round of the intervention, STs' role in the assessment process was mostly in peer and self-assessment. In other words, STs were mainly involved in the on-going and final stages of the assessment process, but not in the task design, though they said students should be engaged in all stages of assessment. Their response to the lectures' request for comments to this initial assessment plan was similar to that in the two previous tasks: they avoided putting forward any suggestions for the assessment plan to the lecturers, even if they then made suggestions in interview. The reasons for this were the same as in the two previous tasks and were also found by Williams (1992). The STs in the current study were afraid of giving their ideas to the lecturers, believing that designing the task was the lecturers' responsibility. Moreover, STs assumed they did not have sufficient assessment experience, like the students in O'Donovan, Price and Rust (2001), Rust, Price and O' Donovan (2003) and most appreciated the appropriate requirements, criteria, and sequence of the task. It can be seen that the STs were not confident about their involvement in assessment.

Most importantly, the STs liked the freedom to select specific topics and types of extracurricular activities. They saw this freedom as the lecturers' recognition of the STs' important role in assessment. The lecturers believed that this freedom gave STs

more chance to perform as real teachers, which was not only meaningful to the STs in this study, but it is also relevant for other contexts, such as Canada (Beck & Kosnik, 2002), England and Germany (Jones, 2000). However, the STs in this study still expected more guidance from lecturers in completing the task because they claimed they didn't know where to start and sometimes they lost direction and found making decisions difficult. The freedom appeared to impact negatively on their group work at times. They explained that, due to this freedom, they had to go through more discussion to reach a consensus. In the STs' opinions, the freedom in assessment should come with lecturers' support.

### ***7.9.2 Student teachers' perceptions of assessing group work in authentic assessment***

Group-based assessment is one of the characteristics of authentic assessment (Archbald, 1991; Lund, 1997; Wiggins, 1990). The STs perceived that the assessment task replicated a real task; therefore, they agreed with being assessed by group work. However, they recognised both the advantages and disadvantages of doing so. The intervention aimed to use student-led activities to assess and develop STs' teaching competencies; thus, it was of necessity carried out via group work. In Task 1, the STs were also assessed by group work. Nonetheless, Task 3 was more complex than Task 1 and required more cooperation within the group. As the STs said in interview, they completely understood the importance of group work in developing their collaboration, communication and self-directed learning skills. However, the STs also said that they had to face more obstacles when working together than in Task 1, such as irresponsive members, conflict, or poor leadership. These factors are quite common and can be found in many studies of assessment by group work (Dochy, Segers & Sluijsmans, 2006; Elliott & Higgins, 2005). Cooperating to complete a task should reduce the assessment workload for students, but in this intervention, STs mentioned the negative impact of group work. They said that they had to spend time discussing ideas with others to reach a unanimous decision. It appears the STs expected more lecturers' input in such a group-based authentic assessment task to assess students.

In Task 3, in order to assess group work, peer assessment was adopted. A panel of student-assessors with representatives from each group of STs was involved in the assessment of the performances. Believing that the more assessors involved, the more reliable the assessment became, the STs consented to peer assessment. This perception is similar to students in other research reviewed in Topping (1998), in which most students approve of the high validity and reliability of peer assessment. The STs confirmed that the student-assessors could supplement the judgments of lecturers to make it more reliable and accurate, even though they still perceived that they lacked assessment experience and showed emotional bias in making assessment decisions. STs therefore suggested that the lecturers' assessment should be weighted more heavily than the students', which showed their reservations about students' judgment. Another advantage of the assessment panel was to provide more detailed feedback. Intergroup peer assessment received more positive comments from the interviewees than intragroup peer assessment. The trial of intergroup peer assessment brought a new initiative of peer assessment to two classes.

Fairness is always crucial in assessing group work because judging accurately and fairly individuals' contributions is complex and challenging (Ohaja, Dunlea & Muldoon, 2013). This is seen clearly by the STs in this intervention. They realised that the problems of unfairness and inaccuracy occurring in Task 1 still existed in Task 3, yet were improved to some extent. As the STs described their group working process, it seemed that over four months, they had not found an effective strategy to cooperate in important assignments. Interviewees mentioned bias in peer and self-assessment within their groups due to their anxiety about relationship break-up and low marks, and their shortage of assessment experience, which is reflected in the review of peer and self-assessment (Dochy, Segers & Sluijsmans, 2006; Hanrahan & Isaacs, 2001). However, some commented that fairness and accuracy in peer and self-assessment were enhanced over time when STs had a better understanding of these assessment strategies. They perceived the importance of peer and self-assessment, and also obtained more assessment experience during the intervention. This confirms the findings of others (Dochy, Segers & Sluijsmans, 2006; Sluijsmans, Brand-Gruwel & van

Merriënboer, 2002) which indicates the necessity of providing assessment training to students before they commence peer and self-assessing.

There has been little research on the development and assessment of prospective teachers' competencies in organising extracurricular activities for school students in both university-based modules and school-based practicum. The initial results from the intervention in this study might contribute to the research-based initiative of improving the training and assessment of organisational skills, especially for extracurricular activities, in teacher education. These primary findings also confirm the STs' expectation to improve their competence in planning and conducting supportive educational activities for school students through authentic tasks. This hints at the possibility of embracing student-led activities in assessment and the development of STs' teaching competencies in teacher education.

**CHAPTER 8**  
**SOME THEORETICAL TOOLS TO INVESTIGATE**  
**STUDENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT**  
**IN PEDAGOGY-RELATED MODULES**

**8.1 Introduction**

This chapter will combine the results of all rounds of the intervention presented in the previous chapters. It will introduce frameworks of STs' perceptions of authentic assessment in pedagogy-related modules. Moreover, a discussion of the general frameworks of students' perceptions of authentic assessment in professional modules in HE will be also included, to reveal the potential to transfer these frameworks to other contexts. Additionally, the hypothesised relationships between STs' perceptions of authentic assessment and some factors, including their practical and indirect teaching experience, prior schooling experience, assessment experience, career goals and cultural values, will be inspected. Furthermore, the framework for designing an authentic assessment task (proposed by the previous researchers and presented in Chapter 1) will be revisited. Finally, the impact of STs' perceptions of authentic assessment in pedagogy-related modules to student learning and its impact on the development of their professional identity will be discussed, and the contribution of the study to knowledge in the field.

**8.2 Contextualisation of the framework of STs' perceptions of authentic assessment**

The discussions at the end of chapters 5,6, and 7 revealed differences in STs' perceptions of authentic assessment in this study in comparison to those of students in other studies (Brown, 2011; Brown & Remesal, 2012; Dorman & Knightley, 2006). The differences in the perceptions of STs across contexts also note a modification of frameworks of prospective teachers' perceptions of authentic assessment to fit each context (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000). In other words, contextualising the framework of prospective teachers' perceptions of authentic assessment should be emphasised in research in this field.



Findings from previous studies indicate that students in different contexts attend to different aspects of assessment (Brown, 2013; Brown & Remesal, 2012; Cakan, 2011; Dorman & Knightley, 2006). For example, the 'Perceptions of Assessment Task Inventory' (PATI) was designed to explore middle school students' perceptions of assessment in science, but was validated also with British students (Dorman & Knightley, 2006). Its final form includes 35 items which cover five dimensions, including Congruence with planned learning, Authenticity, Student Consultation, Transparency, and Diversity (Dorman & Knightley, 2006). However, when Cakan (2011) used the final form of PATI with Turkish STs, it was found that, in that context, the best model of the inventory is the eighteen-item version with the dimensions named very differently from the original. From the Turkish version, it can be seen that the participants ignored 'Authenticity' of assessment, instead attending to the transparency of assessment information. The findings of those studies confirm that the differences in students' schooling levels, majors, education systems and culture might result in very different perceptions of assessment. Therefore, it was hypothesised that STs might perceive authentic assessment in a different way from students in other disciplines, and those in Vietnam might also have distinctive perceptions of assessment in comparison to those in other countries. This raises the importance of developing a framework of students' perceptions of authentic assessment in a specific context. Initial findings in Gulikers (2006) show that students in social work and nursing responded differently to the same framework of authentic assessment. While social work students eliminated 'social context' dimension from the framework, nursing students accepted this dimension (Gulikers, 2006). Therefore, even if the design of this study was based on frameworks constructed by other authors (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2004), eventually it still added new dimensions to the frameworks of STs' perceptions of authentic assessment.

In this study, the context of teacher education and pedagogy-related modules is brought to the fore. The perceived roles of teacher education, teachers and pedagogy-related modules were thought to influence STs' perceptions of assessment in these modules. In particular, STs might expect that pedagogy-related modules would play a vital role in filling the gap between university-based training and

professional practice. Consequently, they might emphasise the connection between the assessment tasks in pedagogy-related modules and real tasks. Additionally, most STs in the study do not have much practical experience, since they had not taken a practicum, and thus, their practical experience might influence their perceptions of authentic assessment.

Moreover, the characteristics of the Vietnamese context were also taken into account. For instance, Vietnam education is characterised as ‘the teaching of a series of systematised pieces of knowledge in print’ (Hamano, 2008, p. 402). This means the lack of practicality in training programmes is a permanent feature in Vietnam (Nguyen & Hall, 2016), so it was inevitable that STs in this study would comment on the authenticity of assessment in pedagogy-related modules. This notion was reinforced by their positive comments on authentic assessment tasks implemented in the study. Therefore, in the framework of STs’ perceptions of assessment, ‘Authenticity’ might be a significant dimension. Furthermore, the dominance of a ‘teacher-centred’ approach in the education system in Vietnam (Nguyen & Hall, 2016) also could lead to a prompt change in which the ‘student-centred’ approach is imported in teacher education to promote STs’ roles in teaching, learning and assessment. Hence, STs’ perceptions of their involvement in assessment will be considered another dimension in the framework.

It is also clear that learners in different contexts may have different perceptions of assessment, but their perceptions will still share some common features (Ashford-Rowe, Herrington & Brown, 2014; Gulikers, 2006; Herrington & Herrington, 1998; Sambell, McDowell & Brown, 1997). For instance, all students in those studies appreciated practicability and usefulness of authentic assessment tasks; potential of authentic assessment in developing students’ professional competencies; requirements of using high-order thinking skills to solve problems in authentic assessment tasks. The similarities of students’ perceptions of authentic assessment across culture and society potentially suggest some universal constructs of students’ perceptions of authentic assessment. Thus, it is possible to adopt a framework from one context to another and explore both similarities and differences in the framework between two contexts. More importantly, reasons for these differences are explored.

This perspective is applied in this study, so the transferability of the frameworks will be also discussed on the light of the comparison between the context in this study and that of others.

### **8.3 Framework of student teachers' perceptions of authentic assessment**

There was no data to reveal that authentic assessment had not been implemented widely in pedagogy-related modules at the UoE. Therefore, the intervention in the study introduced three authentic assessment tasks for STs at the UoE, allowing students to experience authentic assessment. The data collected after the intervention revealed how STs perceived authentic assessment. From such findings, a framework of STs' perceptions of authentic assessment in pedagogy-related modules was also drawn. In the next sections, the process of constructing the framework from the empirical data in the study will be presented. After that, the detailed framework with seven dimensions (named the Seven Dimensions Framework) will also be introduced.

#### ***8.3.1 Emerging elements in the framework***

As described in the literature review (see Chapters 1 and 2) and the methodology chapter of the study (Chapter 4), the authentic assessment tasks in the intervention in the study were designed according to the six-dimensional framework that referred to the findings in other studies (Archbald & Newman, 1988; Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2004; Newmann & Wehlage, 1993; Wiggins, 1990). The framework includes 'Content of authentic assessment task', 'Context of authentic assessment', 'Criteria of authentic assessment', 'Results/Forms of authentic assessment', 'Students' involvement to authentic assessment process' and 'Feedback'. From the data in the study, it appeared that the STs in this study elaborated almost on all these dimensions after participating in the authentic assessment tasks. In what follows, the emergence of elements in the framework of STs' perceptions of authentic assessment will be described and discussed.

### **8.3.1.1 Content of authentic assessment**

'Content of authentic assessment tasks' describes detailed requirements that the STs had to fulfil in the tasks. The STs in this study perceived the relevance of the authentic assessment tasks to the teaching profession and confirmed that all assessment tasks were authentic because they knew them to be obligatory for all schoolteachers. These findings corroborate those of Herrington and Herrington's study (1998), in which Australian STs also reported professional development due to authentic assessment.

Furthermore, the STs in this study also recognised the requirements of integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes, the complexity of the given problems and their ownership of the task completion, which reflects the demands and complexity of teaching, and the diversity of possible solutions in reality (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000). These results concur with findings in prior studies (Archbald & Newman, 1988; Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2004; Newmann & Wehlage, 1993; Wiggins, 1990). This consistency corroborates the hypothesis that the greatest concern for the participants was the usefulness of the assessment tasks.

### **8.3.1.2 Social context of authentic assessment**

In Gulikers, Bastiaens and Kirschner (2004), social context of authentic assessment refers to the fact that an authentic assessment task is completed individually or in a group. However, the interviews showed that in STs' perceptions, the social context of authentic assessment covers a broader meaning than those suggested by Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner (2004).

Based on Gulikers, Bastiaens and Kirschner's (2004) perspective, the intervention in the study included two group-based tasks and an individual task. Nevertheless, as STs said, even in the individual task, the STs communicated with their peers or senior STs, teachers and students in school to obtain information and advice, so they did not fulfil the task 'individually'. In the group-based tasks, in addition to the STs' collaboration in groups, they also sought external help from others. Therefore, instead of commenting much on the modes of the tasks as individual or group-based, STs focused on their interaction during the tasks. They said that authentic assessment

tasks helped them to establish close social relationships with their peers and seniors, their former teachers or teachers and students in school. The STs reported some negative experience of working in groups, but still thought this experience was helpful for them in the future because they perceived that it is part of the teachers' work to collaborate with their peers, students and more experienced teachers. It seemed that STs experienced a range of forms of social interaction, such as cooperation, conflict, competition, accommodation, and consultation during the authentic assessment tasks. This indicates that in STs' perceptions, 'social context of authentic assessment' means their social interaction during an assessment task, which will be important to them as teachers. Bearing in mind the 'social context of authentic assessment', STs in this study appreciated this dimension.

