

Should teachers be licensed on effectiveness or experience?

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Michigan education officials are considering new standards for licensing teachers focusing more on effectiveness rather than years of educational and work experience. Are teachers ready?

The University of Michigan School of Education, which is redesigning its approach to teacher education to focus squarely on developing [teachers](#)' skills with the most productive and important tasks of teaching, has experts who can comment on this issue.

"We are currently identifying those skills of teaching that are crucial for ensuring student learning," said Deborah Ball, dean of the U-M School of Education. "These include the skills of communicating content clearly to [students](#), holding students to high standards while explicitly showing students how to do complex work, establishing a productive classroom climate, interpreting and evaluating students' work, and connecting effectively with students' families."

The school has been developing the Teacher Education Initiative, a comprehensive project to redesign the way teachers are prepared to practice.

"We are building the teacher education curriculum to develop teachers' skills with these tasks and to design performance assessments that will allow us to determine whether teacher candidates can perform each one competently," Ball said. "We will require students in our program to demonstrate proficient performance with each set of skills before they

graduate from our program and before we recommend them for an initial teaching license."

The initiative is part of a larger plan to design a comprehensive curriculum of professional training and licensure that spans pre-service [education](#) through at least the first five years of teaching practice, with corresponding assessments that would provide information about teachers' increasing competence as they become more experienced.

"This approach is a significant departure from current practice in which teachers start teaching with little training in the complex work of practice and are expected to learn this work from experience," said Francesca Forzani, a U-M researcher who is project manager for the TEI.

"As part of this project, we are also working to identify the special kinds of content knowledge and knowledge of schools, culture and society that underlie and enable skilled teaching. We plan to build a complete curriculum for preparing and developing teachers, with instructional materials and assessments for use at each stage of the teaching career."

Provided by University of Michigan ([news](#) : [web](#))

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