

AITSL Pilot Projects, July – November, 2011

Appendix D – Pilot Site Final Reports

The SiMERR National Research Centre

The University of New England

ARMIDALE NSW

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1 ACT TQI

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Setting the Scene

This project is one of 17 projects funded by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). The purpose of the National Professional Standards for Teachers (the Standards) Pilot projects was to trial the Standards within existing structures and practices and to determine what further support is required for their implementation. The opportunity to trial the Standards is consistent with the intention of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) to work closely and collaboratively with stakeholders to develop a range of materials that document effective processes associated with the implementation of the Standards.

The Standards provide a framework of three domains that describe (i) the knowledge, (ii) the practice and (iii) the professional engagement of teachers across four career stages: Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead. Descriptors at each of the career stages define the work of teachers, so that the Standards make explicit the elements of high quality, effective teaching in 21st century schools. The Standards therefore provide guidance for maximising educational outcomes for students in all contexts. The Draft Standards were validated in 2010 through two national surveys.

Through engagement with stakeholders, it is intended that the Pilots will provide a shared sense of ownership and national consensus about the Standards. A range of organisations across each State and Territory is involved in undertaking the Pilot projects to reflect the diversity of structures and practices. This selection encompasses regulatory authorities, employers, universities, schools, associations and national organisations.

As part of the preliminary organisational phase of the Pilot projects were grouped within four Theme Groupings. The ACT pilot is one of three pilots within the Theme Group: *Initial teacher education and registration*. It was undertaken within the context of a newly created ACT Teacher Quality Institute and the need to establish its position within the profession in the ACT.

There is a strong focus on liaison between key teacher education institutions in the ACT, namely, the University of Canberra (UC) and the Australian Catholic University, Signadou Campus (ACU) to develop congruence between the teacher education programs in terms of quality assurance issues related to common expectations, professional learning experiences in schools and assessment of graduates against the Standards.

The aims of ACT TQI project were to:

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 is 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:
 1. a template for the professional conversations about assessment
 2. a rubric for the professional experience report format.

Standards 1 (*Know students and how they learn*) and 6 (*Engage in professional learning*) were chosen to keep the project manageable within the short time frame.

Perceived benefits of the program included:

Increased collaboration in the development of aligned Professional Experience programs for pre-service teachers in the ACT linked to National Standards

Standards will provide common language and understanding for professional conversations around the assessment of pre-service teachers that could provide a model for professional conversations around standards at further career stages

Improved teacher practice in mentoring using the Standards as a framework for professional conversations.

- Improved understanding of the experience of professional practice and conversations for the key stakeholder groups and for ACT TQI and AITSL.

1.1.2 Contextual Issues

1.1.2.1 Recent establishment of the ACT Teacher Quality Institute (ACT TQI)

The implementation of registration and 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. Independent schools in the ACT have been using the Independent Schools Teacher Accreditation Authority (ISTAA) guidelines and procedures.

1.1.2.2 University Liaison

The pilot focuses on liaison between the key teacher education institutions in the ACT, namely, UC and ACU, to develop congruence between the teacher education programs in terms of quality assurance issues related to common expectations, professional learning experiences in schools and assessment of graduates against the Standards. The Signadou Campus of ACU is one of 6 campuses of the ACU that delivers teacher education. As such it may have a limited ability to customise courses, professional experience requirements and assessment tools to the ACT context in alignment with UC.

In response to teacher regulation requirements and student demand the University of Canberra's Faculty of Education is currently transitioning to a range of new course offerings. As part of this overall restructuring the Faculty is reviewing and redesigning the professional experience component of its teacher education courses for implementation in 2012.

1.1.2.3 Sample composition

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 (Kervin et. al., 2006). Students from ACU were already in schools, having commenced an eight week professional experience placement. Students from UC were gathered from a group who had completed all course requirements except for a final internship placement which was scheduled to take place in October and November. Students were given the option of completing an earlier placement.

The small sample size and ACT context could affect the ability to maintain anonymity of participants. The final report has been written at a level for broader audiences and names and details of participants have been omitted to ensure anonymity.