Such findings were in contrast to Gulikers (2006), in which most nursing and social work students in all vocational courses in vocational colleges rated 'Social Context' as the least important dimension of authentic assessment. According to Gulikers, Bastiaens and Kirschner's (2004) definition of social context of authentic assessment mentioned earlier, students in their studies only express their views on the modes of authentic assessment in terms of individual or group-based tasks, preferring individual authentic assessment tasks (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2004). This is explained by students' prior experience with individual testing in their school, which lead them to underestimation of group-based assessment (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2004). Thus, it can be seen that students' assessment experience influences their perceptions of assessment. Gulikers (2006) hypothesises that Dutch students' underestimation of group-based tasks might stem from the fact that in vocational courses in technical and vocational colleges where study and working are closely integrated, students might not appreciate more opportunities to gain professional practical experience by authentic assessment. She also warns that this finding should not be transferred to other university-based HE courses that have less integration of study in university and working in professional practice (Gulikers, 2006). Gulikers's (2006) hypothesis appears to accord with the findings in this study, in which STs did not have many opportunities to gain practical experience, thus they appreciated more opportunities to develop their practical experience in authentic assessment with both

individual and group-based tasks. This makes a difference to perceptions of authentic assessment between students in workplace-based and university-based training courses. In teacher education in a university like the case of the current study, 'Social Context' seems to be an essential dimension of authentic assessment in STs' perceptions.

To conclude, in the current study, STs seemed to interpret the 'social context of authentic assessment' as all social interaction happening during task completion. Therefore, the term 'Social Context' should be revised as 'Social interaction between students and other people during the assessment process' to express this notion more clearly.

### ***8.3.1.3 Student teachers' involvement in authentic assessment***

As regards STs' involvement in authentic assessment tasks, the findings in this study showed that the STs perceived that they ought to have a larger role in assessment process (Frey, Schmitt & Allen, 2012). While most studies focus on students' participation in assessing their assessment products and performances through self- and peer assessment (Frey, Schmitt & Allen, 2012), the STs revealed a wish to partake in all stages of the assessment process and linked this to assessment fairness.

Although in practice the STs did not take up the opportunity to contribute to the design of the authentic assessment tasks, most believed that they should be involved in this stage. For example, they thought that they could offer some realistic situations in teaching practice based on their schooling experience or by collecting the cases in school. They might also suggest some choices of assessment methods or specific tasks to suit most STs' ability. Furthermore, they would have been able to contribute to the establishment of assessment criteria. These results match those observed in earlier studies (Bloxham & West, 2004, 2007; Brown & Knight, 1994; Orsmond, Merry & Reiling, 2000, 2002) in which students proved able to add to and revise marking criteria. Like the students in other studies, the STs in this study thought that their involvement in the design of assessment tasks and criteria would help them to improve their understanding of assessment requirements and criteria and possibly improve their performance (Bloxham & West, 2007). More importantly, with

prospective teachers, such experience is useful because they will have to replicate the design of assessment tasks in future teaching. The reason for students' involvement in assessment development given by the STs in the current study is different than that of nursing students in a vocational training programmes studied by (Gulikers, 2006). The nursing students desire to be involved in the assessment design because they believe that they have more up-to-date and exact practical experience than teachers, while this is not the case among the STs studied. This highlights again the difference in perceptions of dimensions of authentic assessment between students in vocational (Gulikers, 2006) and HE programmes. Additionally, regardless of the advantages of this involvement, the STs had concerns about their lack of assessment experience, and about criticising or objecting to their lecturers' opinions. These concerns were indicated as the main reasons for their reluctance to offer their contributions when asked in the intervention.

Moreover, STs could be involved in self-assessment. Their practical experience of self- and peer assessment in the intervention reinforced their perceptions of both pros and cons of these assessment strategies. In the STs' views, self- and peer assessment promoted their roles in classrooms, enhanced fairness in assessment and improved their assessing skills. Self- and peer assessment are also authentic assessment tasks for STs. This is different from Gulikers (2006), in which the theme 'assessors' (referring to who assess authentic assessment tasks) also emerged in the interviews with students, teachers and practitioners in a nursing programme. However, these people did not really emphasise this theme and the author writes that this is not an essential element of authentic assessment. This reflects that students in different study domains have different perceptions of authentic assessment. 'Assessor' in STs' perception is a very important element of authentic assessment because it offers opportunities for them to develop their core teaching skills. Meanwhile, nursing students (Gulikers, 2006) might not be impressed by this element since assessing others is not part of their job. However, there was a great deal of uncertainty in STs' judgments of self- and peer assessment due to their lack of assessment experience and affective factors such as close relationships between STs, confirmed by several prior studies with students in other contexts (Dochy, Segers & Sluijsmans, 2006). Therefore,

despite appreciating the opportunities to be assessors in the authentic assessment tasks, the STs still believed lecturers had more assessment experience and made more accurate judgments. Over three tasks, it appeared the STs held the view that they should offer feedback to their peers or self-reflect on their assessment process without having to award marks.

These findings highlight the element of 'Students' involvement in authentic assessment tasks' in the framework of STs' perceptions of authentic assessment. This dimension should be defined as STs' perceptions of their participation in all stages of the assessment process. In teacher education, as analysed earlier, STs' involvement in authentic assessment tasks is a realistic experience for students. Therefore, it is an essential dimension in the framework of authentic assessment in teacher education and how STs perceive it has to be a facet in the framework of their perceptions of authentic assessment.

#### ***8.3.1.4 Criteria of authentic assessment tasks***

In line with the STs' perceptions of their involvement in authentic assessment, they also showed concern about assessment criteria, which resulted in another dimension of the framework. In Gulikers, Bastiaens and Kirschner (2004), teachers and students also rate 'Criteria' as an important dimension in the framework of authentic assessment. Three of the authentic assessment tasks in the study had pre-determined rubrics that the students had known beforehand. It appears that STs preferred such transparent rubrics and agreed with most of the required criteria and levels of performance because they recognised these criteria derived from realistic teaching requirements and standards in school (MOET, 2009). Therefore, the rubrics helped them to develop their understanding of teaching standards and know how their teaching in the future will be assessed. The STs believed that specific and detailed rubrics directed their tasks, improved the fairness of assessment and shaped their professional development plans. This is similar to work by Bloxham and West (2007) in which marking criteria are valued as guidelines for good assessed work. However, the detailed rubrics caused STs' anxiety in terms of their final marks because they thought it was very difficult to meet all the criteria. This is also mentioned in Bloxham and West



(2007) where some students state that the specific and clear criteria turn the assessment tasks into 'a mechanistic exercise' (p. 83) because they aim to earn high marks rather than engage in deep learning. Norton (2004) agrees, recognising that such detailed criteria possibly encourage a mark-oriented approach in students. In short, the STs in this study expressed their consideration of both advantages and disadvantages of the criteria in the intervention, which may indicate their holistic perceptions of criteria in authentic assessment. Consequently, 'STs' perceptions of criteria' is integral to the framework of their perceptions of authentic assessment.

#### **8.3.1.5 Outcomes of authentic assessment tasks**

Another dimension drawing STs' concern in the study is the outcome of authentic assessment, referring to learning outcomes, marks and feedback given during and at the end of the assessment process. This dimension also embraces how STs demonstrate their learning outcomes, which are related to assessment methods.

Notably, in the interviews, instead of focusing on marks, STs spoke much about the learning outcomes. Connecting to the authenticity of the tasks in the intervention, the STs confirmed that their pedagogical knowledge and skills improved considerably over the tasks. They perceived that these outcomes might be obtained due to the assessment strategies used in the tasks, including cases methods, role-play, student-led activities, and planning assignments. Some STs appreciated opportunities to experience the new assessment and believed that they had learnt new ways to assess their prospective students in school. Additionally, in each task, a list of learning indicators was required and this encouraged the STs to show their competencies. These advantages of authentic assessment are recognised broadly in several studies (Ashford-Rowe, Herrington & Brown, 2014; Gulikers, 2006; Sambell, McDowell & Brown, 1997)

In terms of marks and feedback, the STs mentioned these in connection to fairness of assessment. In accordance with the STs' perceptions of the criteria presented earlier, they appreciated the marks and feedback from lecturers based on specific and detailed rubrics. Moreover, such rubrics were also helpful in the peer assessment in class. However, the STs did not show complete confidence in the

fairness and accuracy of the marks from self- and peer assessment, which resonate with findings in other studies (Dochy, Segers & Sluijsmans, 2006). Furthermore, STs expressed liking for feedback, especially oral and public feedback in class, finding it useful for their current and prospective performance. It was helpful not only for the recipients but also for other STs in the class because all could refer to feedback to reflect on their own work. Feedbacks was also considered as an effective tool for the STs to explore their strengths and weaknesses and plan to develop their professional competencies. This reinforces the importance of feedback authentic assessment which is mentioned by (Ashford-Rowe, Herrington & Brown, 2014).

#### ***8.3.1.6 Impact of authentic assessment on STs' learning and professional identity formation***

'Impact of authentic assessment on students' learning and professional identity formation' is an emerging dimension from the empirical data of the study. Although findings from some prior studies (Struyven, Dochy & Janssens, 2005) reveal the impact of authentic assessment on students' learning strategies, its impact on their learning motivation and professional identity has not been investigated.

The data showed that the STs emphasised the impact of assessment on their learning, but did not recognise the impact of assessment on lecturers' teaching. After each authentic assessment task, interviewees commented positively on the effectiveness of the task in turning their learning strategies into a deep approach. They compared learning strategies used in the authentic assessment tasks to those used in assessment with traditional methods and recognised that they had changed. Only few STs, who defined themselves as responsible and deep-approach learners, reported keeping their learning strategies regardless of changes in assessment. This accords with the findings in some previous studies (Gijbels, Segers & Struyf, 2008) that indicate the role of assessment in changing students' learning strategies and the tendency to retain their learning routine in deep learners (Struyven, Dochy & Janssens, 2005).

Furthermore, the STs in the study also reported high motivation for their learning, mostly derived from their perception of the value of the tasks for their profession and the excitement at participating in new assessment methods. A similar

finding appears in Gulikers (2006). However, like Gulikers (2006), this study could not confirm whether authentic assessment changed STs' learning strategies or motivated their learning because the evidence collected is self-reported. However, STs hinted at the possibility of employing authentic assessment to improve STs' deep learning and learning motivation.

More importantly, STs appreciated authentic assessment in terms of enhancing their understanding of teaching. Notably, in their comments on the authentic assessment tasks, it appeared that their prior teaching beliefs had changed gradually over the three interventions. For instance, they realised that teaching is challenging and demanding and requires a wide range of competencies. These findings indicate the formation of the STs' professional identity over the authentic assessment tasks, which is a valuable result (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004; Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000) and should receive more attention in research. In other words, the framework to explore STs' perceptions of authentic assessment should include the impact of this assessment approach on their learning and professional identity formation.

#### **8.3.1.7 Preparation time and performance for authentic assessment tasks**

The least discussed dimension in the initial framework is 'Physical Context'. This finding differs from that of Gulikers (2006), in which students from different disciplines emphasise 'Physical context' as an important aspect of authentic assessment. The nursing or social work students in Gulikers's studies expect authentic assessment tasks be conducted in a real workplace. In this study, STs appeared not to attach much importance to class size, facilities and information resources. This might stem from the fact that the authentic assessment tasks for teaching are often conducted in universities, which are not very different in terms of the physical environment from a school. In other words, in STs' opinion, the facilities of authentic assessment tasks in teaching are not essential. The only thing that drew STs' attention here was the preparation time. They perceived that the time given to complete and perform the tasks was based on the time available to real teachers for similar tasks in school. Therefore, most STs accepted the time constraint in the tasks in the intervention as

part of its authenticity. Nonetheless, a few STs felt that they would have liked more time for the task preparation than real teachers because they were not fully qualified. This view reflects the notion that STs do not see themselves as teachers yet, but as apprentices.

STs' above viewpoints indicate their concern about the time for preparation and performance rather than the facilities, and hence this dimension should be revised as 'STs' perceptions of the time for task preparation and performance' in the framework. This may be a distinctive element in the framework of STs' perceptions of authentic assessment in comparison to the framework developed with students in other disciplines.

### ***8.3.2 Description of the seven-dimensional framework***

In line with the above discussion, the following table summarises the seven-dimensional framework of STs' perceptions of authentic assessment. It is noticeable that, to date, there has been no theoretical framework offered for STs' perceptions of authentic assessment in pedagogy-related modules in a non-Western setting. Some researchers investigated views of authentic assessment from students in other disciplines such as nursing or social work (Ashford-Rowe, Herrington & Brown, 2014; Gulikers, 2006). A little research explores STs' perceptions of assessment in pedagogy-related modules but in Western setting (Herrington & Herrington, 1998). Therefore, the framework of STs' perceptions of authentic assessment developed in this study will be helpful to explore how prospective teachers in non-Western countries view authentic assessment in pedagogy-related modules. The results show that the framework in this study shares some common elements with other frameworks in other studies (Ashford-Rowe, Herrington & Brown, 2014; Gulikers, 2006; Herrington & Herrington, 1998) except 'Impact of authentic assessment on students' learning and professional identity formation'. In particular, four of seven dimensions in the framework of STs' perceptions of authentic assessment stem from the framework of authentic assessment created by Gulikers, Bastiaens and Kirschner (2004). Time of preparation and performance for authentic assessment tasks is actually a sub-element in the dimension 'Physical Context' of Gulikers, Bastiaens and Kirschner 's (2004)

framework and is also mentioned in Wiggins (1990). Moreover, the dimension ‘Students’ involvement in assessment’ is found in a study by Gulikers (2006) and in other studies such as Frey, Schmitt & Allen (2012). However, previous studies have not clarified comprehensively all aspects of students’ involvement in authentic assessment or investigated how students perceive those aspects of their involvement. In general, the connection between the framework found in this study and the frameworks of authentic assessment developed by others implies the transferability of this framework to other contexts (other education systems, other disciplines) to examine students’ perceptions of authentic assessment, especially in university-based professional modules. The new added dimension or expansion of prior dimensions suggested by other researchers indicates the distinctive aspects of the framework for STs and this is also the theoretical contribution of this study to the field.

**Table 8.1 The Seven Dimensions Framework of STs’ perceptions of authentic assessment in pedagogy-related modules**

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Examples of STs’ perceptions</b>
Content of authentic assessment tasks	The extent to which STs see the resemblance between the assessment tasks and tasks in professional practice; the diversity of solutions for the tasks; the integration of knowledge, skills, attitudes; and the complexity of tasks.	‘They were realistic situations that all high school teachers can meet at any time’
Time for the preparation and performance of authentic assessment tasks	The extent to which STs see the resemblance between the time for the preparation and performance of the tasks and those of the real task in profession practice	‘I would deliver the task for each group, let them prepare in 15 minutes and perform in front of the class because in practice, we have to react immediately.’

