

AITSL Pilot Projects
Final Summary Report
Appendix C– Executive Summaries

The SiMERR National Research Centre
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ARMIDALE NSW

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1 ACT TQI

This project is one of 17 projects funded by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). The ACT pilot is one of three pilots within the Theme Group: Initial teacher education and registration.

The implementation of registration and the National Professional Standards for Teachers (hereafter referred to as ‘the Standards’) in the ACT is a major change in the professional and industrial landscape for ACT teachers. The ACT Teacher Quality Institute (TQI) was established in 2010 and is currently establishing its position within the profession in the ACT. Prior to 2011 individual employers (ACT Education and Training Directorate, Catholic Education Office and Independent schools) undertook their own qualification and police checks for employment and their own assessment of proficiency for employment. There was no central registration body or process. In this new regulatory environment most ACT teachers have had little access or involvement in the development and implementation of the Standards.

The key teacher education institutions in the ACT, namely, the University of Canberra (UC) and the Australian Catholic University, Signadou Campus (ACU), are both involved in the implementation of the Standards and are open to developing congruence between their teacher education programs in terms of common expectations, professional learning experiences in schools and assessment of graduates against the Standards. The UC intends to implement changes to course structures and professional experience in 2012.

A single research question was refined to incorporate the following aims of the ACT pilot:

1. Use the Standards as an analytical framework to enhance professional experience programs for both pre-service teachers and mentors through improved feedback and self reflection cycles
2. Use the Standards to build common understandings and a shared language to enable and support professional conversations in professional experience programs
3. Use the Standards to identify the core components of a professional experience program that are consistent across teacher education institutions in the ACT
4. Promote teacher quality through shared professional responsibility and collaboration
5. Use the Standards to develop work embedded assessment tools:
 - a template for professional conversations about assessment
 - a rubric for the professional experience report format.

Research Question: How will Standards 1 and 6 inform and enhance the work embedded assessment and feedback for pre-service teachers and their mentors in the ACT?

Standards 1 (*Know students and how they learn*) and 6 (*Engage in professional learning*) were chosen keep the project manageable within the short time frame. The short time frame for the study and the necessity to fit in with established university timetables for professional experience programs led to a 'convenience' sampling methodology.

The pilot used a case study approach with analysis of narrative data and limited quantitative survey data. A case study approach was chosen because it enabled a focus on a specific real-life context with the ability to use a flexible range of multiple data collection sources to build a 'rich' or 'thick' (Kervin et. al., 2006) account of what is being studied (Kervin et.al 2006).

The project incorporated the following activities:

1. Engagement of stakeholders
2. Establishment of sample/participants
3. Collection of baseline survey data
4. A workshop/professional learning day
5. Structured two week professional experience program using the tools developed in the workshop
6. Collection of post participation survey data
7. Initial data analysis to identify themes
8. Collection of narrative data (interviews and focus groups)
9. Analysis of narrative and survey data.

The pilot proposal was initiated by the ACT TQI Board and managed by a Steering Committee and a project officer. Staff at the participating universities were involved in developing the initial and post surveys, attending and contributing to the one day workshop, monitoring and assessing pre-service teachers while on their professional experience placements, and providing support and expertise to the project team.

The final sample consisted of 9 pre-service teachers and nine mentor teachers. Five preservice teachers were from UC and four from ACU. They worked with mentor teachers from three primary schools. There were three Early Childhood and six Primary placement pairs.

Participants were asked to complete a written survey before involvement in the project. The survey form included a mix of open-ended and forced response items designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative responses.

Participants at the cross-sectoral workshop included the participating mentor teachers and pre-service teachers, staff from both universities involved in both teaching and administration of professional experience, principals of two of the three schools involved, members of the TQI Board, and employer representatives. Participants developed a template for Professional Discussions for use in the pilot. A Draft Evidence Guide was developed after discussion about an assessment rubric indicated lack of agreement about the purpose and format of any assessment report.

Participants were asked to use the professional conversation template and the Draft Evidence Guide for reflection, feedback and assessment during the professional experience placement. Participants completed a post survey questionnaire at the end of the placement and took part in group and/or individual interviews.

Broader stakeholder groups such as employing organisations (ACT ETD and Catholic Education Office), independent schools' associations, unions, principals' associations and teacher representative groups were informed about the project via established cross agency committees responsible for teacher education and professional placement arrangements across the ACT.

Cross-case analysis was used to determine emerging themes and comparative analysis of groups. The overlapping of data collection and analysis allowed deeper exploration of themes and confirmation of evidence.

The themes that emerged from the initial data collection and discussion at the workshop were:

1. Exposure to and understanding of the Standards by working teachers
2. Provision of evidence guides
3. Flexibility of templates for professional mentoring conversations
4. Mentoring training for teachers
5. Consistency of university practices for pre-service placements and assessment

These themes were followed through in the post questionnaire, interviews and focus groups.

As the pilot progressed, an overarching theme emerged in the change of language used by participants. There was a marked change in the quality and depth of the language used to describe evidence from the pre-survey to the post survey and

through the collection of narrative data. By the end of the project participants had developed a shared language and understanding that enabled them to reflect personally on their own achievement of the Standards and to be involved in professional conversations that clearly linked the Standards to assessment of pre-service teachers.

1. Exposure to and understanding of the Standards by working teachers

All mentor teachers and pre-service teachers noted the lack of working knowledge of the Standards among working teachers in the ACT and the fact that any implementation of the Standards will need to be handled sensitively to ensure teachers do not see the Standards as 'another bureaucratic imposition'. The implementation of the Quality Teaching Project was seen as a good model for implementation of the Standards. Teachers believe they can build on the shared understanding and common language around QTP and that the model of QTP Champions who worked beside teachers in schools was effective.

2. Provision of evidence guides

Participants liked the fact that the Draft Evidence Guide was a simple and useful reference that supported assessment against the Standards. Most did not use the Draft Evidence Guide to specifically support professional conversations but used it and the professional conversations to develop a better understanding of the role and variety of evidence used for assessment. Participants identified the need for specific elaborations/illustrated examples of evidence for each Standard and at each level. These should be available on line for easy reference. Participants acknowledged that AITSL would be providing specific evidence guides in the future.

3. Flexibility of templates for professional mentoring conversations

The template for Professional Discussions developed in the workshop was used in a variety of different ways by participants. This flexibility was seen as a strength, as it catered for different contexts and the different ways that people operate. Many participants commented that the template provided a useful mental framework that could be used for both formal and informal reflection and planning.

4. Mentoring training for teachers

The majority of participants in this pilot had done no specific professional learning in relation to mentoring and provision of feedback in the past three years. Experiences of mentoring and giving and receiving feedback varied considerably. After participation in this pilot, mentoring teachers used more complex language to describe a greater range of mentoring activities, with a greater emphasis on professional partnership and self-reflection by all parties to the mentoring relationship. Participants recommended that all teachers who are mentoring pre-service teachers have some initial training in mentoring and that additional training

in specific skills such as 'difficult conversations' be made available. Training for mentor teachers was seen as a way of improving the quality of mentoring and consistency in feedback and assessment.

5. Consistency of university practices for pre-service placements and assessment

Participants from both universities saw the introduction of Standards as an opportunity to increase consistency of courses, practicum requirements and assessment across all universities nationally. Participants from both universities stressed the importance of close relationships between university and school staff and clear, shared understanding of all requirements and expectations before the pre-service placement begins.

This project initiated cross-sectoral cooperation between the two teacher education institutions in the ACT, UC and ACU. Both universities are developing courses and associated policies and practices linked to the Standards. While the UC timeframe involves changes to course structures and professional experience arrangements in 2012 an ongoing dialogue has been established and there is a willingness to work together to create aligned policies and practices.

The mentor teachers and pre-service teachers involved in this pilot have had a positive experience working with the Standards and can act as change agents as the Standards are implemented. Two of the pre-service teachers and one of the mentor teachers recently presented at a cross-sectoral principals' meeting on the Standards and others have expressed willingness to undertake similar roles in the dissemination of information. They will provide powerful role models in their schools and across the ACT.

The results and recommendations from this pilot will be communicated to stakeholders through a range of forums including cross agency committees, cross sectoral meetings for principals and professional experience coordinators and will inform the ongoing implementation of the Standards in the ACT.

The pilot has played an important role in establishing a profile for the ACT TQI within the profession in the ACT. The cross-sectoral nature of the project elements including the Steering Committee, workshop participants and schools have reinforced links and established partnerships particularly between the two ACT universities. Feedback on the pilot to a cross-sector principals' forum helped create shared understandings and an agenda for future work. As the pilot progressed and various stakeholders were brought on board there has been a clarification of roles and responsibilities that will inform future governance structures and planning.