1.2 Research Questions

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

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

Research Question: How will Standards 1 (*Know students and how they learn*) and 6 (*Engage in professional learning*) inform and enhance the work embedded assessment and feedback for pre-service teachers and their mentors in the ACT?

1.2.1 Focus

Using the Standards as a framework and reference point, the key elements of the pilot in the ACT context are:

1. Engagement of both the pre-service teacher and the mentor in the professional experience placement process through structured professional conversations
2. Cross sectoral collaboration in the identification and alignment of the core elements of the professional experience component of teacher education programs at the two universities
3. Creation of tools that can be used in the implementation of the Standards for the assessment of pre-service teachers.

Standards 1 and 6 were chosen to keep the project manageable within the short time frame and to reflect two key but discrete aspects of teaching i.e. Knowledge of students and how they learn and professional engagement.

1.3 Methodological Considerations

The pilot used a case study approach with analysis of narrative data and also drawing on 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. A case study approach also enabled in depth understanding of a specific situation that could be generalised to a broader context (Babbie, 2006) as the intention was also to identify elements that could be used in the future implementation of the Standards e.g. a model of professional conversations that could be used at further career stages.

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.

1.3.1 Engagement of stakeholders

The pilot proposal was initiated by a member of the ACT TQI Board with Board support. A Steering Committee consisting of representatives from UC, ACU, ACT Education and Training Directorate (ETD) and the Chief Executive of the TQI was established and met regularly to oversee development of the program, review progress and address issues arising.

A Project Officer was appointed to undertake the research. The Project Officer met regularly with the CEO of the TQI and the Steering Committee and maintained regular contact with SiMERR liaison staff.

University 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.

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.

1.3.2 Establishment of sample/participants

The intention was to have 10 participants from two schools, one ACT ETD school and one Catholic systemic school and to include a pre-service teacher and mentor from a Preschool/Early Learning in each sector. The principals of the initial two participant schools opted to join the pilot after discussions with the CEO of the ACT TQI.

Pre-service teachers from UC participating in the pilot were recruited by invitation facilitated through the university. They were provided with information about the project, contact details of the Project Officer and opted in to the pilot. The sample contained 5 female students from UC, two were specialising in Early Childhood and the others in Primary. Four were final year students undertaking their final professional experience placement and one was a third year who needed to make up a previously incomplete professional experience placement.

The four students from ACU were already undertaking an eight week professional experience placement. All were fourth year students undertaking their final professional experience placement. There were insufficient students placed at the originally identified school so the placements were at two neighbouring primary schools within one parish. We were unable to find a student to undertake placement in the Early Learning Centre attached to one of the schools.

Mentoring teachers were recruited by invitation through individual schools in consultation with principals. They were provided with information about the project and opted in. One teacher did feel under some obligation to participate.

The final sample consisted of 9 pre-service teachers and 9 mentor teachers. There were 3 Early Childhood placement pairs, one in a Preschool, one on a Kindergarten class and one on a Year 2 class. There were 6 primary placement pairs. One of these was a special education Learning Centre placement for students with a range of mild to moderate disabilities.

The sample included one male pre-service teacher, one male mentor teacher (not paired), one Indigenous pre-service teacher and one pre-service teacher with ESL background. The pre-service teachers ranged in age from early twenties to early forties.

The mentoring teachers ranged in age from mid-twenties to early fifties. The early childhood teachers had been teaching from 32 to 38 years (33 years average) and the primary teachers had been teaching between 4 and 26 years (15 years average).

1.3.3 Collection of baseline survey data

Questionnaires were used to collect pre- and post-participation data. They included background questions that provided both demographic data and more open questions that allowed participants to respond in their own words. There were also a number of items that requested closed numerical responses on a Likert scale. These questions mainly related to the participants' experience with and knowledge of the Standards. Two questions asked about the types of evidence they might use to model and assess the descriptors for Standards 1 and 6 identified for the pilot project.