**Table 8.1 (continued). The Seven Dimensions Framework of STs' perceptions of authentic assessment in pedagogy-related modules**

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Examples of STs' perceptions</b>
Social interaction between students and other people during the assessment process	The extent to which STs see the resemblance of social interaction in the assessment task and in a similar task in a professional context	'I sought some [older] students' experience. They gave me advice about designing a classroom management plan and activities in schools.'
Students' involvement in authentic assessment process	The extent to which STs perceive their contribution to designing assessment tasks; and assessing work via self- and peer assessment	'[Self-assessment] increased STs' competence and confidence in making decisions, listening to others and developing themselves.'
Criteria of authentic assessment tasks	The extent to which STs see the resemblance of criteria used in the tasks and in practice; the importance of criteria to their professional development; and the transparency of the criteria.	'I marked my assignment with an average mark but I was pleased because I did it by my own understanding. [...] I did it by myself, so I still preferred it to the assignment in Task 1.'
Outcomes of authentic assessment tasks	The extent to which STs see the accuracy of the assessment results in terms of reflecting their competencies; the diversity of learning indicators demonstrated in their work; multiple performance-based assessment methods which require students to perform or create something; the role of marks and feedback.	'The feedback was very useful. Without the lecturer and the panel's feedback, we could not know what we did wrong to revise our performance later.'

**Table 8.1 (continued). The Seven Dimensions Framework of STs' perceptions of authentic assessment in pedagogy-related modules**

Dimensions	Description	Examples of STs' perceptions
Impact of authentic assessment on students' learning and professional identity formation	The extent to which STs see the impact of assessment on their learning strategies, motivation and professional identity formation through the assessment process and receiving the assessment results.	'In these tasks, firstly, I referred to theories and lessons in the textbooks and sample plans, then we designed our own plan, created something new, practiced and performed.'

#### **8.4 Factors that influence student teachers' perceptions of authentic assessment**

##### **8.4.1 Student teachers' assessment experience**

From the data in both studies we can see that some of STs have experienced both traditional (short-answer closed book examination, essay, and multiple choice tests) and alternative assessment methods (case methods, role play, presentations, microteaching, laboratory work, group projects), while others experienced mostly traditional assessment. It appeared that authentic assessment methods and student-led activities had not been used frequently in their pre-university and university courses. There were some differences in perceptions of assessment between STs who had experienced authentic assessment (hereafter 'experienced STs') and STs who had not (hereafter 'inexperienced STs'). The experienced STs tended to comment in more detail on the characteristics of the assessment tasks than the inexperienced. For example, experienced STs could clarify the impact of authentic assessment tasks on their professional development, while the inexperienced STs were less likely to do so. Therefore, the experienced STs expressed a stronger preference for authentic

assessment than the inexperienced STs. Similar findings were found in other studies (Surgenor (2013). In Gulikers, Bastiaens and Kirschner (2004), freshman students expressed naïve perceptions of authentic assessment, while senior students had more nuanced views.

Furthermore, in the study, the data showed that the novelty of the assessment methods affected the STs' emotion, and the emotion influenced their perceptions of the assessment. Some of the STs were excited to experience new assessment methods, even if the new methods were challenging and demanding, as new methods could reveal their unexplored competencies and skills. Others might be anxious and nervous and think that those methods might lead to low marks.

Having experience of participating in assessment design, or in self- and peer assessment influenced considerably the STs' perceptions of assessment. Some STs who had been given opportunities to choose an appropriate assessment method in previous courses could identify all the pros and cons of this action. However, their positive attitudes towards this involvement depended on the success of this action in their classes. For example, in the study, several STs reported that when their lecturers allowed them to select a preferred assessment method, the students involved had different ideas and it took a lot of time to discuss, and eventually, the lecturers had to decide. Therefore, they were not positive about this involvement. Meanwhile, some STs claimed that optional assessment methods (with lecturers' direction) helped them to gain better results, so they advocated students' involvement in selecting assessment methods. As for self- and peer assessment, positive previous experience helped STs develop their positive perceptions of these strategies with fairness and accuracy of self- and peer assessment the most discussed factors of these strategies. These findings support existing evidence to explain students' perceptions of assessment in teacher education and HE, which has been explored by several studies (Struyven, Dochy & Janssens, 2005).

The above results indicate that rehearsal or familiarity with particular assessment strategies influences students' perceptions of assessment. Moreover, reduction of



students' negative experience by enhancing lecturers' direction and guidance in assessment is also helpful to foster students' positive perceptions.

#### **8.4.2 STs' teaching career goals**

In the interviews, STs repeatedly used the phrase, 'When I become a teacher...' as they commented on different aspects of assessment of pedagogy-related modules. It revealed that all STs expected to become teachers, and that this goal heavily influenced their expectations of assessment. They thought that both instruction and assessment should promote their professional experience. Consequently, they focused nearly exclusively on the authenticity of assessment tasks. Moreover, they linked their prior conceptions of what characterise an effective teacher to the assessment task to judge its authenticity, and analysed comprehensively the relevance and effectiveness of the tasks to teaching practice. For example, they thought that, as would-be teachers, they had to know how to design classroom management plans and thus were strongly in favour of planning assignments. Additionally, to fulfil a teacher's responsibilities in school, they would need advanced problem-solving skills to cope with, for example, disruptive students. Therefore, case methods and role-play were perceived as useful, realistic and effective assessment methods. Such responses indicated the relationship between STs' teaching career goals and their perceptions of assessment.

To date, there is hardly any research on the relationship between students' career goals and their perceptions of authentic assessment. In one of Gulikers's studies (2006) of nursing students, she also recognises a few indicators of the link between students' career goals and their perceptions of authentic assessment, but this link is not defined clearly or discussed thoroughly. Both teaching and nursing are 'well-defined profession in non-profit sectors' (Gulikers, 2006) and students often have a clear vision of their career path during or before training. This vision might shape their expectations of the practicality of the training programmes and how the programmes develop their required competencies for the profession, thus affecting their perceptions of authentic assessment. However, while the Dutch nursing students in the vocational programmes seem to be overwhelmed with practice in workplace and

do not expect too many elements in an authentic assessment task to maximise its authenticity (Gulikers, 2006), Vietnamese STs in a higher education programme desired the most authentic tasks. Here there is another implicit factor causing the differences in perceptions of authentic assessment between the Dutch students and Vietnamese students, which is the difference in nature between a workplace-based vocational training programme and university-based higher education one. In comparison between the two groups of students, it appears that the relationship between career goals and perceptions of authentic assessment is demonstrated more clearly by STs in a higher education programme. The findings in this study might trigger more studies on the impact of STs' teaching career goals on their perceptions of assessment and authentic assessment.

#### ***8.4.3 Student teachers' practical and indirect experience***

In the study, although the participants were second-year STs without practical experience, based on the STs' interviews and the researcher' own experience, Vietnamese STs have practical teaching experience thank to the popularity of private tutoring as a part-time job. Indeed, the tutoring jobs offer students experience of interacting with school students and becoming familiar with some of the activities in school. This experience helped them confirm the authenticity of the assessment tasks and recognise how the tasks might support their future work. From the literature review, authenticity is subjective and the beholders' perceptions of authentic assessment are influenced by their practical experience (Gulikers et al., 2008b). This relationship was evident in the current study.

Moreover, a new factor which influenced STs' perceptions of authentic assessment was their indirect teaching experience gained from former teachers, other teachers, senior STs, and school students. As STs stated, the authentic assessment tasks which related to realistic teachers' task in school required them to seek indirect teaching experience in different ways, such as by consulting senior STs or experienced teachers or visiting schools. This access to communities of teaching practice (although STs were not yet members of these communities) helped STs to understand teachers' responsibilities and school activities, and learn some strategies that teachers

employed. Such understanding also helped STs judge how relevant the authentic assessment task was to teaching work. Therefore, the indirect experience appeared to influence considerably their perceptions of the authentic assessment tasks. This finding raises the idea of using authentic assessment in university-based modules as a tool to introduce STs to communities of teaching practice, which has been proved to be effective for professionals (Wenger, 1998). This should be considered in further research because it potentially increases students' practical experience.

#### **8.4.4 Student teachers' schooling experience**

The impact of STs' prior schooling experience on their teaching knowledge and beliefs has been identified by several studies, including that of Pajares (1992). If STs see similarities between teacher training programmes and teachers' work in school as they observed when studying there, they might appreciate the usefulness and authenticity of the programmes. Interviewees recalled their former teachers in school and emphasised strategies their teachers adopted to solve problematic situations in class and organise activities. In particular, successful cases solved by other teachers seemed very useful for the STs. Moreover, the ways in which their former teachers collaborated with students to conduct extracurricular activities were mentioned frequently as helpful experience for the STs in Task 3. In contrast, a few STs who had not had such experience with extracurricular activities expressed their concern about whether a teacher in school could complete it, which implied their uncertainty in considering the authenticity of the task. To conclude, the comparison between their schooling experience and assessment tasks directed the STs' perceptions of assessment. STs' schooling experience to some extent determined their perceptions of assessment and authentic assessment.

#### **8.4.5 Cultural values**

Cultural value factors were claimed to be important in other research on Vietnamese students' perceptions of assessment (Ho, 2015; Luong, 2016), but were not recognised clearly in this study. STs did not contribute many ideas to their lecturers when asked. They also expressed their concern about giving low marks to their peers. However, Western students also do not actively participate in assessment design if given

opportunities to do so (Struyven, Dochy & Janssens, 2005). Even valuing self- and peer assessment, they still have concerns about the reliability of these assessment strategies (Sambell, McDowell & Brown, 1997) and recognise tensions created in class by peer assessment and suggest removing it from the assessment process (Ohaja, Dunlea & Muldoon, 2013). More importantly, the Vietnamese studies (Ho, 2015; Luong, 2016) assume the impact of Vietnamese and Confucian culture on students' perceptions of assessment, based on their analysis of the culture rather than empirical comparison of studies. Therefore, such perceptions of Vietnamese STs in the current study should not be explained as the results of Vietnamese and Confucian culture alone.

Notably, in the current study, STs emphasised the group leaders' role in peer assessment. Some interviewees believed that group leaders could assess members' contributions most accurately. Therefore, in intragroup peer assessment, group leaders should be given authority to assess other members. It is hypothesised that STs' perceptions of power distance, which has been characterised as long between leaders-members in Confucian countries (Truong, Hallinger & Sanga, 2017) influenced STs' perceptions of the role of group leaders in peer-assessment. Such perceptions were hardly found in other studies in both Western and Eastern settings. Therefore, the influence of Confucian culture on this perception of STs cannot be conclusively determined and requires further research.

## **8.5 Framework of an authentic assessment task revisited**

It is noted that, based on some frameworks of authentic assessment constructed by others, the current study produced a framework of authentic assessment used as a base for the intervention in the study (see Chapter 6). The framework for the intervention included seven dimensions. For STs, the importance of each dimension varied. Hence, based on the data, the framework of authentic assessment was revisited and the revised framework can be used as a guide to design authentic assessment tasks in pedagogy-related modules, in teacher education or other professional modules in other disciplines.

The content is still the most important element of authentic assessment in STs' views, which agrees with previous research (Frey, Schmitt & Allen, 2012). This element is also the crucial distinction between authentic assessment and other assessment approaches because it emphasises the reality of the task (Frey, Schmitt & Allen, 2012). It is notable that STs' prior schooling, practical and indirect experience impact their perceptions of the authenticity of the assessment, which consequently influenced their learning. Therefore, the content of authentic assessment has to be chosen with consideration for the students' experience (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2004). Moreover, in the study, STs also showed a desire for realistic situations, which is also confirmed by other studies (Levin, 1995; Merseth, 1996). Additionally, STs also preferred to have ownership of the content of the task. Students' ownership is focused on the content of authentic assessment because it helps them to interpret tasks as more realistic (Gulikers, 2006). The complexity of the tasks was also mentioned by the STs because they thought that, in practice, the requirements might be more complex and the lecturers should challenge them during their training. Therefore, the complexity of the tasks should be also taken into account by the framework (Gulikers, 2006).

Moreover, studies show that authentic assessment can be conducted in a simulated context, even via an online platform, and there is no evidence that a realistic physical task is more effective. Thus, an authentic location and facilities are not required (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2004; Herrington & Herrington, 1998). Additionally, as mentioned earlier, STs highlighted time available for preparation and performance. Hence, the dimension 'physical context' should be changed to 'time and preparation and performance' to be more specific.

In terms of the dimension 'social context', Gulikers (2006) focuses on social interaction between students or individual accountability in the assessment tasks within university-based classroom. However, as suggested by the data in the current study, the social context in authentic assessment should be extended beyond classrooms to environments such as students' future workplaces, and thus social interaction might take place between the students and people outside the classrooms. This meant that even in an individual assessment task, it is still possible to encourage

social communication and relationship establishment between individual students and other people in the community. Authentic assessment can be individual or group-based depending on the real task being replicated.

Furthermore, the dimension 'Students' involvement in authentic assessment tasks' should be included in the frameworks of authentic assessment as discussed earlier. As Tummons (2010) finds, students who are undertaking a module are unable to fully understand university documents related to their assignment requirements and tutors have to spend lots of time supporting the STs to clarify the requirements of assignments. In the current study, STs also had some issues with the criteria. Therefore, involving STs in assessment in discussion with lecturers is highly recommended, especially if STs do not have much practical experience of authentic assessment tasks. Moreover, in authentic assessment, students have the potential to contribute to the design of the assessment content and criteria.

STs can also assess their own work and that of their peers. Self-assessment is a crucial sub-element in this dimension, which is consistent with the suggestions of Darling-Hammond, Ancess and Falk (1995) because the main goal of authentic assessment is to develop students' capacity to assess their own work against public standards to modify and improve where necessary. Coupled with self-assessment, peer assessment is also supportive of the development of students' professional competencies. Nonetheless, previous research has not highlighted the role of peer assessment in authentic assessment despite the fact that it is supposed to improve students' assessment skills (Dochy, Segers & Sluijsmans, 2006). Hence, in the framework of authentic assessment in teacher education, peer assessment should be an important sub-element. Moreover, transformation from a 'teacher-centred' to a 'student-centred' approach should be encouraged in any education system (Spencer & Jordan, 1999), especially in Vietnam (Nguyen & Hall, 2016), which indicates the need of engaging students in teaching, learning and assessment. In the case of the teaching profession, if STs experience a 'student-centred' approach, they may adopt it later in their teaching. Additionally, assessing skills are also crucial for all teachers and they need to develop those skills before commencing their work in school (Heritage, 2007).

Consequently, STs' involvement in assessment is a great opportunity for them (Sluijismans, 2002)

The dimensions of criteria and outcomes of authentic assessment tasks follow the findings mentioned earlier, in which where feedback should be emphasised. STs in this study also drew attention to feedback to improve their work in the next phase of learning. This reinforces the focus on feedback in authentic assessment, which is found in several studies (Ashford-Rowe, Herrington & Brown, 2014).