2 AEF

Setting the scene and contextual issues

All Education Ministers agreed in the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (Melbourne Declaration)* on ‘the need for Australians to become Asia literate’. In a major step towards achieving this aim, the Australian Curriculum identifies ‘**Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia**’ as a Priority across the curriculum and at all levels of schooling from Foundation to Year 10.

Asia literacy is therefore, a curriculum imperative and policy enacted through the Australian Curriculum. As such, all teachers, whether primary or secondary, regardless of sector and regardless of Key Learning Area are teachers of Asia literacy.

An Asia literate teacher requires relevant knowledge, skills and understanding of Asia to support the teaching of all subjects within the curriculum: English, History, Mathematics, Science, Geography, Languages, Arts, Technology and Design, Health and Physical Education, ICT, Economics, Business and Civics and Citizenship outlined as Phase 1, 2 and 3 subjects by the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (ACARA).

During the course of this pilot study the AEF identified a gap in the National Professional Standards for Teachers (hereafter referred to as ‘the Standards’). That is, while the Standards specifically relate to three of the seven of the General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum: Literacy, Numeracy, and Information and Communication Technology, they only refer to one of the Cross-Curriculum Priorities – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders – but do not refer to the other two: the *Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia* Priority (Asia Priority) and the Sustainability Priority.

Therefore, the AEF undertook a pilot study to trial the use of the Standards with a focus on developing a case study on how **Asia literacy** in Australian schooling can be supported by their use. The AEF collaborated with the Australian Professional Teachers’ Association (APTA) to undertake the pilot study.

This pilot study provided an opportunity to reflect with teachers on the success of their learning, their current and developing capabilities, their professional aspirations and their achievements in relation to Asia literacy. The Pilot resulted in the documentation of four case studies to support the development of Asia literate teachers in their career.

The research questions

The rationale of the pilot study was to explore how teachers define, implement and evidence their work using the Descriptors in the Standards framework and where they see themselves on the Standards Career Stage continuum. Two research questions were posed:

1. **Research Question 1:** What does Asia literacy mean for a Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher as defined in the National Professional Standards for Teachers?
2. **Research Question 2:** How can teachers be supported in identifying their place on the continuum of Career Stages in the National Professional Standards for Teachers in relation to Asia literacy?

The answers to the questions above are in the formative stage, however, the following key points and/or themes have emerged from a consideration of the data collected during this Pilot:

1. The Asia Priority in the Australian Curriculum needs to be given the imprimatur of its authorising document *The Melbourne Declaration of Education Goals for Young Australians* and needs to be included in the Standards as a reference point for all educators.
2. At this stage, teachers and principals are not engaged consciously and systematically with the Standards.
3. All teachers need to be supported in a range of ways by a range of agencies in exploring how the Standards can be applied to Asia literacy and the Asia Priority.
4. What characterises a Lead teacher in Asia literacy is that they are enablers and evaluators and as such they can lead from the classroom.
5. What links and distinguishes a Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher as defined in the Standards is praxis.
6. A more rigorously tested self-assessment tool (than the one developed during this Pilot) needs to be developed to support teachers and principals.
7. The development of indicators or exemplars at each Career Stage in the Standards may aid all teachers in understanding how their career path in Asia literacy can be manifested through the Descriptors in the Standards.

8. The results of this pilot study are embryonic and require further development if they are to be tested and made useful and meaningful to teachers across Australia.

Methodological considerations

At the beginning of the project *The Most Significant Change (MSC) Technique* (Davies & Dart, 2005) was to be used in preparing the cases. The project team read *The Most Significant Change Technique – A guide to its use* in preparation for the project.

While the data was gathered and interrogated with the MSC methodology in mind a number of factors mitigated against using it fully. The main factor being that using an “iterative questionnaire and feedback approach” was precluded by the time frame of the project.

And therefore, the main methods used to interrogate data were:

1. The project team conducted interviews and received information (though interview or discussion with a third party).
2. The team would then meet as a group (either through teleconference or email) and discuss and compare findings, issues and challenges. The team used its professional tentacles to discuss the pilot study’s processes and findings more widely.
3. The information received was mapped against the purpose of the project.

As a result of undertaking this Pilot Study, the AEF is in a better position to:

1. Understand the Standards and how they be used and applied by teachers;
2. Inform school leaders, through its Leading 21st Century Schools: Engage with Asia – An Initiative for Principals – Professional Learning Program about how the Standards can be used and applied by teachers;
3. Make links between the Standards and the *Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia* priority in the Australian Curriculum;
4. Provide exemplars of professional learning models to support teachers in identifying their place on the Standards continuum;
5. Provide a revised self-assessment tool for teachers to use in identifying their place on the Standards continuum, and

6. Assess what agencies it can work with to provide expert advice in relation to the Asia Priority and how it can be used to apply to the National Standards.

3 AIS NSW

The pilot study was conducted in three NSW independent schools. The schools used the National Professional Standards for Teachers (hereafter referred to as ‘the Standards’) to support teachers to understand the actions they can take to assist the school to meet the goals and identify professional learning that will support their achievement of the goals. Contextualised to each school, the Standards provided the basis for schools’ and teachers’ systematic review of practice and for identifying future professional learning and support plans.

The research questions for the study were designed to identify how using the Standards for teaching assisted teachers to understand their school goals for improvement, develop their confidence to meet the school goals and engage in a review process to identify areas of professional strength and areas for improvement in classroom practice at the key Career Stages of Proficient and Highly Accomplished teacher.

Grounded theory methodology was used to collect and analyse the data. Data were collected from teachers and school executive in the three schools using quantitative and qualitative methods. Individual teacher questionnaires using a 4 point rating scale and focus group interviews were used as data collection tools. Analysis of the quantitative data at each school informed the next sequence of each data collection. The qualitative data were coded for emerging themes to answer the research questions.

Results from the study identified capacity building, group solutions and an integrated approach to teacher professional learning as key drivers for using the Standards for teaching to improve professional practice. Similarly these key drivers contribute to the achievement of the school goals that are directly related to improving the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms. Mapping the Standards to school goals when conducted in a supported and collaborative environment was a strategy lever for whole school change (Fullan, 2011). The process in this Pilot modelled the ‘right drivers’ that engage teachers and school leaders in cycles of continuous improvement that inspires teachers to work together in a collective effort to demonstrate high standards of practice. Findings from the study identified that using the Standards for teaching highlighted the need for program coherence between the school goals and future plans for professional learning. In addition, the results pointed to the need for supportive and collaborative structures and organisation to ensure that both the strategies and resources are targeted and effective for whole school reform.

4 APC-ACSSO

The Australian Parents Council (APC) and Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) are the national organisations that together represent the parents of 3.3 million students attending Australian schools. APC and ACSSO promote the role of parents as the primary educators of their children and the importance of parents and teachers working in positive partnership to maximise the schooling outcomes of young Australians. This AITSL Pilot study was developed jointly by APC and ACSSO to focus on the following two standards from the National Professional Standards for Teachers (hereafter referred to as ‘the Standards’):

3.7 Engage parents / carers in the educative process

7.3 Engage with the parents / carers.

The primary research question for this Pilot project was ‘What are the common practices of teachers and school leaders at each career stage that lead to effective parental engagement to support student learning?’ APC and ACSSO utilised their networks to organise seven focus groups comprising parents and teachers in four states and the Australian Capital Territory, and engaged a consultant to facilitate the focus groups and analyse the information and feedback elicited from the focus groups. The purpose of the focus groups was to discuss this research question based on Standards 3.7 and 7.3.

The methodology for this project involved hosting seven focus groups, and then analysing participants’ comments for recurring themes, patterns and learnings. A major methodological consideration for this project included ensuring that focus groups were as diverse as possible, and genuinely represented various parent and teacher constituencies. This meant achieving a balance of parents and teachers, fairly even numbers of participants from both government and non-government sectors, as well as the full range of the four career stages for teachers. The scope of the project did not allow broad representation from various ethnicities and cultures, however it was considered important to seek some representation to the extent possible along with a cross-section of socio-economic backgrounds.

All parents and teachers involved in the focus groups believed that the Standards are an important and helpful initiative, to assist teachers and parents to work more closely and effectively together, leading to improved learning outcomes for students. Both parents and teachers were enthusiastic about participating in the focus groups, and expressed considerable goodwill and commitment about supporting the implementation of the standards. There was a strong belief that good relationships and communication between principals, teachers, students and parents matter enormously, and have a major impact on students’ learning. This was consistent with a large body of Australian and International evidence. It was perceived that whilst teachers at each of the four Career Stages have differing skills associated with parental engagement, that teachers at each stage could nevertheless positively impact student learning by improving their relationships with parents.

The recommendations contained in this report arose from requests by both teachers and parents for relevant Professional Learning for teachers, so that teachers can more effectively engage with parents to support students' learning. Both the findings from the focus groups and the recommendations contained in this report were constant across each of the Australian states and territories and the different school sectors, and there didn't appear to be any perspectives or recommendations that were limited to a particular location, jurisdiction or sector.

5 ASPA

A concern had been expressed in a number of places (principal forums (local, state/territory wide and national), Education Departmental meetings and meetings with AITSL), that many principals will not have engaged with the National Standards for Teachers (hereafter referred to as 'the Standards') and will be unaware of the implications both positive and negative of the standards for them, their staff and their school communities. There is a significant danger that many principals, especially in regional and remote areas, will ignore or pay scant attention to the Standards. It is essential that principals are provided with the support and encouragement necessary to ensure the successful roll-out of the Standards.

This project aimed to articulate some of the issues involved and elucidate possible ways of addressing them.

Key contextual issues of the study related to which state or territory jurisdiction principals came from, how far they were from major population centres and their level of experience (early or later in their careers).

Research questions centred on asking principals

1. what strategies and structures they might use to implement the Standards
2. what things they needed to know and understand
3. what kind of support could be helpful
4. the professional learning needs of their school
5. what things will help them
6. barriers to implementation and
7. how prepared they feel and
8. the influence of the schools context on implementation.

Principals were selected by the Australian Secondary Principals Association (ASPA) Executive. The selection was based on maximising the chances of providing a range of contexts and critical information on how to implement the NPST. Principals selected individual lead teachers with a view to providing similar input to the project's research.

Principals were provided with an online Pre-Interview Survey as a 'tuning in' exercise to the one-on-one, face-to-face interview conducted by ASPA's President, Ms Sheree Vertigan. The research questions mentioned above provided the basis for the survey and a foundation for each interview. Responses to the survey were analysed and cross-referenced to the principal's state or territory and level of experience. Their written responses to open comment questions were also incorporated into the results section of the study. The interviews were taped and transcribed or notes made at the time.

Generally, principals were praising of the explicitness of the Standards when describing good teaching practice and felt they would assist with transforming schools. A number also thought that those schools with good structures and processes are succeeding in implementing current like initiatives in their state/territory more so than those without such structures and processes.

There were a range of responses to the question about strategies to implement the standards with most principals saying they would use current structures, policies and procedures to implement the standards. One principal commented that “We have [had] teacher standards in this state for many years now and would not view national standards as much a change to what is already in place”

Many principals indicated that their current school structures that exist will aid in the implementation of the Standards and include regular staff and executive/leadership team meetings where teaching practice is a focus. One of the most comprehensive responses was where a principal noted that they held “Regular fortnightly professional learning sessions reflecting on teacher practice and promoting digital and personalised pedagogy.” In addition, this principal also anticipated

Using a significant evidence base to promote and support teacher development including a survey using the AITSL standards that enables staff to self assess their practice and provide key points for targeted professional development conversations and classroom observation.

Perhaps obviously a clear and detailed knowledge and understanding of the Standards was commented on as being of critical importance to implementing the Standards. Principals early in their career were not as confident in their knowledge as those later in their career. However, the degree of understanding generally expressed in the survey by participants was not as evident in the interview. When data for this same question was analysed on a state-by-state basis it was clear that principals from one state were lacking knowledge of the Standards. This will require further investigation to test the veracity of this finding.

There were a number of things canvassed by principals as being supportive of successfully implementing the Standards. The majority of comments in the Pre-Interview Survey related to the provision of professional learning and/or examples of implementation of the standards. Suggestions from the interviews ranged from materials of an online modular nature, including smart phone apps, adequate resourcing by systems (especially in the provision of “time”) and enabling tools or instruments (e.g. to support classroom observations, self-assessments etc).

A number of principals commented that the Professional Learning is critical as it will help to ensure consistency across schools and jurisdictions. As one put it “I have a great concern about how consistency will be established, maintained and ensured across the country.” There was a call for “a balanced view of how the professional standards can enhance teacher practice and promote professional growth”.

In interviews it was noted that schools with a staffing profile consisting of large numbers of young staff are well placed to introduce the Standards as they are familiar with the language of standards, are familiar with classroom observation “walk throughs” and are, in some states, required to meet registration requirements having a similar set of standards to those in the Standards. Unfortunately a “two tribes” culture was something that had to be guarded against. Interviewees stressed the lack of incentive for staff later in their career than new teachers seeking to become “proficient” was perceived to be an inhibiting factor for the implementation of the Standards.

Another point made was the need for regular evaluation to ensure that they maintain or reflect cutting edge practice or best practice as over time they will need to become even more rigorous as the graduates who were first introduced to the standards move through the system.

It should be noted that nearly every principal commented on the helpfulness of the explicit language in the standards document and sought tools or instruments that used that were characterised with the same explicitness and clarity.

A number of barriers were mentioned which basically stemmed from a lack of support from the system or a lack of things mentioned as being required to implement the Standards.

Data collected for this project indicates that AITSL and individual education departments/authorities must co-construct an engagement or implementation plan. Principals, school leaders, teachers and the community must first understand the value proposition i.e. it will increase the focus on teaching and learning and has the capacity to raise the quality of teaching in all schools before they will commit to the use of the National Professional Standards for Teachers.

Some of the key recommendations and findings to support implementation of the Standards follow, others can be found in Section 7 of the final report.

For those principals in states and territories where standards and/or frameworks exist, it is critical that there is an understanding around the purpose of the standards and the relationship between the documents. It is recommended that AITSL and relevant systems develop a clear mapping publication showing how the documents interconnect.

It is recommended that the AITSL Clearinghouse offer schools some ‘how to packages’ or a suite of implementation tools, at low cost, that schools can use as the starting point. These include, but are not limited to:

- reflection and self-assessment tools with some links to the Standards,
- quality feedback tools and question matrices that can be used in both conversations or written reports,

- exemplars of preferred data sets that can be used to inform professional conversations,
- models of record keeping – electronic templates developed against the Standards, simple ways of recording information from conversations etc,
- tools for an experienced principal new to a school, or a beginning principal, to assist them communicate information about the NPST and to develop a professional growth culture in their school around the NPST,
- an audit tool to promote a quick formative review of the schools current context.

In planning for the future it will be important to maintain the initial impetus provided by implementing the Standards and ensuring its continued roll-out will be a significant challenge. Addressing the issues and challenges raised above will be important to the success of the Standards and continued engagement with the profession, especially those charged with implementing it in schools, i.e. principals, will be essential.

6 Australind Senior High School

Australind Senior High School (ASHS) is a large regional education institute located 160km south of Perth in a stunning estuary environment on the Indian Ocean. The school has 982 students enrolled from year eight to twelve. We enjoy a stable, yet diverse student population with increasing numbers of Aboriginal, Maori and migrant students whose families are drawn to the area for employment in the booming Western Australian mining sector.

The purpose of the pilot was to improve teacher and thus student performance. Our research into teacher development and more importantly the barriers inhibiting development has provided rich information about how teachers evaluate their own performance, the performance of colleagues and asks students to evaluate teacher quality. Conceptually, this method provides rich input from three points forming a data triangulation pyramid. This concept is represented in (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Data Triangulation Pyramid

Within the context of this Pilot, teachers mapped themselves against the Professional Practice domain of the National Professional Standards for Teachers (hereafter referred to as 'the Standards') with a view to identifying and discussing gaps (weaknesses). Teacher performance was further evaluated against empirical data gleaned from mentor and student feedback. Through this process the teachers' metacognition is more accurately engaged. Thus, we aimed to build the capacity of teachers through self-reflective gap analysis, mapped against the Standards and guided by student surveys, classroom video footage and colleague/mentor feedback in a highly supportive paradigm.

Australind Senior High School has recently (January 2011) gained Independent Public School (IPS) status under the auspices of the Department of Education (DoE) Western Australia. This transition has provided the school with greater autonomy particularly with regard to flexibilities in the management of resources. Our teaching

staff is highly experienced and characterised by an average age of 45 years. Due to this, staff have experienced many curriculum and policy changes in their career. Thus, it was crucial to guard against the possibility of change fatigue and potential resistance against the introduction of student voice into our school improvement strategy.