### **8.6 Impact of authentic assessment on student teachers' professional identity formation**

Investigation of the impact of authentic assessment on STs' professional identity formation was not one of the original aims of this study. However, from interview data in both sub-studies, especially in the study, STs commented on how authentic assessment tasks influenced the development of their understanding of and beliefs about the teaching profession. Since interviews are found to be the most common research method to examine students' professional identity development (Sutherland & Markauskaite, 2012), the data allowed exploration of the impact of authentic assessment on STs' professional identity development.

Sutherland and Markauskaite (2012) define a person's professional identity as their sense of themselves within their professional world. Teacher identity is key to the teaching profession because 'it provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of 'how to be', 'how to act' and how to understand' their work and their place in society' (Sachs, 2005, p.15). Teacher identity is a dynamic rather than stable trait, which is formulated gradually and changes over time under the impact of factors such as students' experience and their engagement within a community of practice (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Sutherland & Markauskaite, 2012). A large number of empirical studies have reported the impact of both pre-service and in-service teacher education on prospective teachers' professional identity development (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004) which helps them to sustain and achieve better results in their profession (Sutherland & Markauskaite, 2012; Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010). So far, however, there has been little discussion of the influence of authentic assessment in

teacher training programmes on prospective teachers' identity development (Sutherland & Markauskaite, 2012). Timoštšuk and Ugaste (2010) found that a good link between teacher training programmes and teaching practice can facilitate prospective teachers' processes of learning to teach. Moreover, an authentic environment in teacher education can provide better professional understanding and engage prospective teachers with their future professional community (Sutherland & Markauskaite, 2012). Authentic learning and assessment have this impact on teachers' identity development because identity is usually developed in a specific context (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Sutherland & Markauskaite, 2012). In authentic activities, students are always placed in specific contexts with specific and realistic tasks that often ask them to collaborate with others. Hence, authentic tasks give them opportunities to experience realistic professional work, and the students can develop a sense of who they are and how they will interact with others in their professional community (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Furthermore, there is a claim that an individual's professional identity is formed via his/her reflection on his/her personal attributes and professional competence development (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009) and his/her internalisation of professional requirements, standards, values, and norms (Sutherland & Markauskaite, 2012). Indeed, self-evaluation and reflection are core parts of authentic assessment (Sutherland & Markauskaite, 2012). Therefore, it appears that authentic assessment is appropriate for both assessing prospective teachers' competencies and forming their professional identity.

In this study, based on the experience of authentic assessment tasks, the STs reported that their professional identity was shaped gradually. In particular, STs stated that authentic assessment tasks helped them to expand their understanding of teachers' responsibilities and professional standards, which they aimed to improve as much as they could during the training programme. They claimed that after completing the tasks, they recognised that teaching work included not only teaching subject lessons but also organising extracurricular activities and communicating with parents. Therefore, they found that the teaching profession required a broad range of knowledge including daily life, psychological, pedagogical and other specialised knowledge. In addition, teachers also need a variety of skills such as communication,



public speaking, organisational, planning, classroom management, and emotional management skills. These perceptions shaped the STs' belief that teaching was a demanding profession; consequently, they had to work hard to become competent, qualified teachers. This on-going process also formed their image of how a teacher should be, which is a core aspect of their professional identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). They also realised the value of the teaching work and the importance of teachers for students' personal and intellectual development. They analysed the cases given in the authentic assessment tasks (see Chapter 7) and gave other examples of work from their prior schooling and practical experience. They concluded that teachers have a great impact on students' development, for example, in changing their students' challenging behaviour. Teachers could be good role models for their students. In general, STs in this study tended to motivate themselves to be experts in their subject (for example, maths or physics) and didactic experts competent in utilising teaching methods, which corroborates some findings in the Netherlands (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000) in which teachers also saw themselves as those types of experts. However, while the Vietnamese prospective teachers also assumed that they had to be pedagogical experts who rely on their competencies to develop their students' social, emotional and moral traits, the Dutch teachers are less likely to perceive themselves as pedagogical experts (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000). It can be hypothesised here that cultural beliefs influence teachers' professional identity. In the Vietnamese culture, teachers are seen as good examples who impact all aspects of their students' personality development (Nguyen & Hall, 2016); hence, STs might have a tendency to define themselves as pedagogical experts-to-be.

Furthermore, when expressing concern about teaching standards, the STs in this study also showed confidence that practising teaching through authentic tasks helped them develop their teaching competencies. They felt more able to meet the requirements and standards expected of teachers. Such confidence and capacity are essential in teachers' professional identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Moreover, when STs' commented on the given cases or specific tasks, they revealed their philosophy of education. For instance, they stated that the teacher has to respect each students' personality traits to find an effective way to educate that student. They also

recognised that teachers needed to establish a mutually honest, respectful and reliable rapport with students. Such notions reflected their perceptions of norms related to their interaction and relationship with students, which are core to teachers' identity (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000). Therefore it can be said that authentic assessment impacted significantly on STs' professional identity formation.

The primary findings of the impact of authentic assessment on STs' professional identity formation found in this study supplement empirical evidence of the value of authentic assessment (Sutherland, Howard & Markauskaite, 2010; Sutherland & Markauskaite, 2012). They also raise the need for further study of the relationship between authentic assessment and prospective teachers' identity development, which might support the design of teacher education programmes to develop prospective teachers' development. This is an important area in education research because the focus on developing prospective teachers' professional identity contributes to their commitment to their profession (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

## **8.7 Conclusion**

The chapter discussed the results of the study, noting theoretical contributions and practice-related contributions (see more details in Chapter 9). The main theoretical contributions include: (1) the Seven Dimensions Framework covers STs' perceptions of authentic assessment in pedagogy-related modules; (2) reflection on core elements of an authentic assessment task. Moreover, factors influencing STs' perceptions of authentic assessment were also explained. It can be seen that STs' prior assessment experience, prior schooling experience, practical and indirect teaching experience, and career goals are crucial factors. In the next chapter, a summary of the whole study will be outlined.

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **9.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapters, I have presented the theoretical background, practical setting, methodology and findings of the study. Here I will summarise and draw conclusions of the research findings in connection to the existing theory and literature. Based on the findings, I will suggest implications for education practice. Moreover the limitations of the study will also be identified and venues for future research will be recommended. The chapter ends with my own reflection about the study.

#### **9.2 Summary**

The study stemmed from my ambition to improve assessment in order to promote my STs' learning and professional development at the university of education in Vietnam where I worked as a lecturer. Changing assessment is an effective strategy to promote actual changes in teaching and learning, as has been confirmed by both research and practice (Torrance, 1994). Moreover, the study was also inspired by the undergoing education reform in all levels of education in Vietnam (MOET, 2013) where teacher education has been acknowledged to contribute significantly to the success of the reformation and assessment has been highlighted as one of the influential aspects in the education system. Additionally, recent changes in assessment worldwide recognise the values of formative assessment (Black et al., 2003; Black & Wiliam, 1998) and calls for implementation of these assessment approaches in teacher education in Vietnam to support student learning. Based on this context, the study aimed to explore Vietnamese STs' perceptions on authentic assessment in pedagogy-related modules. Subsequently, it introduced authentic assessment to the STs as an alternative assessment approach in these modules and investigated their perceptions of it. The study was conducted in a single site, which was the University of Education (UoE) - one of the leading universities of education in the south of Vietnam.

The selection of authentic assessment in the study derived from recent changes in both global and national contexts. Global and national labour market demands have

focused on employees' professional and transferable skills rather than their possessed knowledge (Dochy, 2001). Therefore, assessment in HE has to be able to form accurate judgments on students' professional competencies (Dochy, 2001). In order to meet this requirement, the use of authentic assessment has been promoted across disciplines including teacher education (Dochy, 2001). Taken the values of authentic assessment into account, an intervention with three authentic assessment tasks was implemented in two classes of second-year STs during the second term of the academic year 2014-2015. After each task, seven STs in each class participated in interviews to express their opinions about the authentic assessment task that they had completed. Details of the intervention and data collection as well as analysis were presented in Chapter 4. The data from 42 interviews supported by classroom observations and curriculum documents revealed STs' perceptions of authentic assessment and why they had such perceptions in pedagogy-related modules.

To conclude, two sub-studies were able to answer the predetermined research questions and offer significant contributions to the study in both theoretical and practical aspects which will be presented in the next sections.

### **9.3 Theoretical contributions of the study**

Based on the results and the discussions presented in Chapters 5, 6,7, as well as the general discussion presented in Chapter 8, the current study provides theoretical frameworks to investigate insightfully understanding of STs' perceptions of authentic assessment in pedagogy-related modules.

#### ***9.3.1 The Seven Dimensions Framework of student teachers' perceptions of authentic assessment in pedagogy-related modules***

STs' perceptions of authentic assessment were constructed in The Seven Dimensions Framework presented in Chapter 8 based on the empirical evidence in the study. There was a consistency in STs' perceptions over three authentic assessment tasks from the intervention in the study. Even though the tasks were different, the STs highlighted seven dimensions of authentic assessment: content of the tasks, time for preparation and performance of the tasks, social interaction between STs and other people during

the assessment process, their involvement in assessment, criteria, outcomes of assessment, and impact of assessment on STs' learning and professional identity formation. Some of these dimensions corresponded to the existing frameworks found in other disciplines and cultural contexts (Darling-Hammon & Snyder, 2000; Frey, Schmitt & Allen, 2012; Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2004). This correspondence means that it is possible to employ this authentic assessment framework and frameworks of STs' perceptions of authentic assessment across disciplines and cultural contexts. However, a few aspects of the framework in this study were considered unique for STs.

Like other students in other contexts, Vietnamese STs emphasised the importance of task content that refers to content of cases, assignments, questions, and activities that STs had to complete. The 'Content' dimension also reflects certain knowledge and skills that STs needed to employ to succeed in the tasks. When viewing the content of authentic assessment tasks, the STs had to judge whether it reflected teachers' realistic tasks in school, required an integration of multi-disciplinary knowledge and numerous skills, or contained problematic and complex issues. Moreover, STs were also concerned with whether the tasks encouraged them to propose various solutions or options to fulfill the tasks.

Another important dimension of authentic assessment identified by STs was the social interaction between them and other people inside and outside of the classrooms. During the task completing process, ST perceived that they had developed their social skills and relationships, especially relationships with teachers and students in school and senior STs. This helped STs to initially enter a community of professional practice, which offers them valuable second-hand experience from other teachers.

While emphasising the social interaction in authentic assessment, STs seemed to overlook physical conditions. They did not highlight issues such as classroom sizes, teaching facilities, and resources to support the implementation of authentic assessment. However, they highlighted the time allowance for task preparation and performance because they realised that this dimension considerably influenced their ability to complete the tasks. Many STs thought the time allowance should be similar

to that in an actual school context. Yet a few suggested that the time allowance for prospective teachers should be longer than that for actual teachers, which reflects STs' perceptions of their teaching identity as an trainee teachers. The STs had not seen themselves as actual teachers.

The dimension related to the students' involvement in assessment process has not been clarified in other frameworks of authentic assessment (Frey, Schmitt and Allen, 2012). In this study, ST defined clearly their roles in assessment process including task design and product assessment. The STs thought that they could increase the authenticity of assessment tasks by contributing their opinions to design the content of assessment tasks and criteria. Despite their lack of confidence and experience in assessment, they still supported self- and peer assessment. They perceived these assessment strategies as good opportunities for them to practise assessment skills which are the core skills required for teachers. They also expected that lecturers would provide more guidance for them to conduct self- and peer assessment and produced effective strategies to assure fairness and accuracy in self- and peer assessment.

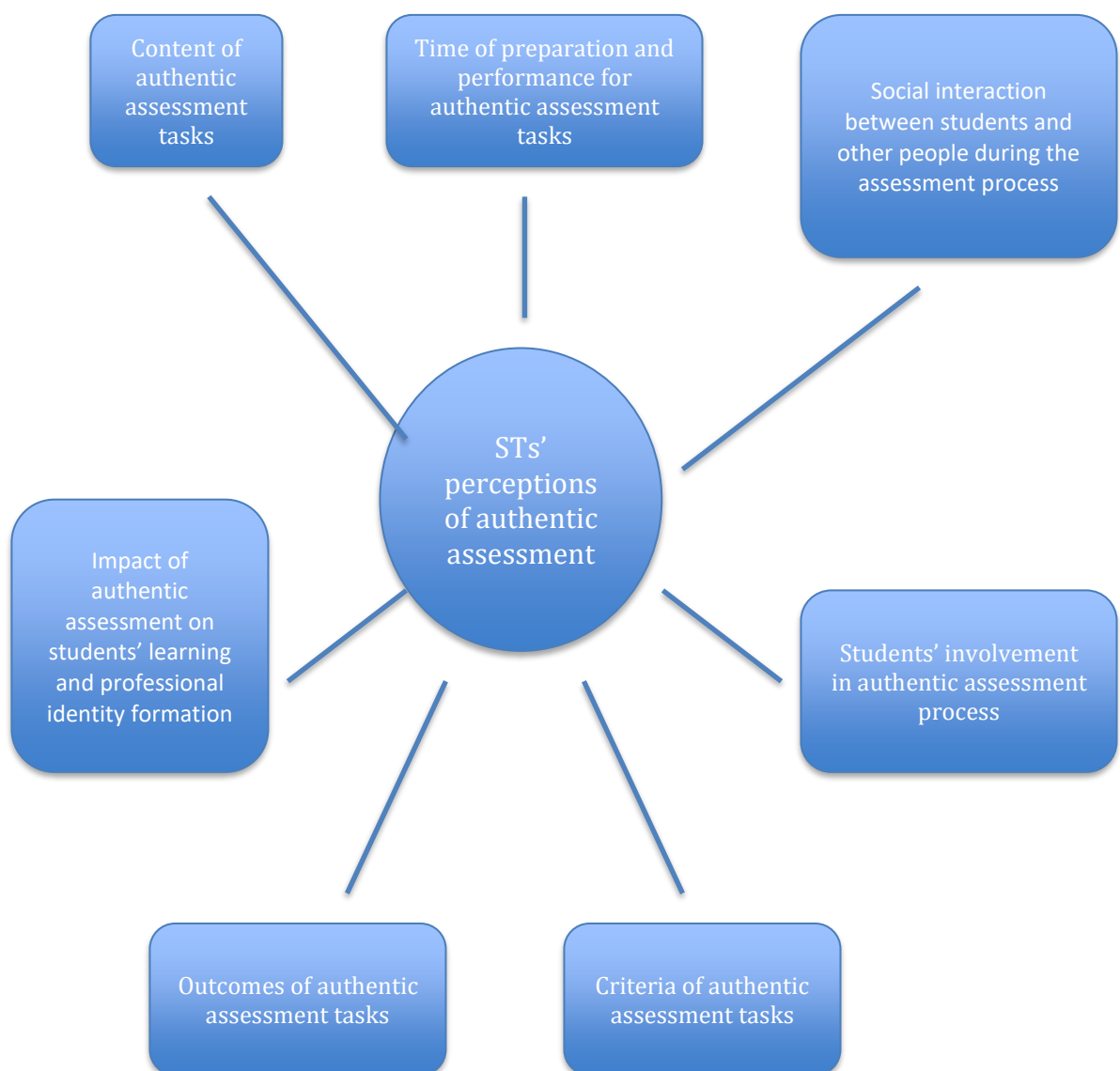
Two other dimensions which were closely connected with STs' perceptions were the criteria and outcomes of the authentic assessment tasks. Since STs preferred detailed and specific rubrics with appropriate standards and levels of performance, they assumed that such rubrics would lead to fair and accurate grades as well as constructive feedback from lecturers. In addition, such rubrics were considered helpful for STs to conduct self- and peer assessment. Nevertheless, STs were also concerned that detailed rubrics with many criteria might be too demanding for STs to follow and thus reduce their marks in assessment tasks. This concern, to a certain extent, reflected STs' perceptions of marking. Nonetheless the STs still appreciated the feedback and learning outcomes more than the grades in authentic assessment.

The last but not least important dimension was STs' perceptions of the impact of authentic assessment on their learning, motivation and professional identity formation. Most STs reported that authentic assessment tasks turned their learning strategies into a deep approach and motivated them to demonstrate and develop their

competencies. The challenges in authentic assessment were also perceived as essential and useful for STs' professional development. Therefore, 'Impact' became an inevitable dimension in the framework of STs' perceptions of authentic assessment.

This framework covers multiple dimensions that possibly define whether an assessment task is authentic. Therefore, it has potential not only for other researchers to explore students' perceptions of authentic assessment in other contexts but also for practitioners to design authentic assessment tasks in professional modules. This practical implication will be discussed further in section 9.7.

**Figure 9.1 Framework of STs' perceptions of authentic assessment in pedagogy-related module**



### **9.3.2 *The framework of authentic assessment revisited***

The study did not produce a new framework to design authentic assessment tasks. However, based on STs' perceptions of authentic assessment, the current frameworks of authentic assessment constructed by other studies (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2004; Darling-Hammon & Snyder, 2000) were revisited. Almost all elements of authentic assessment tasks found by other studies were recognised by STs such as the content, criteria, result, feedback of authentic assessment and students' involvement in assessment process. However, in STs' perceptions, the descriptions of some elements should be expanded or clarified more specifically. In particular, the 'physical context' dimension should be restated as 'time for preparation and performance'. The 'social context' dimension should be defined as all social interaction between STs and their inter- and intra- group peers, and between STs and their lecturers, senior STs or teachers in school. STs' involvement in authentic assessment should include their roles not only in self- and peer assessment but also in assessment design. The revisited framework seems to be applicable to design authentic assessment tasks in professional modules in HE institutions.

### **9.4 *Student teachers' perceptions of the impact of authentic assessment on their learning and professional development in pedagogy-related modules***

A part of this study focused on exploring students' perceptions of the impact of authentic assessment on students' learning. As mentioned earlier, STs were aware of the significant impact of authentic assessment on their learning strategies, motivation and professional development. The STs relied on both marks and feedback from their lecturers and peers to improve their learning. The STs, while appreciating the role of marks, still expected to get more feedback from their lecturers and peers. These findings are proven to be promising for the implementation of authentic assessment in teacher education in Vietnam. Even though self-assessment is an important part of authentic assessment, STs did not comprehensively perceive the role of this assessment strategy in their learning probably because self-assessment was not implemented frequently in the UoE.



In general, most STs reported that they had used assessment results including marks and feedback first to acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses and later to shape their learning plans. Additionally, many STs adopted different learning strategies to respond to different assessment methods and tasks. They said that closed book examinations with short answers and multiple-choice encouraged them to employ surface learning. Meanwhile, performance-based or authentic assessment methods such as case methods, practical examinations, role-play, oral presentations, lesson planning, and student-directed activities directed them to adopt deep learning. However, some STs stated that they insisted on pursuing a deep learning strategy because they thought that was effective. Such perceptions show that there is a possibility of using alternative assessment to promote deep learning.

STs also reported the impact of authentic assessment on their learning motivation, especially over authentic tasks in the intervention. The practicality of assessment tasks appeared to motivate STs because they thought that they may have to deal with such tasks in their future teaching. Additionally, they were motivated by the novelty of the assessment methods. These findings reflected clearly the STs' intrinsic motivations to learn in pedagogy-related modules. Furthermore, fairness was also an influence on STs' motivation since it is claimed that fair judgments from lecturers or peers can enhance STs' learning effort in the following assessment tasks. In contrast, unfair assessment can demotivate STs' learning.

Another issue is that some STs believed that authentic assessment had potential to reduce tensions in class and in assessment, which made them prefer authentic assessment over other assessment methods. Meanwhile, some STs found it relatively challenging for them to talk in front of many people in authentic assessment tasks. However, it seemed that this challenge did not restrict their appreciation of authentic assessment. In summary, these findings provide supporting evidences to show that authentic assessment can be implemented in teacher education in Vietnam.

## **9.5 Factors influencing STs' perceptions of assessment in pedagogy-related modules**

Data collected in the study indicate common factors which significantly impact STs' perceptions of authentic assessment. The key factors include STs' prior experience with assessment, their practical and indirect experience, their teaching career goals, and their schooling experience. While STs' prior assessment experience and practical experience have been identified in previous studies with students in other disciplines (Gulikers, 2006), other factors appeared to be distinct for STs. Notably, 'STs' teaching career goals' is a local factor exclusive for Vietnamese STs which has not been found in any previous research.

Among the factors mentioned above, STs' prior assessment experience seemed to be the most influential on their perceptions of authentic assessment. This is not unexpected because if STs have experience of a type, a method or a strategy of assessment, they might have better understanding of it. STs tended to prefer authentic assessment when they had opportunities to practice them beforehand. This highlights the need for aligning teaching and assessment in a module to ensure that STs are familiar with alternative assessment methods including authentic assessment. In the case of new assessment strategies such as self- and peer assessment, positive experience promoted STs' positive perceptions of them and vice versa. Such perceptions influenced the STs' preference for self- and peer assessment. Therefore, it is suggested that before STs are placed into the position of assessors, they could be offered a full training on assessment to understand the criteria of marking and giving feedback.

STs' practical and indirect experiences as well as their prior schooling experience also play an influential role in shaping these perceptions. Based on their practical experience during practicum or when working as private tutors, STs developed their understanding of teaching, school contexts, and teachers' standards. More importantly, STs who had not undertaken the practicum still gained such understanding through experience shared by their senior STs who have completed practicum or teachers in school. Additionally, STs' schooling experiences were also

claimed to contribute to their understanding of teachers' responsibilities, and strategies to manage classes, communicate with school students and organise activities in school. This understanding provides a lens for STs to judge whether the assessment in pedagogy-related modules was relevant to real teaching in school. In other words, STs who have more practical and indirect experience as well as remembered schooling experience possibly comprehensively perceive assessment and authentic assessment in pedagogy-related modules.

A new factor found in the current study was STs' teaching career goals which was assumed to impact on STs' perceptions of assessment. The STs were certain about pursuing a career path in teaching. Thus they expected more authenticity in assessment in pedagogy-related modules supposed to provide professional knowledge and develop professional skills for them. Furthermore, they also supported self- and peer assessment because these activities are also authentic for prospective teachers. In general, the impact of STs' career goals on their perceptions of authentic assessment hinted that in order to help STs perceive an assessment as authentic, teacher educators should support STs in navigating their teaching career goals.

Cultural factors seemed not to have any significant impact on STs' perceptions of assessment and authentic assessment as anticipated. The current study share some findings with other Vietnamese studies (Ho, 2015; Luong, 2016) in terms of marking, self-and peer assessment and students' involvement in assessment. Nonetheless, it is hard to conclude that such perceptions stemmed from Vietnamese or Confucian culture because such viewpoints can also be found in studies in other contexts (Ohaja, Dunlea & Muldoon, 2013; Sambell, McDowell & Brown, 1997; Struyven, Dochy & Janssens, 2005). These perceptions reveal similarities in students' perceptions of assessment across cultures and countries. STs' perceptions of the roles of group leaders in group-based assessment tasks were the new findings in this study, such perceptions may relate to the high power distance culture in Vietnam. However, this relationship should be further investigated before conclusions are drawn. To sum up, to change students' perceptions of assessment, education practitioners could focus on developing effective strategies to manage factors mentioned above.

## **9.6 Impact of authentic assessment in pedagogy-related modules on STs' professional identity formation**

The impact of authentic assessment on STs' professional identity formation was an unanticipated aspect in the findings of the study. The previous studies reviewed by Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) and Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004), concluded that teacher education plays a crucial role in the development of prospective teachers' identities. Nonetheless, the influence of authentic teaching and assessment in teacher education to STs' teaching identity formation was not identified. Based on the STs' comments about the authentic assessment tasks, educational theories and situations, it can be recognised that STs gradually expanded their understanding of teaching requirements, teachers' responsibilities and school context. This understanding changed several aspects in STs' prior teaching beliefs and perceptions. The STs' perceptions of teaching obtained through all authentic assessment formed their views of how a teacher should be and shaped their plans to develop their professional competencies to adapt to teachers' standards. Such impact of authentic assessment on STs' perceptions of teaching career supports a promotion of further research on this aspect and also adoption of authentic assessment in teacher education.

## **9.7 Bringing the research findings to education practice**

Although the study focused on theoretical contributions to assessment in teacher education, its findings still potentially contribute to assessment practice in various contexts.

### ***9.7.1 Taking STs' voices into assessment change***

This study provided empirical evidence supporting STs' potential for contributing to the changes in assessment practice in teacher education. The STs shared a great deal of insightful and valuable ideas for the current assessment and the new approach: authentic assessment. These ideas were found useful for examining both advantages and disadvantages of the assessment strategies and taking note when implementing them into practice.

Moreover, in this study, some insights from STs' viewpoints of authentic assessment were beyond the researcher's and lecturers' anticipation. These results also indicate the differences between teachers' and students' perceptions of assessment. This reinforces the need of teachers' explanation of assessment to ensure that the students fully understand it before it is commenced, especially when a new assessment strategy is implemented. Without a comprehensive understanding of the assessment, the students might not deliver the best performance.

Additionally, it is noted that the context factors (subject of study, education system, and schooling levels) and personal factors (prior experience, beliefs, career goals) proved to have significant influences on students' perceptions of assessment (Brown & Harris, 2012; Brown & Wang, 2013; Matos, Cirino & Brown, 2009). This in fact raised the issues of considering the students' perceptions of assessment in each context before any innovative assessment strategy is applied.

## ***9.7.2 Implementing authentic assessment***

### ***9.7.2.1 Designing authentic assessment tasks***

The revisited framework of authentic assessment can be relied to design authentic assessment tasks for not only pedagogy-related modules in teacher education but also in other professional modules of higher education. According to the framework, when lecturers design an authentic assessment tasks, they should consider elements such as: content of the task; time of preparation and performance for the task; social interaction among students, and between students and people outside the class, especially professionals in the workplace; assessment criteria; assessment outcomes, and students' involvement in assessment. These elements have to be embedded in the tasks to maximise the effectiveness of authentic assessment.

It is worth to note that authenticity of assessment is subjective according to beholders' perceptions that are influenced by a range of factors mentioned in 11.5, especially students' different types of experience. Therefore, when designing authentic assessment tasks for students in each context, lecturers should consider students' experience. Furthermore, during students' assessment completion process, lecturers

also have to provide effective guidance and support so that the students can perform well.

Due to STs' preference of the individual task in the study, it is highly recommended that in authentic assessment, individual assessment and group-based assessment should be balanced. Group-based assessment is valuable for students to develop a range of social skills and relationship. However, if lecturers cannot manage effectively group work assessment, it can demotivate students' learning. Moreover, when lecturers conduct group-based assessment, they should also provide training of working in groups for students.

#### ***9.7.2.2 Pressures of authentic assessment***

During the intervention, some STs stressed the heavy workload of authentic assessment tasks even though two tasks were organised in groups. As a result, in a classroom-based assessment, both traditional and authentic assessment should be employed so that students can avoid being placed under a considerable pressure of authentic assessment (Struyven, Dochy & Janssens, 2005).

Additionally, the findings in the study also showed that anxiety might result in some STs' poor performances as found in (Errington, 1997). With prospective teachers, presentation, public speaking and communication skills are necessary; consequently, it is important that STs overcome public performance anxiety. Authentic assessment is expected to improve those skills for students but firstly, they have to be given opportunities to rehearse and practice to adapt to the requirements of public performance. In other words, during teaching sessions, lecturers have to utilise strategies to enhance students' confidence in public performance.

#### ***9.7.2.3 Useful assessment strategies in teacher education***

In the intervention, four assessment strategies were implemented in three tasks including cases methods, role-play, planning assignment and student-led activities. All were appreciated by STs in terms of their potential to connect teacher-training programmes with teaching practice in school and to develop their teaching

competencies, change their learning and contribute to the formation of their professional identity. These findings revealed the possibility of adopting such assessment strategies in university-based modules in teacher education across education systems.

The use of case methods and role play in teacher education has been reported in previous research (Merseeth, 1996; Niemeyer, Johnson & Monroe, 2014). In these studies, STs showed their appreciation for both assessment strategies in developing their pedagogical knowledge and skills, critical thinking and language skills. Additionally, the STs also expressed their excitement when performing role-plays. Role-play improved their confidence to perform something in front of many people, which is crucial for all teachers. Such positive perceptions of case methods and role-play are in accordance with findings in other studies (Errington, 1997; Levin, 1995). Hence, utilising these methods is highly recommended in teacher education.

Lesson and classroom management planning are mandatory tasks for all teachers (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000). The planning assignment in the intervention was the task most liked by the STs although the lecturers and the researcher thought that the STs would have seen it as boring. Their preference came from their perceptions of the realistic values of the task for the teaching profession. Such positive responses from the STs support the implementation of planning assignments in teacher education, which has gained little attention from education researchers and practitioners so far (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000). When implementing such assignments, as observed in the intervention in this study, contextualisation of the plans is the most important aspect because there is evidence that each plan only suits a specific class or group of students (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000).