The most significant issue facing the project in the initial stages were concerns from teachers regarding the potentially confronting nature of student voice. Teacher concerns were openly discussed and the main issues identified. These concerns were evident in questions raised, such as:

- Are we passing too much power over to students?
- Can students assess how well a teacher is performing?
- Can students be trusted to answer surveys respectfully?
- Are we exposing ourselves to scrutiny by students and community members?
- Will students intentionally give negative feedback to teachers they did not like?

Our school considers the best measure of a school's effectiveness to be student performance. Therefore, it is logical to change the focus of school improvement from teaching to learning and from teacher voice to student voice. The pilot informs us about how the Standards can be linked to professional learning and thus school improvement. It was also concerned with the effectiveness of student voice in shaping teachers' understandings of the Standards.

The following focus questions were developed to incorporate these points:

- How can the Professional Practice domain be used to audit current professional learning practices and structures?
- How can students contribute to improved teaching and learning?
- How can student feedback data assist schools to improve practice?
- How can the Professional Practice domain be used to audit current professional learning practices and structures?
- How can students contribute to improved teaching and learning?
- How can student feedback data assist schools to improve practice?

We were determined to run the pilot study within existing school structures and in alignment with the school improvement cycle illustrated (Figure 2) from the Department of Education WA, *School Improvement and Accountability Policy* (2008).



Figure 2: School Improvement Cycle

To ensure alignment of processes between the pilot and our school improvement cycle we have focused on three interconnected and interdependent areas:

- Investigating the Standards for teacher self-reflection (Assess)
- Linking the Standards to collaboration/mentoring as the basis for improvement (Plan)
- Investigating the use of the Standards to inform professional learning for teachers (Act)

In designing the surveys we utilised a four point *Likert Scale*, essentially forcing students to commit to a positive or negative assumption about their teachers' professional practice. Eight questions were written for each of the focus areas in an attempt to expose students' perspective of teacher performance that would satisfy attainment of the Lead Teacher Career Stage of the Standards.

A summary of weighted mean scores was calculated in a separate spread sheet and conditional formatting applied. Conditional formatting was coded in the following way; less than 2.5 coloured in red (concern); between 2.5 and 3.0 coloured in yellow (neutral); greater than 3.0 coloured in green (good).

The data was organised into in three main categories:

Individual Teacher Data

- Raw score tally organised by focus question and *Likert* category
- Weighted mean score organised by focus question

Group Data

- Tally for *(All)* responses organised by focus question and *Likert* category

- Weighted mean score organised by focus question and (All) responses
- Charts populated with weighted mean score data from both surveys and organised by teacher (x axis) and weighted mean score (y axis)

Summary Data

- Weighted mean score responses
- Summary page organised using conditional formatting
- Percentage distributions comparing pre and post survey data organised by weighted mean scores

Table 1: Percentage Distributions Comparing Survey 1 and 2 Weighted Mean Scores

3.1 Pre	3.1 Post	3.3 Pre	3.3 Post	3.4* Pre	3.4* Post	3.5* Pre	3.5* Post	3.7* Pre	3.7* Post	5.1* Pre	5.1* Post	5.2 Pre	5.2 Post
58%	37%	17%	28%	0%*	0%*	56%*	50%*	0%*	0%*	31%*	31%*	60%	65%
42%	42%	42%	47%	0%*	6%*	25%*	31%*	25%*	0%*	50%*	38%*	30%	30%
0%	21%	41%	23%	100%*	94%*	19%*	19%*	75%*	100%*	19%*	31%*	10%	5%

Note: Focus areas tested with two or less participants indicated with a (*)

A list of resources developed for the pilot is as follows:

- Power Point – outlining processes, roles, responsibilities and timelines
- Classroom film footage and audio
- Student surveys
- Classroom improvement plans
- Excel – conditionally formatted summary sheet
- Excel - focus area summary sheet

The main implication for our school is the revelation that we need to redesign our professional learning program to be more flexible in what professional learning we resource and when. This places the onus on teachers to use the Standards as their map of development forming a conduit to professional learning and thus improved professional practice.

Secondly, through the very act of surveying students, we are simultaneously increasing the transparency of teaching practice for students and parents. With continued development of the program, it is inevitable that students and parents will become more educated about what good teaching and learning should look like in the classroom and be able to communicate with teachers through this discourse.

The following is a list of recommendations that may be useful for schools:

- Timing: Be strategic about when to embed student survey data into the school planning cycle. It needs to be positioned early enough to make significant changes to professional practice.
- Coverage: Use a range of data sources.
- Autonomy: Give teachers more autonomy with regard to their selection of professional learning.
- Self-reflection: Use video footage for classroom conferencing. This is a very efficient way to collect and store visual data.
- Collaboration: Allow teachers time to collaborate with a trusted colleague.
- Network: It is common that a broad range of outstanding expertise exists within local school communities.
- Integrate: Build student voice into existing practice.
- Focus: Start small and build from there, i.e. select only 2 – 3 focus areas to concentrate on for each improvement cycle.
- Distribute curriculum leadership: Create opportunities for staff to lead curriculum change.
- Broker expertise: Use available resources to assist with professional learning needs tailored to the Standards.
- Transparency: Be open with all stakeholders about your school improvement strategy. This will build trust and generate future support for projects.

Findings from the pilot will be distributed throughout the Leschenault Alliance of Public Schools. This small network comprises Australind Senior High School and its feeder primary schools. We have a strong tradition of collaboration and work closely with them on transition programs for students moving from primary to high school. There is an excellent opportunity to use our knowledge of the Standards to build common understandings of outstanding teaching and learning and use this information for school improvement.

In conjunction with the Department of Education (WA) regionalisation agenda, Principals from state schools have been instructed to form networks for the purpose of supporting staff, students and the community. The networks are charged with the purpose of developing shared vision and innovative practice with the aim of improving interschool performance. Further, professional learning funding from the Department will be channelled through the network and targeted at more integrated models for school improvement. The Institute for Professional Learning WA will broker professional learning tailored to suit individual teacher needs and as identified in the Standards, mentor/colleague feedback and student voice.

With the implementation of the Australian Curriculum upon us together with the trialling of the Standards, it makes sense for schools to implement both together. It seems logical to align this work because common platforms will promote shared beliefs and understandings, thus clarifying national educational discourse. This will

enable policy makers to forge clear directions allowing educators to deliver enhanced teaching and learning and improved student performance.

7 CDU-NTTRB

This Pilot investigated how teachers in their first two years of teaching can collect suitable evidence in their daily work, to move from the Career Stage of Graduate to that of Proficient as a teacher. This pilot was one of 17 pilots funded by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). Each of the funded pilots were interested in trialling one aspect of the implementation of the National Professional Standards for Teachers (hereafter referred to as ‘the National Standards’).

This study was undertaken in the Northern Territory. It was conducted with nine provisionally registered teachers in seven schools located in regional, remote and very remote locations. All the schools in the pilot have sizeable Indigenous student populations. This study was conducted in Northern Territory government and non-government schools in urban, regional, remote and very remote locations.

Of specific interest to this research project were two major issues:

1. The types of evidence that can be collected in teachers’ daily work that will meet Northern Territory teacher registration requirements to move from Provisional to Full Registration, as measured against the Professional Standards for Competent Teachers in the Northern Territory (hereafter referred to as ‘the NT Standards’); and concurrently
2. How this evidence might match the processes for collecting evidence for the transition from the career stage of Graduate to Proficient, using the National Standards, to be implemented in the Northern Territory from 2013.

As such, this pilot focused on the strategies that could be used by new teachers located in regional, remote and very remote schools in the Northern Territory to collect evidence of their achievements in their daily work. The focus of the pilot was for each participant to undertake the two following activities concurrently:

- to identify and collect artefacts that would allow them to develop a portfolio of evidence for moving from provisional to full teachers registration in the Northern Territory; and
- to determine the ways in which they could identify and collect evidence of their teaching performance, through their daily work, that could be used to meet specific Standards they identified from within the National Standards

Although brief, this study shows the importance to early career teachers of planning an approach to the collection of evidence at all career stages. Furthermore, the

study highlights the impact of formally implementing Standards on the workloads of new teachers, their school principals and their mentors. In addition, this study points to the importance of school principals and mentors to support new teachers to develop understandings of the requirements associated with meeting the various Territory and national requirements to account for teachers' performance.

As this study was one small project among many, further research into the issues raised in this study is required. Indeed it was observed that the meta-approach used in this project replicates a problematic aspect for teachers meeting the Standards: that is, the atomisation of the concepts of 'Standards'.

8 DECS SA

The pilot project in South Australia involved the Department of Education and Child Development, The Teachers Registration Board, Catholic Education SA and The South Australian Principals Associations. The cross sector partnership undertook a pilot study to investigate the use of the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) for observation and reflection on teaching practice. Leaders and teachers at fifteen sites in Adelaide, including primary, middle, secondary and specialist schools used an observation tool (Appendix A) to help teachers to explore observation and reflection on teacher practice using the National Professional Standards for Teachers (The Standards). The teacher participants were largely early career teachers, who observed more experienced teachers to inform professional conversations that reflected on their teaching practice.

The research question used to frame the pilot was:

How can observation and reflection be used to promote learning about the Standards in practice?

The pilot was premised on an assumption that observation of practice is an effective professional development strategy. The Early Career Teacher cohort was prioritised for selection of teacher participants. Engaging with this cohort also promoted identification of the Proficient standards as the focus for using and developing an observation tool.

A draft observation tool was used by the participants to scaffold reflection on the classroom practice and demonstration of the Standards. The participants found observation to be a powerful tool for reflection and an effective scaffold for professional dialogue between colleagues. The common language of the Standards provided clarity and the process was seen as affirming and effective in encouraging teachers to reflect and discuss their practice. Teachers and leaders readily used the observation tool to identify and articulate practice at graduate and proficient levels of the standards as well as considering the highly accomplished and lead levels of the Standards. School leaders/mentors and teachers used the tool to scaffold professional conversations about teaching practice.

Fifteen school sites were invited to participate in the pilot and nominate at least two early career teachers from each site. The methodology of the pilot included:

- A Steering Committee, representing the pilot partners which played a key planning and facilitating role.
- A professional learning day which introduced the participants to the Standards and the concept of observation for learning.
- Newsletters and a Ning were set up to facilitate communication about the project.

- Delegated responsibility to school sites to establish collegial relationships between experienced and early career teachers to conduct classroom observation followed by professional conversations about classroom practice.
- A post study workshop to share the participants' review of their experiences through a written narrative that considered the processes used, the understandings gained and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the observation tool and the reflections that followed.
- Perception data from participants at the final workshop through their narratives, through an interactive voting process and an online checkbox survey.

The *Investigating the Use of the Standards for Teacher Self-Reflection* pilot teachers and leaders from Reception through to Year 12 sites identified Observation and the National Professional Standards for Teachers as effective strategies to develop teaching practice. Many of the pilot participants indicated intentions to use the observation tool as an ongoing strategy to build a culture of reflection and embed the National professional standards for Teachers into school practices. The following quote captured the sentiment of participants:

“The process gave people the opportunity to enhance and affirm their confidence in their profession”

9 DoE Tas

This report describes action research undertaken by 15 Tasmanian teachers into their own professional practice using the National Professional Standards for Teachers (hereafter referred to as ‘the Standards’) as a research and teaching practice framework. As expected some studies crossed over to the use of the Standards as a tool for teacher evaluation but in general the report describes the Standards being used as a professional learning tool that is, however, aligned to school and system priorities and to what we know about exemplary teaching practice.

There are cogent arguments for standards to be used for both performance evaluation and professional learning and for them to be aligned with individual, school and system priorities and needs. Such an alignment is common in some parts of the western world but is not commonplace in Australian States. Now that a set of National Standards has political acceptance we will be seeking to embed professional teaching standards in the daily lives of Australia’s teachers.

This will not happen automatically. What we are searching for in this Pilot are manageable ways to develop internal accountability in schools for educational improvement using the Standards. We believe that the answer might lie in large part in what we know about successful professional learning particularly the role and importance of intense and continuous support close to instruction, formative feedback, the matching of system with school and individual goals and teacher self-reflection through inquiry and professional conversations.

Given this background and context our two research questions were developed around the use of the Standards as a framework for professional learning.

1. How useful is the National Standards framework for informing and guiding action research and inquiry?
2. How useful is the National Standards framework as a tool for teacher self-reflection?

The work undertaken by teachers in the AITSL Pilot formed part of a broader Teacher Leader Program in which they were participants. A major requirement of the Teacher Leader Program was a work-based individual inquiry and some teachers chose to develop their inquiry around the Standards whereas others in the program did not necessarily have such a focus. The teachers with the Standards focus are the ones in the AITSL Pilot.

While their inquiries are qualitative and highly contextualized each has been examined for links not only to the research questions but to the wider state and national context. Participants have said:

In using the AITSL Framework, leaders are able to understand their staff's strengths and areas for improvement very quickly and they can use this knowledge to plan future PL for their staff. Leaders can also self-assess their own leadership through the AITSL Framework and employ the Cognitive Coaching approach to their own thinking.

The direct links made between the student survey questions and the National Professional Teaching Standards allow us to get very specific information about where to go with our professional learning and support to meet the needs of teachers.

Professional Conversations, conducted properly in a non-threatening, supportive and trusting environment can provide a great conduit for honest reflection & goal setting. These conversations have been effective in previous years, but had been undertaken with a set of structured questions that reflected school goals, without a strong emphasis on the individual practitioner.

It is clear from each participant's report that the Standards have provided a useful framework for their inquiries and for self-reflection. In many cases the Standards have brought a degree of rigour to the action based research and a sense of authenticity around the foci and research questions. In this context, the Standards sit well alongside teacher's own thinking about what is important to develop in their practice and the established directions and goals of their school or workplace. In a national context where the use of Standards over many years has been largely ad hoc, feedback from all sites suggests that teachers are ready to embrace a consistent and professional teaching language that can guide teacher, school and system development and planning.

The story that emerges is that the Standards are not an end in themselves. When they are coupled with a teaching and learning focussed policy setting, consistent state-wide professional learning plans, conversation tools, and the opportunity to participate in on-going classroom based reflection on teaching then a very powerful mechanism to improve student outcomes and teachers' teaching begins to emerge.

The trick is to match what the literature and our collective experience tells us will work with practical, workable and close-to-instruction opportunities for teachers to apply and improve their craft. In this pilot we found that the Standards can be a powerful tool for teachers who want to research their own teaching and we have ample evidence that when teachers gather valid data about their work, and respond to it, then we will see improvement in teaching and a consequent improvement in outcomes.

We should be mindful of Elmore's (2004) warning that "...there is no well-worked theory of how you get from performance based accountability to improvement in teaching and learning". Finding practical ways for teachers to engage with their own

practice in non-threatening, data centred and peer supported ways might help overcome the inexorable problem we have faced with most school improvement literature that it is long on telling us on what is wrong, and what we should be aiming at, and short on what the pathways might be between the two. The combination of teacher inquiry based on professional teaching standards offers one powerful practical pathway.

10 DoE WA – The Western Australian Institute for Professional Learning

The Western Australian Institute for Professional Learning (the Institute) has been established to coordinate the Western Australian Department of Education's strategic objective of building a motivated, committed and skilled workforce, able to meet the challenges of providing all Western Australian children and young people with access to a public education system which is dedicated to the highest standards of student achievement. The Institute is the overarching body responsible for the coordination and delivery of professional development for teachers and educational leaders at all levels as well as the design, management and brokering of professional development for all support staff.

The Institute has adopted the National Professional Standards for Teachers (hereafter referred to as 'the Standards'), developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), as a framework for professional learning. To ensure an evidence-based approach underlies this initiative, the Institute undertook a program of extensive consultation and feedback with school leaders and teachers to determine their expectations and needs. Through this consultation three essential research questions were formulated.

Research Question 1: *To what extent are the Standards useful for teachers to reflect upon their practice?*

Research Question 2: *How useful are the Standards in establishing priorities and planning for the professional development of teachers throughout their career?*

Research Question 3: *To what extent is it possible to align the current professional learning program to the Standards?*

Participant feedback indicated an overwhelmingly positive response to the notion that the Institute should develop a self-reflection tool for teachers based on the Standards and saw the alignment with national direction as an opportunity to develop consistency and familiarity with the Standards. Respondents saw extensive benefit in linking professional learning with the Standards, determining that this initiative allowed teachers to:

- identify individual professional learning needs
- link professional learning to performance management and areas of growth
- assist with individual teacher goal setting and self-reflection
- identify areas of whole school need

Additional information gleaned from consultation groups indicates unanimous support for evaluation of programs offered by the Institute to be explicitly linked to the Standards. Analysis of these responses provided a baseline for the direction of the Institute in addressing the implementation of the Standards. In direct response to the data analysis, the Institute initiated the following long-term projects:

1. The development of a tool for teacher self-reflection, linked directly to the Standards.
2. The mapping of available teacher professional development providing direct links to the appropriate career stages, focus areas and descriptors as articulated in the Standards.
3. A tool for teachers that provides easy access to lists of professional learning available through the Institute, connected to each standard and career stage.
4. A generic course evaluation tool linked directly to the Standards.