Student-led activities, like organising and conducting extracurricular activities for school students in Task 3 in the intervention, are seldom used as an assessment strategy in teacher education. Actually, extracurricular activity organising is a common task for teacher around the world (Darling, Caldwell & Smith, 2005; Paul & Baskey, 2012; Sitra & Sasidhar, 2005). Consequently, assessing STs' organisational skills in

extracurricular activities is an appropriate strategy in teacher education. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that adopting complicated student-led activities to assess and develop prospective teachers' teaching competencies should be considered in the light of the assessment workload. Therefore, time for STs to prepare such activities should be extended with teacher educators' significant support throughout the whole assessment process.

### **9.8 Limitations of the study and future research**

The study has significant contributions to assessment theories and practice. However, the study still contains some limitations which should be addressed in further research.

The study found how STs had perceived the impact of a authentic assessment on their learning strategies and motivation based on their self-reports in the interviews. However, the actual influence of STs' perceptions of assessment and authentic assessment on their learning has not been examined due to the limitations of the research methods used. Interviews have advantages in exploring people's perceptions but less effective in reflecting practice. The observations in the study were mainly in guidance sessions of the lecturers and performance sessions of the STs, thus, students' learning strategies could not be identified. To further explore the influence of assessment on STs' learning practice, observations of their learning activities inside and outside class should be carried out. Moreover, multiple research methods can be employed to discover how assessment motivates STs to learn and which types of motivation (intrinsic or extrinsic motivation) are more considerably influenced by assessment. Additionally, the impact of assessment on STs' teaching identity formation in pedagogy-related modules should be the focus of further research.

Moreover, as the study was conducted at only one research site and the qualitative data was collected on a relatively small number of STs, this constrained the generalisability of the study. Consequently, in further research, the study could be replicated in other universities of education with a larger number of samples in order to draw the bigger picture of STs' perceptions of assessment in pedagogy-related



modules in Vietnam. After that, a common guideline of assessment in these modules can be produced and applied across universities of education in Vietnam.

### **9.9 Personal reflection**

As an experienced lecturer with 8 years of service in a university of education in Vietnam before conducting this study, despite knowing little about alternative assessment, I was motivated to explore STs' perceptions of assessment. This reflected my belief that students' voices are valuable in a process of changing the assessment practice. The assessment changes aimed to improve STs' learning and enhance their professional competencies to meet requirements in school; this might help to increase STs' employability which has been problematic in Vietnam since 2000s.

Through a critical review comprising current global trends of assessment and a body of research on authentic assessment, I also realised the gaps in the field. Whereas assessment in TE has gained attention in Western countries, it is still overlooked in non-Western contexts, especially in Confucian-influenced countries. New assessment approaches such as formative assessment and authentic assessment have not been studied sufficiently and implemented broadly in teacher education practice in Confucian-influenced countries like Vietnam (Luong, 2016; Nguyen, 2008). Subsequently, STs' perceptions of these assessment approaches have not been investigated comprehensively here.

As for theoretical contributions, the study constructed frameworks to investigate STs' perceptions of authentic assessment in pedagogy-related modules in teacher education in a non-Western setting. The study also discovers factors that influence STs' perceptions of authentic assessment in such contexts. Even though the study was conducted in teacher education, it still possibly contributes to expand understanding regarding students' perceptions of authentic assessment in other disciplines. Furthermore, in the study, an intervention of authentic assessment was implemented to find out how Vietnamese STs responded to it. Consequently, the findings revisited the existing frameworks to design authentic assessment tasks in HE.

The theoretical findings in the study also provided guidance for me as well as my teacher educator colleagues to implement authentic assessment in teacher education in the future. I recognised the advantages of authentic assessment in narrowing the gap between university training and needs of the labour market. In the context that Vietnamese HE system still emphasises examinations for grading and qualifications, rather than producing a well-trained workforce to adapt to social and economic innovation, authentic assessment is helpful to change this situation. In teacher education, authentic assessment can support prospective teachers to improve their learning, gain practical knowledge, and develop professional skills effectively to prepare for teaching profession. The prospective teachers' preparation for teaching will directly impact on success of the education reform in all levels of education.

By conducting the study, I have developed my understanding of assessment, especially alternative assessment in higher education and teacher education. I also realise roles of contextual factors when borrowing educational approaches in a context (such as a Western setting) to apply in another one (such as Vietnam). Such understanding will support effectively my career as a teacher educator.

Contrary to my expectation, the data reported by STs showed that in the UoE some lecturers had adopted several alternative assessment approaches and methods. Two lecturers participating in this study revealed a willingness to learn new assessment approaches and change their traditional assessment methods. More importantly, the STs also expressed their appreciation and interest in being assessed by authentic assessment tasks. All these reactions bring me hope that I can introduce authentic assessment broadly to my colleagues and students in my university of education. Furthermore, I also expect that when STs have opportunities to gain experience with alternative assessment, they will adopt alternative forms of assessment in their future teaching.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

**Table 1. The list of teacher education majors and non-teacher education majors in the UoE**

List of 19 teacher education majors	List of 15 non-teacher education majors
1. Mathematics Education	1. Information Technology
2. Information Technology Education	2. Physics
3. Physics Education	3. Chemistry
4. Chemistry Education	4. Literature
5. Biology Education	5. Vietnamese Studies
6. Literature Education	6. International Studies
7. History Education	7. Psychology
8. Geography Education	8. Educational Psychology
9. English Education	9. English
10. French Education	10. English-Russian
11. Chinese Education	11. French
12. English- Russian Education (double-degree course in 5 years)	12. Chinese
13. Politics Education	13. Japanese
14. Primary Education	14. Korean
15. Early Childhood Education	15. Vietnamese for foreigners
16. Physical Education	
17. Special Needs Education	
18. Educational Administration	
19. Military Education	

## **APPENDIX B: SOME ETHICS-RELATED DOCUMENTS**

### **INFORMATION SHEET FOR COLLABORATION IN THE INTERVENTION**

#### **STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT: THE CASE OF PROFESSIONAL MODULES IN TEACHER EDUCATION IN VIETNAM**

**Researcher:** NGUYEN THI THU HUYEN

**Supervisor:** DR. PAOLA IANONE, DR. REBECCA WESTRUP

I would like to invite you to take part in my research and I need your signed consent if you agree to participate. Before you decide, you need to know why I am doing this research and what it will involve. Please take time to read this information carefully to help you decide whether or not to take part. Please contact me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you for reading this.

#### **What is this study about?**

With this study, I am trying to find out students' perceptions of authentic assessment in professional modules in teacher education in Vietnam. Particularly, I am looking for the answers of the questions: what do students think about advantages and disadvantages of authentic assessment in a professional module they will have just experienced in the intervention, why they have such perceptions, what do the students think about the impact of the authentic assessment to their learning.

#### **How will you be involved?**

Generally, in the intervention, I will collaborate you to design formative assessment with authentic assessment approach for a class in General Education module in the term. The assessment tasks in the intervention will be designed based on the current curriculum of the module and be ensured to follow the module objectives. The percentage of the weigh of these assessments in the module assessment, the number of assessment tasks will not be changed in comparison with the original assessment plan of the faculty.

During the intervention, I will be in the class as your assistant. I will appear in most of the teaching sessions to help the students be familiar with me. You will provide the guideline of these assessments, I will provide information sheet of my research in the

beginning of the module. You will notice the students that all of the students have to participate in the assessments because they are treated as official formative assessment in this module but the students will not be forced to participate in my research. The students who will be willing to join my research will sign separated consent forms.

In each assessment task, I will observe what will be taking place in the class by video-recorders and myself. I will only take observation notes and film the performance of the students who will have signed the consent forms to participate in the observation, you will not be the object of the observation. After each assessment task, I will interview you to ask you some questions of your thought on the students' performance. Moreover, I will discuss with you to revise the next assessment task to get more appropriateness to the students' ability and expectation.

**Who will have the access to the research information (data)?**

Data management will follow the 1988 Data Protection Act. I make sure to keep all information of your collaboration with me and your personal information confidentially. In the interviews and the discussions, you will be asked some personal information such as your years of teaching experience, years of working in the university and years of teaching this module. Your name or other personal identity information will not be recorded in any paper. I will use pseudonyms in the meeting minutes, the interview notes and transcriptions.

The meeting minutes, the interview notes and transcriptions will not be viewed by anyone other than my supervisors, and myself. The data will be stored safely and will be destroyed when my project is completed. In data analysis and result presentation in the thesis, the specific name of the university and individual identities of all research participants included you will not be mentioned. The data will be used for my PhD thesis or my publications later but only for scientific or research purposes.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

The research study has been approved under the regulations of the University of East Anglia's School of Education and Lifelong Learning Research Ethics Committee.

**Who do I speak to if problems arise?**

If there is a problem please let me know. You can contact me via the University at the following address:

NGUYEN THI THU HUYEN  
School of Education and Lifelong Learning  
University of East Anglia  
NORWICH NR4 7TJ  
t.t.nguyen1@uea.ac.uk

If you would like to speak to someone else you can contact my supervisor:

DR. PAOLA IANNONE  
P. Iannone@uea.ac.uk

If you have any complaints about the research, please contact the Head of the School of Education and Lifelong Learning, Dr Nalini Boodhoo, at [n.boodhoo@uea.ac.uk](mailto:n.boodhoo@uea.ac.uk).

**OK, I want to take part – what do I do next?**

You need to fill in one copy of the consent form and return it to me. Please keep the letter, information sheet and the 2<sup>nd</sup> copy of the consent form for your information.

**Can you change your mind?**

Yes. You have the right to withdraw from the research at any time.

**Thank you very much for your time**

**CONSENT FORM**

**(1<sup>ST</sup> COPY FOR RETURN TO THE RESEARCHER)**

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT: THE CASE OF PROFESSIONAL  
MODULES IN TEACHER EDUCATION IN VIETNAM**

I have read the information about the study.

*Please tick the relevant box.*

**I am willing** to take part in the study.

**I am not willing** to take part in the study.

**I am willing** to be taken note in discussions with the researcher as part in the study.

**I am not willing** to be taken note in discussions with the researcher as part in the study.

**I am willing** to be audio recorded in the interviews as part in the study.

**I am not willing** to be audio recorded in the interviews as part in the study.

Your Name: .....

Your Signature: .....

Date:

.....



## **INFORMATION SHEET-OBSERVATION- INTERVIEW- ANALYSING STUDENTS' ASSESSMENT PRODUCTS- STUDENT**

### **STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT: THE CASE OF PROFESSIONAL MODULES IN TEACHER EDUCATION IN VIETNAM**

**Researcher:** NGUYEN THI THU HUYEN

**Supervisor:** DR. PAOLA IANONE, DR. REBECCA WESTRUP

I would like to invite you to take part in my research and I need your signed consent if you agree to participate. Before you decide, you need to know why I am doing this research and what it will involve. Please take time to read this information carefully to help you decide whether or not to take part. Please contact me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you for reading this.

#### **What is this study about?**

With this study, I am trying to find out students' perceptions of authentic assessment in professional modules in teacher education in Vietnam. Particularly, I am looking for the answers of the questions: what do students think about advantages and disadvantages of authentic assessment in a professional module they will have just experienced in the intervention, why they have such perceptions, what do the students think about the impact of the authentic assessment to their learning.

#### **How will you be involved?**

Generally, in the intervention, I will collaborate your lecturer to design formative assessment with authentic assessment approach for your class in Education in High School module in the term. The assessment tasks in the intervention will be designed based on the current curriculum of the module and be ensured to follow the module objectives. The percentage of the weigh of these assessments in the module assessment, the number of assessment tasks will not be changed in comparison with the original assessment plan of the faculty.

During the intervention, I will be in the class as your lecturer' assistant. I will appear in most of the teaching sessions to help you be familiar with me and can perform your learning naturally. However, I will not be involved in any assessment decisions or results on your performance in the tasks. All decisions will belong to your lecturer. You will be provided the guideline of these assessments in the beginning of the module.

Please note that all of the students in the class have to participate in the assessments because they are treated as official formative assessment in this module but you will not have to participate in my research. If you will be willing to join any part of my research, you will sign the separated consent forms attached in this information sheet. If you will not join the research, there will not any disadvantage for your own studies. In each assessment task, I will observe what will be taking place in the class by video-recorders and myself. I will only take observation notes and film the performance of the students who will have signed the consent forms to participate in the observation. If you do not sign the consent form of the observation, your performances will be excluded in my observations and filming.

I will also wish to interview some students after each assessment task to ask them what they think about the assessment task they will have just experienced. If you agree to interview with me, you will provide your email address in the consent form, when each assessment task finishes, I will contact you later by email to arrange an interview in a private room after school. The interview will take place between only you and me and will be audio-recorded.

Furthermore, I would like to analyse some students' assessment products (assignments, reports, presentations), if you are willing to help me to do it, after each assessment task finishes and after your lecturer has done his/ her assessment/marking, you will give me the copies of your assessment products.

**Who will have the access to the research information (data)?**

Data management will follow the 1988 Data Protection Act. I make sure to keep all information that you will provide me and your personal information confidentially. I am the only person who knows exactly which part of the study you will participate in. In the observation notes, interview notes and transcriptions, analysing papers of the students' assessment products, only the information of the students' faculty will be recorded. The students' name or other personal identity information will not be noted in any paper. I will use pseudonyms in the observation notes, interview notes and transcriptions, analysing papers of the students' assessment products.

The videos, interview notes and transcriptions, analysing papers of the students' assessment products will be viewed by only my supervisors and myself.

The data will be stored safely and will be destroyed when my project and the related dissemination is completed. In data analysis and result presentation in the thesis, the specific name of the university and individual identities of all research participants included you will not be mentioned. The data will be used for my PhD thesis or my publications later but only for scientific or research purposes.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

The research study has been approved under the regulations of the University of East Anglia's School of Education and Lifelong Learning Research Ethics Committee.

**Who do I speak to if problems arise?**

If there is a problem please let me know. You can contact me via the University at the following address:

NGUYEN THI THU HUYEN

University of East Anglia

School of Education and Lifelong Learning

Local phone: (+84) (0) 989876175

t.t.nguyen1@uea.ac.uk

If you would like to speak to someone else you can contact my supervisor:

Dr. PAOLA IANNONE

University of East Anglia

School of Education and Lifelong Learning

Phone: (+44) (0) 1603 630020

Email: p.iannone@uea.ac.uk

If you have any complaints about the research, please contact the Head of the School of Education and Lifelong Learning, Dr Nalini Boodhoo, at [n.boodhoo@uea.ac.uk](mailto:n.boodhoo@uea.ac.uk).