These projects were completed as a result of this pilot study. The Institute now has a professional learning program for teachers that is explicitly linked to the Standards, as well as a suite of electronic tools designed to assist teacher self-reflection, decision making, course evaluation and professional learning choices.

11 ISQ

Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) is the peak body representing independent schools throughout Queensland in a diverse range of settings and contexts (geographical, religious, philosophical and pedagogical). Its membership comprises 188 independent schools serving a wide range of communities.

To support the introduction of the National Professional Standards for Teachers (hereafter referred to as 'the Standards'), Independent Schools Queensland developed a Self-reflection Tool designed to support teachers to reflect on their professional knowledge and practice based on the Standards. The analysis of data gained from the tool was used by schools in a variety of ways including: as a basis for planning targeted professional learning; providing positive feedback; as an initial step for conversations about teaching practices and to capitalise on the strengths of their teaching staff at a whole of school level. Once completed, the survey was also used as a basis for individual growth planning by teachers.

The Pilot for the Self-reflection process was set up in two stages. The first stage involved the initial exploration of the Standards and the use of the Self-reflection Tool developed by ISQ. The second stage followed the completion of the Self-reflection Tool and the completion of Professional Growth Plans by the teachers. The following research questions were employed at each stage:

Stage 1

1. How effectively were project leaders able to work with staff to contextualise the Standards?
2. How well did teachers engage with the Self-reflection Tool?

Stage 2

1. Did the tool inform future direction for teachers, for their own professional learning? What patterns emerged within schools and across schools?
2. How useful did schools find the data for strategic planning?
3. How could ISQ use the information collected?

Contextualising the Standards in terms of what evidence, in their school setting, would demonstrate proficiency was identified as a challenge by school leaders. All leaders commented on the need for additional support materials to ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of each standard.

All school leaders commented that the standards would help focus their conversations with staff about professional growth. They also felt that this would complement their current processes and that it would be possible to align the standards with their current expectations for staff.

The Self-reflection process was seen as positive and an important step in the process of Professional Growth Planning. It was also seen as a useful beginning for further conversations about teaching practices.

The Data Analysis Tool which provided schools with profiles of their teaching staff was highly effective for identifying patterns and consequently for strategic planning at a school and sector level.

As a consequence of the positive findings of the Pilot and feedback from school leaders, ISQ will continue to refine the Self-reflection and Data Analysis Tools so that they are available to support member schools on a wider scale. Schools will be encouraged to use the templates provided to support teachers in the Professional Growth Planning process.

It is recommended that AITSL develops support materials for the National Professional Standards for Teachers to ensure that there is common understanding of each standard.

12 NSW DEC

The NSW Department of Education and Communities (NSW DEC) is committed to providing every student in NSW government schools with quality learning that is underpinned by high quality school leadership and high quality classroom teaching. Currently, this commitment is realised through a system wide strategic approach to:

- supporting New Scheme Teachers to gain and maintain accreditation with the NSW Institute of Teachers at the career stage of Professional Competence
- ensuring that all teachers are equipped to deliver quality classroom teaching programs through the provision of high level, quality assured professional learning that is aligned to the NSW Institute of Teachers *Professional Teaching Standards* and can be equitably accessed across the state
- the provision of a high quality continuum of professional learning for aspiring, newly appointed and experienced school leaders.

The NSW DEC pilot study *Recognising, Building and Ensuring Teacher Quality* was designed to build an evidence base that could be used to inform:

- the way the system engages its teachers in the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* particularly at the career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead
- the development of system strategies and the provision of responsive, high level professional learning that will ensure teacher quality across the state.

To focus its investigations, the pilot study specifically explored three research questions:

- To develop teacher quality and teacher leadership at the career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead, what will be the professional learning needs of teachers?
- How can high quality teaching practice be best evidenced in relation to the implementation of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* within the context of NSW DEC settings?
- What will be involved in engaging NSW DEC teachers in the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*, particularly at the career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead?

The pilot study's three research questions were investigated using a mixed-method participatory methodology, gathering and analysing both qualitative and quantitative data. The NSW DEC's considerable networks and strategic capabilities provided a strong, structural platform of support for the pilot. This support enabled efficient and effective mobilisation of system capacity to ensure that NSW DEC maximised the scope and reach of the pilot for the benefit of the NSW DEC's leaders, teachers and students state wide.

Key actions undertaken as part of the pilot study's investigations engaged representatives from a range of stakeholders and key groups of teachers. Critical actions included:

- consultation with NSW DEC principals and senior officers to provide input, support and feedback for the pilot study and the survey. This consultation was undertaken to utilise NSW DEC's networks to strengthen the quality and degree of engagement in the survey.

Strong themes that emerged from this consultation included the need:

- for a system wide approach to meeting professional learning needs in relation to gaining and maintaining certification that will ensure consistency and equity of opportunity for teachers
 - for senior school executive to engage with and encourage a school level culture of involvement in the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*
 - to ensure that engagement in the Standards is focussed on the core business of teaching and learning
 - to ensure teachers have the opportunity to participate in professional learning that is aligned to the Standards
 - to ensure that Standards are embedded in school and individual professional learning plans.
- focus group consultations with 'expert' teachers to engage them in the implementation of the survey within their schools and capture their attitudes and beliefs. Their considerable involvement in current NSW Institute of Teachers accreditation processes provided critical insights into the pilot study's research questions.

Views expressed in focus group consultations related to anticipated opportunities afforded by certification, the impact of school and system culture, strategies for increased engagement and the most effective approaches to professional learning to develop teacher quality.

- Consistent themes arising in focus group consultations included the view that teachers' decisions to undertake voluntary certification at the career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead would be largely influenced by factors such as perceived benefits, school culture, cost of accreditation, potential promotional opportunities, familiarity with the current process of accreditation with the NSW Institute of Teachers and the support provided by colleagues who may have previously undergone accreditation with the NSW Institute of Teachers *Professional Teaching Standards*.

Focus group participants provided a clear indication of the kind of strategies that would support NSW DEC teachers and leaders to undertake voluntary certification at Highly Accomplished and Lead. These strategies included:

- teachers being more self regulating in relation to understanding policy and procedure
 - relevant information being widely distributed by the certifying body
 - maintaining consistent system wide support
 - strong school executive support
 - school culture of mapping current practice against standards.
- an online survey that gathered information from key groups within NSW DEC, including school leaders, Highly Accomplished Teachers, Teacher Mentors, experienced teachers and early career teachers. The survey sought general demographic information about respondents, as well as views regarding the implementation of and the professional learning needed to engage teachers in the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*.

Analysis of the trends evident from the 710 survey respondents formed the basis of the pilot's findings, with consideration given to themes identified during the consultations.

Respondents generally viewed the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* in a positive light as a framework for improving teacher practice. It was of particular significance that the trend was consistent, regardless of whether teachers were New Scheme Teachers or Existing Teachers.

Professional learning was a pervasive theme that emerged across survey trends, responses and discussions. NSW DEC leaders and teachers saw professional learning as the key strategy for developing sustained quality teaching practice.

More specifically, respondents rated the need for professional learning as consistently high across all seven standards of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*, with four standards, 5,3,1 and 2, those most closely focussing directly on classroom teaching and learning, rated higher than the other three.

That such a significant sample of leaders and teachers from across the state has identified a future focus not only for professional learning, but for professional learning that is focussed on the classroom, has significant implications for NSW DEC.

The Pilot investigated the best ways to develop and evidence quality teaching practice. NSW DEC teachers and leaders identified *Critical reflection on practice* and *Collaborative engagement with other teachers in developing lessons and resources* as

highly effective practices. When asked about the ways to demonstrate evidence of best practice, teachers and school leaders favoured *Peer observation and collaboration* and *Direct observation of classroom teaching and learning* as the most effective ways.

It is clear that NSW DEC teachers and leaders see greater benefit in strategies where teachers work collaboratively with others and authentic feedback from colleagues and students and self assessment are centred on classroom practice.

With regard to introducing the Standards, respondents highlighted that the most useful way would be *Engaging teachers in a scaffolded process that will assist them to develop evidence* followed by *Engaging principals and executives in professional learning that will facilitate the introduction of the National Professional Standards for Teachers*.

Of the factors influencing teachers' decisions to undertake certification, those noted as being very important could be described as immediate, personal and practical in nature. By far the most significant was *Consideration of personal circumstances and commitments*. Other factors also of importance were cost, perceived increase in the likelihood of permanency or promotion, flexible management of work and time associated with the certification process.

Alongside this group of largely personal considerations, teachers placed considerable significance on *Encouragement and support of school executives and personnel*. Teachers identified principals and Teacher Mentors as crucial in supporting teachers to achieve certification.

The significance respondents attribute to the role of school leaders in the process of accreditation and the identification of Teacher Mentors as a crucial group in supporting accreditation are instructive findings for NSW DEC as the system moves towards implementation of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*.

When asked to identify the groups most likely to engage in the voluntary career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead, respondents identified aspiring leaders as the most likely, followed by New Scheme Teachers, teachers currently seeking accreditation with the NSW Institute of Teachers, Highly Accomplished Teachers and Teacher Mentors.

The survey process, supported by themes that emerged in other pilot actions, revealed some possible inhibitors to the implementation of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*. Potential cost and the requirement of having to undertake what is perceived to be a rigorous process were identified as the most outstanding inhibitors. These two aspects have not yet been articulated in relation to certification against the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* which presumes that NSW DEC teachers have shaped their responses on their experience of the current accreditation processes in place with the NSW Institute of Teachers.

Two clear enablers emerged. The first related to the *Capacity to assume a role that is focussed on developing teacher quality in others*, suggesting that NSW DEC teachers may already be projecting into the process and developing a level of awareness about what they will need to be demonstrating for certification. The second, the *Relevance of the process of certification to a teacher's day to day work* is a finding consistent with trends already detailed and is an important consideration that can inform future implementation particularly in relation to professional learning.

Another trend of significance in relation to inhibitors and enablers was the high number of respondents unsure about whether the factors listed in the survey would inhibit or enable. This trend was reflected during the pilot's consultations and indicated that many teachers and leaders are interested in the need for specific articulation, guidance, understanding, and clarity about the process of transition to *National Professional Standards for Teachers*.

Similarly with regard to respondents' actual intention to engage in the Standards, two distinct, almost contradictory trends were revealed. First, a strong encouraging trend was evident where respondents believed that they would *Use the Standards to inform their practice*. Second was the fact that a large number of respondents were unsure about how they would engage with the Standards.

This trend was mirrored in responses relating to whether teachers would be interested in seeking certification as a means of recognising them as exemplary classroom practitioners. While the *Yes* response was highest, the *Unsure* and *No* responses were also significant.

In summary, this pilot study's findings provides a strong evidence base of rich and insightful understandings about how teachers and leaders view teaching standards and their role, impact and relationship to the core business of teaching and learning. The findings also provide useful, instructive ways forward that can strategically inform and direct system effort within NSW DEC and other jurisdictions as systems transition to the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*.

13 NSWIT

The NSW Institute of Teachers (NSWIT) oversees a system of accreditation and recognition of a teacher's professional capacity against professional teaching standards. NSW teachers who have achieved the mandatory accreditation level of Professional Competence (equivalent to Proficient in the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST)) must demonstrate over a five year period that they have maintained their teaching practice at the standard of Professional Competence and undertaken 100 hours of Professional Development. This pilot study has investigated the use of the NPST for accreditation processes that support teachers' professional learning.

The use of standards at career stages in NSW has meant that policy and processes have been implemented that engage teachers and schools in various phases of accreditation. PD providers also support some accreditation processes. On this basis, some specific contextual issues needed to be considered through the project.

The implications of the use of the NPST for current accreditation processes, whereby teachers in NSW are accredited at the level of detail described in the descriptors, formed the starting point for the project. A detailed analysis of the NPST at the descriptor level against the current NSW Standards provided initial advice on the potential for transference of the standards.

The effect of a change to the standards used also has repercussions for the approval of PD providers and the current provision of PD offered by endorsed providers. In 2011 the Institute has undertaken a review of a sample of endorsed providers of PD, which has contributed an awareness of potential issues providers may have in registering PD that addresses the NPST. Furthermore, the voluntary accreditation of teachers at the levels of Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership is an area of growth, and the approval processes of PD providers at these levels has been piloted in 2011.

To focus the project's investigation, five research questions were devised.

1. What process will be used to endorse professional development against the teaching standards?
2. What current NSW Institute Registered professional development already exists to address NPST?
3. What IT system is needed to assist teachers to electronically record, evaluate and reflect on their professional development?
4. What teacher-identified professional development are teachers currently undertaking that will address NPST?
5. What advice will support school personnel and professional development providers with implementation of the NPST in NSW?

Initial planning began with the intention of investigating an area of accreditation that affected large numbers of accredited teachers and other stakeholders in NSW. The numbers of teachers undertaking PD while maintaining their accreditation is growing substantially each year (by approximately 7000), and school personnel and PD providers are also participating by validating and monitoring online.

Five broad areas required work over the following twelve-month period, if an orderly transition to national standards were to be implemented. Initial planning also considered that work already underway might be drawn on to leverage more value for a project operating simultaneously with a larger implementation strategy for NSW. The pilot review of PD providers, the working group devising and trialling a PD approval process for PD undertaken for maintaining Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership accreditation and an analysis of the NPST and Descriptors were all identified.

Ongoing work identified opportunities for discussion with stakeholders about using the NPST and useful sources of data. New data sources were also identified and planned. Data sources were described for each research question and a timeline of planned events was developed.

The sources of data had two main forms – text records from processes that included meeting minutes, observation notes and reports and online database records from teachers and PD providers about completed PD. Analysis methods were devised to reflect the nature of the data undertaken. Some additional analysis was devised when results indicated.

In brief, some findings include:

- The use of PD for NSW accreditation requirements requires a range of actions to make the transition to NPST - changing some accreditation processes, developing new IT software, developing new targeted advice to specific stakeholders about the new standards and about the use of PD for accreditation.
- The current provision of Institute Registered professional development and teacher-identified professional development clearly addresses the NPST at the broad Standard level.
- The coverage against the NPST Descriptors of currently used professional development is also generally good, but there are a small number of gaps. Advice for providers and teachers will be needed to support addressing these descriptors.
- Targeted support is needed to encourage discussion in schools about the purpose, nature and role of professional development and differentiating this from the work of teachers.
- Identifying teacher professional learning needs using Descriptors of the NPST is essential to provide direction and broader coverage.

14 QUT

This pilot project investigated the existing practices and processes of Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers in the interpretation, analysis and implementation of National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) data. The definitions used for these three groups of teachers drew on the Preamble and Standard Descriptors for each Career Stage of the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST). A qualitative case study approach was the chosen methodology, with nine teachers across a variety of school sectors interviewed. Themes and sub-themes were identified from the participants' interview responses revealing the ways in which Queensland teachers work with NAPLAN data.

The data illuminated that generally individual schools and teachers adopted their own ways of working with data, with approaches ranging from individual/ad hoc, to hierarchical or a whole school approach. Findings also revealed that data are the responsibility of various persons from within the school hierarchy; some working with the data electronically whilst others rely on manual manipulation. Manipulation of data is used for various purposes including tracking performance, value adding and targeting programmes for specific groups of students, for example the gifted and talented.

Whilst all participants had knowledge of intervention programmes and how practice could be modified, there were large inconsistencies in knowledge and skills across schools. Some see the use of data as a mechanism for accountability, whilst others mention data with regards to changing the school culture and identifying best practice. Overall, the findings showed inconsistencies in approach to focus area 5.4. Recommendations therefore include a more national approach to the use of educational data.

15 REFA

The Murchison Network consists of eight remote schools located in an area the size of Victoria, 300 kilometres from Geraldton in Western Australia. The network has a staff of 65 (including principals) and 474 students. In 2009 the Murchison Network completed the Murchison Education Strategy 0-18 Years with two of the eight recommendations identified in the strategy underpinning the pilot: professional support for all staff, and knowledge of learning and teaching strategies. In the network, teacher professional learning has been delivered by principals and external specialists; delivering face to face on the school site, in Geraldton and in Perth. The aim of the pilot was to support teacher professional learning through an online environment. This nature of this support was to be guided by Descriptors within the Professional Engagement Domain of the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST).