**OK, I want to take part – what do I do next?**

You need to fill in one copy of the consent form and return it to me. Please keep the letter, information sheet and the 2<sup>nd</sup> copy of the consent form for your information.

**Can you change your mind?**

Yes. You have the right to withdraw from the research at any time.

**Thank you very much for your time.**

**CONSENT FORM- OBSERVATION**

**(1<sup>ST</sup> COPY FOR RETURN TO RESEARCHER)**

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT: THE CASE OF PROFESSIONAL  
MODULES IN TEACHER EDUCATION IN VIETNAM**

I have read the information about the study.

*Please tick the relevant box.*

**I am willing** to take part in the study.

**I am not willing** to take part in the study.

**I am willing** to be taken note in observations as part in the study.

**I am not willing** to be taken note in observations as part in the study.

**I am willing** to be video- recorded in observations as part in the study.

**I am not willing** to be video- recorded in observations as part in the study.

Your Name: .....

Your Signature: .....

Date: .....

**CONSENT FORM- INTERVIEW**

**(1<sup>ST</sup> COPY FOR RETURN TO RESEARCHER)**

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT: THE CASE OF PROFESSIONAL  
MODULES IN TEACHER EDUCATION IN VIETNAM**

I have read the information about the study.

*Please tick the relevant box.*

**I am willing** to take part in the study.

**I am not willing** to take part in the study.

**I am willing** to be taken note in interviews as part in the study.

**I am not willing** to be taken note in interviews as part in the study.

**I am willing** to be audio- recorded in interviews as part in the study.

**I am not willing** to be audio- recorded in interviews as part in the study.

Your Name: .....Your email address: .....

Your Signature: .....

Date: .....

**CONSENT FORM- ANALYSING STUDENTS' ASSESSMENT PRODUCTS  
(1<sup>ST</sup> COPY FOR RETURN TO RESEARCHER)**

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT: THE CASE OF PROFESSIONAL  
MODULES IN TEACHER EDUCATION IN VIETNAM**

I have read the information about the study.

*Please tick the relevant box.*

**I am willing** to take part in the study.

**I am not willing** to take part in the study.

**I am willing** to provide my assessment products (assignments, reports, presentations) as part in the study.

**I am not willing** provide my assessment products (assignments, reports, presentations) as part in the study.

Your Name: .....

Your Signature: .....

Date: .....

## APPENDIX C

**Table 2. List of the interviewees**

Name	Class	Group	Major
Thao	1	1	History Education
Quan	1	2	Physics Education
Hong	1	3	Literature Education
Luong	1	5	Chemistry Education
Dan	1	6	Military Education
Khuong	1	6	Military Education
Dung	1	6	Military Education
Thanh	2	1	Biology Education
Lien	2	3	Chinese Language Teaching
Bich	2	3	History Education
Hoa	2	4	Physics Education
Thinh	2	5	English Language Teaching
Nga		6	Biology Education
Dao	2	7	Literature Education
Total	14 STs		

## APPENDIX D

### INTERVENTION DETAILED PLAN

INTERVENTION TASK	LECTURER' TASK	STUDENTS' TASK
<p>TASK 1: Each group will pick up randomly an educational typical scenario in high schools. They have to write a full script for the scenario (up to their opinions) included the ways to solve the problem. After 1 week, they demonstrate their solutions by role-playing in the class and hand in a group essay to explain why they solve the problem in such way.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaborate with the researcher to design some educational typical scenarios in high schools, draft the task description and guide, design assessment criteria for the task (assessment rubric of group role-play performance, rubric of the group essay, peer-assessment rubric)</li> <li>- In week 4, divide all students in the class into some groups (5-7 students/ group) randomly. Give each group a scenario randomly. Explain and guide them how to complete the task. Lead the discussion about assessment criteria with the students. The lecturer may modify the original versions of the assessment criteria after</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gather all members of the group to discuss about the task, how to complete it, assign the specific tasks and roles to each member. Record group working by meeting minutes and diary.</li> <li>- Practice the performance beforehand, prepare some aids for the performance if necessary</li> <li>- Submit the group essay on the date of performance</li> <li>- Perform the group scenario</li> <li>- Give comments for the other groups' performances and join the whole class discussion about all scenarios</li> <li>- Assess (give comments + marking) group working effectiveness for each member. Group leader submit the result to the</li> </ul>



	<p>the discussion with the students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contact with students by email to support them if necessary</li> <li>- Supervise the students' performance on the date (week 5).</li> <li>- Give feedback to the groups and lead the discussion of the whole class after each group' s performance</li> <li>- Assess the groups' performance and essay, give them results (comments+ marks) after one week (week 6).</li> </ul>	<p>lecturer by email (send cc email to other members of the group) after the performance day.</p>
<p>TASK 2: Each student will come to contact with teachers/management board of a high school to collect the school' education plan in that month, then each of them will have to design a supervising plan for an optional class in that month. The students will have 1 week to finish the task and hand in the plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaborate with the researcher to draft the task description and guide, design assessment criteria for the task (assessment rubric for individual writing exercise)</li> <li>- Deliver the task to the students in week 8. Explain and guide them how to complete the task. Lead the discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contact with teachers/management board of a high school to collect the school' education plan in that month</li> <li>- Finish their own plan, submit the plan on time</li> <li>- Present the plan if invited.</li> <li>- Give feedback to students who present the plan.</li> </ul>

<p>in hard copies to the lecturer. Some students will be invited to present their plan in front of the class.</p>	<p>about assessment criteria with the students. He/ she may modify the original versions of the assessment criteria after the discussion with the students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contact with students by email to support them if necessary.</li> <li>- Give comments + marks to the students one week after their submission.</li> </ul>	
<p>TASK 3 Each group of the students will make a plan for extracurricular activities (a game, a competition, a music show,...) for students in high schools. Then, the students in each group will have to play the roles of teachers and students in high schools to demonstrate that plan in the class within 30 minutes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaborate with the researcher to draft the task description and guide, design assessment criteria for the task (assessment rubric of group activity performance, peer-assessment rubric of group working for members in each group)</li> <li>- In week 8, divide all students in the class into some groups (8-10 students/ group)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gather all members of the group to discuss about the task, how to complete it, assign the specific tasks and roles to each member. Record group working by meeting minutes and diary.</li> <li>- Practice the performance beforehand, prepare some aids for the performance if necessary</li> <li>- Submit the group activity plan in week 11. Modify the plan after getting the</li> </ul>

	<p>randomly. Explain and guide them how to complete the task. Lead the discussion about assessment criteria with the students. The lecturer may modify the original versions of the assessment criteria after the discussion with the students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contact with students by email to support them if necessary</li> <li>- Ask all groups to submit their detailed activity plan in week 11 by email. Give feedback to the students before the teaching date in week 12.</li> <li>- Supervise the students' performance on the date (week 13+ 14).</li> <li>- Give feedback and marks to all groups after all of them complete their performances.</li> </ul>	<p>lecturer' comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Perform the group task in the class</li> <li>- Assess (give comments + marking) group working effectiveness for each member. Group leader submit the result to the lecturer by email (send cc email to other members of the group) after the performance day.</li> </ul>
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## APPENDIX E: AN EXAMPLE OF THE INTERVIEWS

### STUDENT 7- CLASS 1- ROUND 1

Interviewer (I): Hi, I'm happy that you are here to be interviewed by me. The information from this interview will be kept confidentially . We will discuss about task 1 that you have just finished in Education in High School module. How did you feel when you completed the task?

Student (S): Before I started to carry out the task, I felt like a fish out of water with the lecturer' task and the way she assessed. After I completed, I felt more motivated, generally, the task helped us to understand theories better, deeper, and memorise the lessons longer so as to apply them in the future.

C.H: so it's useful for you later?

SV: yes.

C.H: have you ever been assessed in such way?

SV: not yet, this was the first time...that's why I felt like a fish out of water.(smile)

C.H: what assessment methods were you assessed with?

SV: Recently, in the Introduction of Psychology module, we had to do presentation...but only theories, we also had to play some roles to solve problems in a scenario but not comprehensively like this module (I: General Education), with assessment for attendance, the lecturer used multiple-choice test, not like this module...

C.H: So were you assessed with role-play?

SV: yes, role-play to solve problems in a scenario, the lecturer also gave comments for our performance, the way we solved the problems. But back then, we did the role-play in zone A of our university, it was noisy, we did video-recorded the play, but when we opened the clip in class, we could not hear anything.

C.H: oh, did you perform the play and video-record it, but you did not perform in front of the class?

SV: Yes

I: Ok, what do you think about the relationship between Task 1 and the practice you will experience in the future?

S: Through task 1, I got a lot of experience for my teaching career in the future, especially teaching for high school students who are in 'rebellious' ages. With the scenarios given by the lecturer and the ways to solve them, we know how we should react in the future if we face the similar cases in reality.

I: In addition to the realistic experience for problem-solving, what else did the task help you for your future career?

S: communication skills, reacting skills in all cases, problem-solving skill...generally, a lot of experience to interact with my students later.

I: do you want to suggest anything to help the assessment task to be more useful and realistic for your practical teaching in the future?

S: I want to solve more complicated and difficult cases which require us to think, analyse, evaluate to solve the problems immediately...the lecturer should not let us bring home and prepare...we have to solve the problems in scenarios right in the class, in that teaching session.

I: Is it challenging and are the students put under pressure of time?

S: Yes.

I: To you, which knowledge and skills do the students need to possess in order to complete Task 1?

S: To me, there should be knowledge of developmental psychology, especially psychological characteristics of high school students; social understanding about social relationships of the students in family, school, society. About the skills, they are communication skills, problem-solving skills and language skills to express what we want to say.

I: language skills?

S: Yes.

I: Task 1 had two parts: play performance and written essay, which part do the skills you just mentioned belong to?

S: Those belong to the play performance part. About the essay, we need to possess writing skills and problem-solving skills. We also have to find the best way to solve the problem and match it with the play performance.

I: you mentioned knowledge of psychology and society, how about knowledge of education?

S: Yes, as a student in History major, we can integrate history knowledge and education knowledge when we solve the problems

I: integrate history knowledge and education knowledge?

S: Yes, for example, find a good example for students.

I: so it means when you complete the task, did you have to integrate the knowledge of many disciplines?

S: Yes.

I: what do you think about the importance of team work in Task 1?

S: If all members in the groups understand the importance of team work, the team results will be good. No one is perfect, everyone has strengths and weaknesses, we can support and complement each other to get best results. With group working, we learn solidarity, patience because when we discuss in group, some members are really conservative, high-ego whenever I raised ideas, they rejected right away, at first time, I felt uncomfortable, now, I understand them more, and so it's fine.

I: how did you cooperate with those people?

S: At first time, there were only 2 History students in my group, whenever we came up with ideas, even when they were good, other members from National Defense Education major rejected and ignored them. They informed us about next group meeting but we were agry, so we left immediately, then the leader texted us (smile). One time when we had group discussion in the class, because we often disagreed, two of us gathered and discussed, other members gathered and discussed with each other, Mrs H (the lecturer) passed by and asked what we were doing. When we presented the results of group discussion, two of us presented first and other members added some ideas later. We did not have same ideas. But in Task 1, we had to work together, we accepted others' ideas, not like before.

I: so good team work makes good results, right?

S: Yes. But in the first meeting, some members did not understood the role of group meeting, they were not active, enthusiastic to contribute to group work, they used their cellphone, texted messages, called and chat, etc. I think if we join a group meeting, we have to be serious, no one has free time to come there for chating.

I: so the result of your group in this task comes from group cooperation, doesn't it?

S: in the last group meeting, there were 4 or 5 members, others did not come, they did not know how we solved the problems, what they could add to the essay, etc. We decided all. When we performed in front of the class, we didn't utilise the talent within our group, we only used two members for two main characters as the teacher and the mother. Because we misunderstood the lecturer's requirement, we thought we had to talk about how we solved the problems in the scenario first, and then we performed the play. For that reason, in the script of the performance, we cut off some details. However, when we watched other groups perform, they did not explain anything and only performed their plays. Thus, we decided to perform without explanation. And that's why the lecturer gave comments that we did not solve the problems completely.

I: Do you think if all the members in your group cooperate better, the result will be better?

S: sure, more people contribute their ideas, we generate the ideas, we can pick up the best idea.

I: OK, it is a useful experience, isn't it? If you were the lecturer, would you deliver the task in a different way from your lecturer's?

S: Yes, different, I would not do the same the lecturer as she delivered the task and gave us one week to prepare. I would deliver the task for each group, let them prepare in 15 minutes and perform in front of the class because in practice, we have to react with cases immediately. We will not have one week to think or ask the other people's opinion and then come to our class to solve the problems with our students.

I: so do you think it was enough time for you to complete the task?

S: I think the essay could be submitted later, but about the scenario, we only needed to catch some main points to solve the problem, we did not need to explain in details.

I: so perform the way to solve problems in class and then write an essay later about the proposed solutions, do you think those two ways to solve the problem will be different?

S: if there are differences between the two, the lecturer can ask the students why they change their mind, why they solve the problem in one way in class but they present differently in the essay, and whether they ask others' opinion.

I: oh, it means after receiving the essays from the groups, the lecturers has to ask the group again about what they have written in their essay?

S: Yes, the lecturer can ask by emails, doesn't need to ask the groups in person.

I: (laugh) what else do you think the lecturer should change?

S: About the assessment rubric, it is accurate and fair because in one group, there are some active and productive members, others are not I think for those who are active and productive, they deserve to get high scores. Otherwise, they have to accept low scores. This module is similar to Psychology module, the lecturer also let us use peer-assessment and submit the results to her.

I: Yes, in this module, you assessed your group members anonymously.

S: Yes, in psychology module, after we completed multiple choice tests, we exchanged the test papers, checked correct answers and gave marks for each other. We then submitted the results to the lecturer; she didn't need to assess the test papers.

I: do you prefer peer- assessment?

S: yes.

I: Why? Do you think there will be bias because of the close relationships among members?

S: No, when you assess, you need to rely on some criteria, standards, the assessed members cannot object to that assessment result. For example, we can assess that whether members are active, productive, contribute their opinions and ideas or not, serious or just do their own business, etc.

I: it means we need clear criteria.

S: Yes, [that will help us] assess accurately.

I: (smile) ok, you agreed that the students should involve in assessing stage, how about the stage of designing assessment task?

S: yes, the lecturers should let their students speak their opinions, for instance, the lecturers ask their students that they prefer multiple choice or oral questions. Normally, students do not prefer oral questions (smile), they often prefer multiple choice and assignment because taking oral questions is nervous, the examiners wait for our answers, we are too nervous, can't say anything, so the mark will not be high, perhaps we will not fail but the mark will not be as high as expected.