The pilot project had three important research questions:

Research Question 1: *In what ways does networking within and across schools in a remote setting enhance professional learning and dialogue?*

Research Question 2: *Does an online platform have the potential to support collegiate learning within rural and remote locations?*

Research Question 3: *Does a blended approach enhance collegiate mentoring in supporting individual professional learning as described in the Standards?*

The network planned to employ a First Steps mathematics mentor teacher who was to drive the professional learning at individual school sites, the online forum being an important part of the program. An initial training session was held for the network staff on the connections to, and use of, the Country Education Project Inc. (CEP) online platform. There was ongoing online support for the staff as required, provided by CEP personnel. The Rural Education Forum formed a reference group to coordinate the project, collect data and write the final report. The staff completed an online survey during the week of October 24 – October 28.

Over the period of the pilot, the network developed three online professional learning forums through the CEP website. They were:

- A network wide forum focusing on instructional learning and numeracy using the First Steps program as a focus. Key personnel in the network immediately saw the potential to expand the number to include:
- A principal's network exploring leadership issues online and through the interactive platform Blackboard Collaborate, and
- An early years' forum.

Online Survey

In the online survey all staff answered fifteen research questions then a further seven relevant to their career stage. The research questions related to how the use of the online platform promoted professional learning consistent with Standard Six – *Engage in professional learning*, in the National Professional Standards for Teachers (referred to hereafter as ‘the Standards’).

Results

The majority of teachers believed that the use of the online platform significantly supported their professional learning, that their collaborative practice across the network was enhanced, that it enabled them to engage in professional dialogue both within their school and across the network, assisted them to self-reflect upon their professional learning and their knowledge of available resources was improved. The majority believed that access to the online platform was straightforward and that it was easy to use.

The minority of teachers believed that the use of the online platform promoted collegiate mentoring, professional dialogue with colleagues outside the network, or that its use saved time.

In the network a higher percentage of graduate and lead teachers responded positively to the potential of the use of the online platform, to support their professional learning, than did the proficient and highly accomplished teachers.

An unexpected outcome was the extent to which the online forum was used by the principals in the network.

Findings

Adequate time to plan, resource, in-service and learn is essential to the introduction of an online platform into a network system.

Adequate time is needed to allow for the connectivity to build a momentum towards significant staff engagement. This is extremely important if the network wishes to then develop dialogue and collegiate learning outside the network.

Recognition of the change transitional period is crucial to network-wide acceptance and use of the technology.

To ensure staff engagement in the use of online technology, the professional learning must be linked to a network curriculum priority and to the level of the online expertise of the teacher.

There is a need to create a culture of network online professional learning.

The staff need constructive “play-time” within the many forums. This time must have a real purpose.

All principals in a network must accept and mentor the change. The success of the principal forum in the Murchison Network pilot highlights the need to have:

- a blended learning strategy
- a mentor who is available and relentless
- a real purpose
- adequate time

Recommendations

That an appropriate national research body conduct an audit of professional learning programs designed to build teacher and pre-service teacher online platform capacity.

That the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership conduct a longitudinal study of the capacity to implement and sustain online capacity in rural and remote networks in order to build collegiate learning consistent with the Standards.

Conclusion

The use of the online platform enhanced teacher professional learning and dialogue and supported collegiate learning in a rural and remote network of schools that is consistent with the Standards.

16 SSI

The Stronger Smarter Institute (SSI) conducted workshops in diverse schools around the country to capture the unique voice and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and community members. These workshops also provided the opportunity to work with teachers and school personnel to investigate what makes an impressive (*deadly*) teacher and to identify how these teachers effectively engage with community. Two particular Focus Areas from the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) were used to develop questions for the Pilot project. The Focus Areas were: *Engage parents/cares in the educative process* (Professional Practice Domain); and *Engage with parents/carers* (Professional Engagement Domain).

Targeted schools from metropolitan, provincial and very remote communities participated in a range of workshops and rich data was collected representing diverse perspectives. Processes designed to stimulate debate, reveal assumptions and explore a range of perspectives and beliefs provide us with unique insights into the experiences and understandings of students, teachers and community members living and working in vastly different contexts.

The information collected is contained in the Appendices to this report and provides a rare opportunity to listen to and take account of student and community voice as well as enable teachers to reflect on their own beliefs and deepen understanding of the significant impact of the teacher-student and teacher-community relationships. The insights shared indicate that it is not a list of tasks we tick off but how we interact with students and community that is seen as important. The existence of a respectful relationship is essential ensuring a sense of connectedness with the school and the school's willingness to work with community rather than imposing what the school or teachers think is required. These workshops were often the beginning of a new way of engaging with community, and the conversations that arose indicated that there is not always a clear understanding of what community engagement is, whose responsibility it is to engage and what are the most effective ways to go about building these genuine relationships based on respect. The information gained for this pilot has significance for the individual schools involved as well as having wider implications for schools and communities working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and communities from very different demographics. Whether working with a school and community with one or two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students or a school community with 100 % Aboriginal students, the message is the same: build positive strong relationships and ensure clear understandings for the basis of plans that are inclusive of the community not imposed on community.

The processes facilitated rigorous debate and the insights that can be gleaned from individuals' responses provide valuable information from which schools can build with a view to enhancing community engagement in their specific school and community context. In addition teachers can understand from community and

student perspectives what they can do to build effective relationships with their students and communities.

The research questions focussed on describing the attributes of an impressive teacher and how they facilitate and support community engagement from community, student and school perspectives. This recognises the symbiotic relationships generated by effective teachers and also the strategies they put in place for building a school environment that fosters genuine community engagement.

Workshops conducted were responsive to the needs and requirements of the participating schools and uniquely structured to accommodate the individual sites and available times. Consistent processes and similar statements were used throughout to enable comparison across sites and to build a clear picture by capturing key messages. Interestingly, regardless of the demographic or context of the schools, the community, students and teachers recognised the importance of building strong relationships with students and communities. The schools involved could build on the conversations that have been started and use the information to explore further some key concepts of community engagement: listening to community and students and building new ideas and ways of incorporating procedures into school practice.

17 VIT

The Victorian Institute of Teaching (hereafter referred to as ‘the Institute’) is the regulatory authority for teachers in Victoria. It provisionally registers teachers who meet all qualifications and suitability requirements to be a teacher but who have not yet demonstrated they meet the standards of professional practice for full registration.

The Institute has developed and implemented an evidence-based process for Provisionally Registered Teachers (PRTs) to gather evidence from their teaching practice in schools to meet the VIT Standards. This process has been in place since 2004 and has been recognised by both PRTs and mentors to be an authentic way of demonstrating the Victorian Standards and of supporting professional learning.

This project investigated the use of the National Professional Standards for Teachers (hereafter referred to as ‘the National Standards’) within the processes and practices established by the Institute.

The overarching question for the Institute was:

How does the current process for full registration accommodate the National Standards at the Proficient level?

The questions that focussed the investigation were:

- How are the National Standards at the Proficient level understood and used by provisionally registered teachers (PRTs) for full registration?
- How are they used by mentors to support PRTs to do this?
- How do the National Standards support the development of PRT practice?
- What professional learning benefits are there for mentors?

The study involved participation of 15 schools: 6 in a regional and rural area; 9 in the metropolitan area. In most cases 2 teachers per school participated: 1 provisionally registered teacher and their mentor. In two schools there were two pairs of teachers and in one circumstance the one mentor had two PRTs who participated in the pilot project. The project was supported by staff in the Institute’s Standards & Professional Learning branch.

The research involved a mixed method approach that comprised:

- a workshop to benchmark practice and develop an action plan;
- school visits;
- online surveys; and
- development of individual case studies.

Findings from the Pilot

Feedback from PRTs, mentors and Institute managers indicated there are no major issues with transference from the Victorian Standards to the National Standards. The frame of reference for the National Standards provides a positive basis for inclusion into the Victorian process. In addition, teachers reported professional learning benefits from using the National Standards.

There were some Descriptors that the majority of teachers were concerned about evidencing. This will require the Institute to investigate these Descriptors more fully as they are used over a longer period of time.

Overall:

- Teachers were able to easily use the National Standards in developing evidence of their practice for full registration.
- Provisionally registered teachers found using the National Standards helpful to understand and improve their area of practice.
- Mentors found the National Standards assisted them to support development of practice of the PRT and to frame questions.
- The National Standards provided a common language for the teachers to discuss what they do.
- Mentors found that using the National Standards supported their own professional learning.

The case studies developed as part of the pilot project will provide rich material to understand what practice looks like at the Proficient teacher level.

These findings were contextualised within the way that PRTs in Victorian schools provide evidence for the full registration with the support of a mentor. Those regulatory authorities that are developing a similar process to the Institute could potentially benefit from this pilot project.