I: so if the lecturers ask their student about the ways that they want to be assessed, will the students choose the most convenient way for them?

S: Yes, but oral exams may give you some useful experiences. If you are so scared to talk directly to the examiners, maybe you dare not talk to anyone in the future.

I: if the lecturers ask all students in the classes about their opinion, which scenario may happen?

S: Yes, maybe there are too many different opinions because each student wants to choose the most convenient way for them. In such case, the lecturers can choose the opinion preferred by most students...or the lecturers can make their own decision.

I: (laugh) what if the ratios were 50-50 or there is not much difference?

S: normally, only few students choose oral exams; about multiple-choice test, we can mix with short-essay questions. In one test, maybe multiple-choice part weighs 4 marks; short- essay question part weighs 6 marks or vice versa. If we use problem-solving by role- play, I prefer to complete the task immediately in the class because it is more realistic and useful.

I: Ok, how about criteria?

S: because the lecturers are more experienced than students, they should suggest criteria and then discuss with students about those criteria, they do not have to ask students to suggest criteria at the beginning.

I: what do you think about self- assessment?

S: I think it's good. With people who know their own competencies, knowledge, they can assess themselves, but with people who do not care about their marks or others' marks, they may assess unseriously (I: they are lack of responsibility in assessment?)....yes...so I think we should use peer- assessment.

I: so do you agree with self- assessment or not?

S: Yes, I agree.

I: Ok, now we talk about the assessment rubric of Task 1. About role-play performance criteria and marks, would you like to change anything?

S: I think these criteria and marks are ok, but the criteria of role-play ability, we should reduce the weight because we are students, our role-play skills may not be good enough as our expectation, sometimes, we are too nervous, we forget the scripts. We are not professional.

I: so if we reduce those criteria, which criteria should we increase?

S: the content of the script, the rationales of the problem solution, we should increase its weight.

I: how about the assessment rubric of the essay?

S: I think it is reasonable.

I: Is it clear and specific? (S: yes). How about the rubric of peer- assessment?

S: we should increase the weight of cooperation.

I: and decrease....

S: Completion of the assigned task.

I: Why?

S: because the task assigned for each member is their responsibility, everyone has to finish their task. It's also individual benefit. But we are lack of cooperation in group.

I: so do you want to increase its weight?

S: yes, because if it is not good enough, we need to do all ways to improve it.

I: how did the task 1 affect to your learning strategies?

S: Yes, it changed my learning strategies a lot, with task 1, if we only relied on theories in the books, we couldn't solve the problems in scenarios, we had to 'escape' the books and obtain a practical view. , We had to have problem-solving skills or soft skills, they are not in books, not in lecturers' theoretical lessons.

I: How did you complete this task?

S: Combining theories and practice.

I: what did you do first?

S: Firstly, our group gathered to suggest the outline, divide tasks and distribute to members. So the members finished their tasks, the group leader generated all members' completed works, and we then gathered again to modify and supplement opinions.

I: Is this learning strategy different from the way you use with multiple choice tests or close-book short-essay question tests?

S: with multiple choice tests or close-book short-essay question tests, we focus on learning what in the books but with this task (task 1), we have to combine theories in the books and practical knowledge in our life. A case in the task was absolutely the same to my younger brother's case. He was an excellent student in secondary school

but became worse in grade 10 in high school, now he is in grade 12 and is not doing well with his study. He skipped most of his classes or lied so as to escape from attending classes. His teacher had to invite my parents to his school to inform [them of] his faults and discuss how to deal with him. My parents almost gave up, but his teacher succeeded.

I: so when you completed task 1, did you have to use your own experience to solve the problem?

S: Yes.

I: How did you assess yours and your group's performance in this task?

S: in this task, my group made efforts to cooperate. When other groups performed, we also gave some useful and valuable comments for them.

I: what do you think about feedback from the lecturer and other groups? Did you expect to get the feedback?

S: yes, I did. I really expected to get feedback. Whenever I presented, I always expected feedback from the lecturer and other students in the class because they helped me to recognise my weakness, I could improve it. If everything we did was good, we would not try our best. Of course, we would like to hear positive comments but negative comments are also helpful for us later. For examples, after our performances, the lecturer suggested reasonable and useful solutions for each scenarios.

I: how about comments from your group members? Are they useful?

S: Yes, they are, because as members in the groups, we knew each other well, the lecturer could not know how member worked and contributed to groupwork. That's why I think the peer- assessment rubric was really helpful. We knew who was active and productive member, who was less active and productive, ect.

I: do you have any suggestion for the next assessment task?

S: as I said, I would increase the difficulty of the task, change the way to deliver the task and time for preparation to complete the task.

I: Thank you so much for the interview.

## **APPENDIX F**

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE MODULE IN THE INTERVENTION**

**Title of the module: General Education**

**Length of module: 12 weeks, 3 hours per week**

**1. Objectives:** After finishing this module, the students will be able to:

#### 1.1. Knowledge dimension

- State concepts, models of education;
- Analyse the nature, characteristics, motivation, stages, content, principles and methods of education;
- Explain the contents of moral education, aesthetic education, physical education, vocational education for school students.
- Describe the role, goals of general education; curricula of general education, management models in primary, secondary and high schools in Vietnam; roles, responsibilities, standards of the teachers at school.
- Describe the roles, responsibilities of the supervising teachers; explain the contents and methods to supervise students in a class at school.
- List extracurricular education activities; describe processes, conditions, methods to organise extracurricular education activities at school.

#### 1.2. Skill dimension

- Analyse, criticise, evaluate, synthesise education theories
- Find out, criticise, evaluate education practice at school.
- Apply educational principles and methods to solve specific problems in education practice.
- Formulate and develop skills of a supervising teacher at school.
- Formulate and develop critical thinking in education, study skills and education research skills.

## **2. Content**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction of education theories**

1. Concepts of Education
2. Educational principles
3. Education and students at school
4. Strategies to manage students at school

### **Chapter 2: Schools and Teachers in Vietnam**

1. Schools in Vietnam
2. Teachers at school in Vietnam

### **Chapter 3: Teachers' supervising activities at school**

1. Roles, responsibilities of the supervising teachers/ form tutors
2. Strategies of supervising students in a class
3. Conditions for teachers to do well supervising activities

#### Chapter 4: Organising extracurricular activities for students in high schools

1. Concepts and goals of extracurricular activities in high schools
2. Types of extracurricular activities
3. Models, conditions, methods to organise extracurricular activities in high schools
4. Process to organise extracurricular activities in high schools

*\* Extracurricular activities are defined as activities after teaching and learning hours with subjects (Maths, History, Literature, Physics, Chemistry,...) in schools.*

#### 3. Assessment of the module

Formative assessment			Summative assessment
Participation/ Attendance	Individual assignments/ exercises	Group projects/tasks	- Open- book written test with short essay questions
5%	15%	20%	60%

## APPENDIX G

### DESCRIPTIONS OF TASK 1 IN THE INTERVENTION

#### 1. OBJECTIVES: After finishing the task, students will be able to:

- Reflect educational principles and strategies of behaviour and classroom management
- Apply educational principles and strategies of behaviour and classroom management to deal with some typical scenarios in education practice
- Develop the students' problem-solving skill, communication skill, group working skill

#### 2. TASK DESCRIPTION

The task will be completed in groups. Each group will be assigned an educational typical scenario in high schools. They have to write a full script for the scenario (up to their opinions) included the ways to solve the problem. After 1 week, they demonstrate their solutions or a part of their solution by role-playing in the class within 7 minutes. Besides, they also have to hand in a group essay to explain why they solve the problem in such way by using some education theories as a background. The essay is maximum 1000 words.

#### 3. GUIDELINE

- Gather all members of the group to discuss about the task, how to complete it, assign the specific tasks and roles to each member. Record group working by meeting minutes and diary.

- Practice the performance beforehand, prepare some props for the performance if necessary
- Submit the group essay on the date of performance
- Perform the group scenario within 7 minutes in class
- Give comments for the other groups' performances and join the whole class discussion about all scenarios
- Assess (give comments + marking) group working effectiveness for each member. Group leaders submit the result of peer assessment, group working minutes and diary to the lecturer by email (send cc email to other members of the group) 3 days after the performance day.

#### 4. ASSESSMENT

The results of the task will be included the lecturer' assessment and peer assessment. All the members in the same group will get the same results from the lecturer' assessment but maybe different results from peer assessment.

The final result of each student = (Lecturer's mark x 60+ Peer's mark x40)/100

- Assessment rubric for group role- play performance (made by the lecturer)



Criteria	Excellent (8.5- 10)	Good (7-8.4)	Satisfactory (5.5-6.9)	Poor (<5.5)
Reasonableness of the problem solution	Reasonable and realistic solution Based on solid theoretical background	Quite reasonable and realistic solution Based on some logical theoretical background	Reasonable but may be not realistic solution Based on few theoretical background	Not reasonable and not realistic solution Based on delicate theoretical background
Role-playing performance	Use convincing verbal communication of character's feelings, situation and motives. Uses a lot of body language (eye contact, posture, gestures) to show the characters' attributes appropriately and effectively All roles were performed confidently	Use competent verbal communication of character's feelings, situations and motives Uses some aspects of body language to show the characters' attributes quite appropriately and effectively All roles were performed quite confidently	Use adequate verbal communication of character's feelings, situation and motives. Uses little or no body language to enhance and support the characters' attributes	Use limited verbal communication of character's feelings, situation and motives.
Cooperation in group	Assign the roles and tasks rationally and equally to all members	Assign the roles and tasks rationally but not really equally with all members	Assign the roles and tasks to all members but not rationally and	Assign the roles and tasks not to all members

<p>• <b>A</b> <b>A</b> <b>s</b></p>	<p>All members contribute to the group work effectively All group meetings are effective and productive</p>	<p>Some members contribute to the group work effectively All group meetings are quite effective and productive</p>	<p>equally Few members contribute to the group work effectively Group meetings are not really effective and productive</p>	<p>Few members contribute to the group work effectively Group meetings are not effective and productive</p>
<p><b>A</b>bility to offer <b>c</b>onstructive <b>f</b>eedbacks and <b>s</b>comments in the <b>s</b>discussions after <b>m</b>each performance <b>e</b> <b>n</b> <b>t</b>  <b>r</b> <b>u</b></p>	<p>Response clearly, effectively the questions and comments of the other groups Join all discussions with other groups All feedbacks and comments are constructive and relevant</p>	<p>Response clearly, effectively the questions and comments of the other groups Join some discussion with some groups Most of feedbacks and comments are constructive and relevant</p>	<p>Response clearly but not effectively all the questions and comments of the other groups Join few discussion with few groups Few feedbacks and comments are constructive and relevant</p>	<p>Response not clearly and not effectively all the questions and comments of the other groups Hardly join discussion with other groups Most of feedbacks and comments (if yes) are not constructive and relevant</p>

**Rubric for group essay (made by the lecturer)**

Criteria	Excellent (8.5- 10)	Good (7-8.4)	Satisfactory (5.5-6.9)	Poor (<5.5)
Knowledge and understanding	Demonstrate exceptional comprehension of the topic	Show thorough knowledge and understanding of the topic with evidence of reading beyond the key texts	Show evidence of relevant and sound knowledge and understanding of the topic	Show basic but insufficient knowledge and understanding of the topic
Analysis and arguments	Sophisticated analysis using ideas and principles beyond those introduced in the module	Show a resourceful and imaginative analysis using ideas and principles beyond those introduced in the module	Show evidence of analysis using ideas and principles introduced in the module	Show limited description and unsupported facts and opinions
References	Fully supported by reference to relevant up-to-date material Accurate presentation of the references according to the MOET system	Clear evidence of wide and relevant reading Accurate presentation of the references according to the MOET system	Well informed by reading which goes beyond key texts Accurate presentation of the references according to the MOET system	Use a limited range of reading Inaccurate presentation of the references according to the MOET system
Essay structure	Clear structure which enriches the discussion and argument	Clear structure which enhances the discussion and arguments	Structure is clear and supports coherent discussion and	Unstructured with omitted key issues

			arguments	
Use of language	Written by excellent standard of academic Vietnamese writing	Written by very good standard of academic Vietnamese writing	Written by good standard of academic Vietnamese writing	Poor standard of academic Vietnamese writing

- Peer assessment (made by members in each group)

After the performance day, each group gather, give feedback each other and then rate each member' contribution to the group work according to the following form. The form will be printed and the copies will be distributed to each member. They will rate other member anonymously and hand in to the group leaders for generalisation. The final result will be sent by email to the lecturers and other members

#### PEER- ASSESSMENT FORM

Criteria	Member 1	Member 2	Member 3	Member...
Group meeting attendance				
Completion of the assigned task				
Group meeting attendance				

Engagement in discussion				
Total				
Average				

PEER- ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Criteria	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Group meeting attendance (Maximum 2 point)	(1.5-2 points) Come to all group meetings on time Leave only when the meetings finish Concentrate during the meetings	(1-1.4 points) Come to all group meetings but late one meeting around 10 minutes OR leave early one meeting around 10 minutes Concentrate during the meetings	(0-0.9) Come late OR leaver early OR not come ALL meetings Come to all meetings and stay until end of the meetings but not concentrate at all
Completion of the assigned task (maximum 5 points)	(3.5-5 points) Complete all the assigned tasks by deadlines Suggest creative, effective ideas/ solutions	(2.0-3.4 points) Complete some the assigned tasks by deadlines Suggest some ideas/ solutions Perform satisfactorily or support	(0-1.9 points) Complete some the assigned tasks but late or Do not complete the assigned tasks Do not suggest any idea/ solution

	Perform well or support others to perform well on the performance date Find useful resources for group essay	others to perform well on the performance date Suggest some resources for group essay	Join the group performance but not perform satisfactorily or absent on the performance day Only access resources suggested by others
Cooperation (maximum 2 points)	(1.5-2 points) Listen respectfully other in group meetings Response politely others' conflictive ideas Willing to share own ideas with the group Support other members to complete their tasks Always reply in all group online communication	(1- 1.4 points) Listen respectfully other in group meetings Sometimes reject others' conflictive ideas Share few own ideas with the group Refuse politely the request for help from other members Often reply in some group online communication	(0-1 point) Listen respective other or do not concentrate in group meetings Quiet in all group meetings Do not contact often with other members
Engagement in discussion after performance	(0.8-1 point) Be representative of the group to response enthusiastically and effectively the	(0.5-0.7 point) Suggest good ideas to response the comments and questions of the other groups but	(0-0.4 point) Suggest few ideas or be quiet in all discussions

(maximum points)	1 comments and questions of the other groups Give some questions/ comments to other groups	not be representative of the group to speak out Give few questions/ comments to other groups	
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