Questionnaires were distributed to participants, where possible, prior to the workshop/professional learning day in August. (Appendices 1 and 2)

1.3.4 A workshop/professional learning day

A workshop/professional learning day was held on Thursday 25 August. The workshop was attended by 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, including the Chair, and representatives from the ACT Education and Training Directorate and the Catholic Education Office

The workshop was held at one of the participating schools and included the following sessions:

1. *National Professional Standards for Teachers, the Big Picture and this pilot*
This session provided a background and overview of the development of the Standards and their role in National Partnerships and teacher education programs and teacher registration. It also provided an outline of the pilot and the program for the day.
2. *Mentoring and Feedback, their role in this project*
This session focussed on the roles and responsibilities of both parties in a mentoring relationship and the principles and skills of giving and receiving feedback.
3. *Workshop: Developing a template for Professional Conversations*
Participants were placed in cross sectoral groups that included mentors and preservice teachers from each sector and staff from each university. They were provided with a range of resource material including performance review templates and reflection templates from a variety of sources. Their task was to develop a template that could be used for professional conversations as part of the assessment process for pre-service teachers.
4. *Workshop: Developing a rubric for assessment of pre-service teachers against Standards 1 and 6*
Participants remained in the same cross sectoral groups. They were provided with a range of resources including sample assessment reports and rubrics from several universities.

General discussion and lack of agreement about the purpose of the assessment including validity, reliability and fairness, and the type of assessment (Standards/criteria based versus graded/normative) resulted in a change of direction and the task was changed to the development of a draft evidence guide focussing on how both mentors and pre-service teachers could demonstrate aspects of Standards 1 and 6.

1. *Clarification of roles, responsibilities and requirements for project participants*
This session focussed on the requirements for mentors and pre-service teachers to demonstrate and provide evidence to support achievement of Standards 1 and 6 using the professional conversation template and the draft evidence guide during at least two weeks of the professional experience placement. Requirements were deliberately not stated in terms of numbers or specific activities or evidence. (Program provided at Appendix 3)

1.3.5 Structured two week professional experience program using the tools developed in the workshop

Mentors and pre-service teachers were asked to integrate the use of the template for professional conversations and the draft evidence guide into their professional experience placement. The placement was not structured to include use of these tools as some students were well into their placement when the pilot started and others began their placement after the workshop and with little notice.

1.3.6 Collection of post participation survey data

Post Surveys for participants were distributed in the last week of Term 3 (the last placement week for most participants) for return at the end of the school holidays. The survey forms for mentors and pre-service teachers (Appendix 4 and 5) were in the same format as the pre-surveys with open questions about their experience of mentoring and giving and receiving feedback, some forced response questions about the use of the Standards and open questions about the types of evidence they used to model and assess the Standards. Additional open questions were also included about what participants saw as the key issues and recommendations for the implementation of Standards for the assessment of pre-service teachers.

1.3.7 Initial data analysis to identify themes

Data from the pre and post surveys was used to identify emerging themes for further analysis and clarification in interviews and focus groups. Emerging themes were discussed with SiMERR personnel and the pilot Steering Group.

1.3.8 Collection of narrative data (interviews and focus groups)

A series of interviews was undertaken with groups and individual participants. Timetabling was based on availability. Some group meetings included pre-service teachers and their mentors; others were mentor teachers only or pre-service teachers only. Two early childhood teachers were interviewed in a separate group and most pre-service teachers were also interviewed individually.

In the interviews participants talked about how they had used the template and the draft evidence guide. Participants were also given the opportunity to respond to the emerging themes and to add anything they may not have included in the survey responses.

1.3.9 Analysis of narrative and survey data.

Data from both narrative and survey sources was analysed in terms of Early Childhood mentors and pre-service teachers and Primary mentors and pre-service teachers and organised around the previously identified themes.

1.4 Results from the Engagement

1.4.1 Data Collection and Management

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

5. Exposure to and understanding of the Standards by working teachers
6. Provision of evidence guides
7. Flexibility of templates for professional mentoring conversations
8. Mentoring training for teachers
9. Consistency of university practices for pre-service placements and assessment.

An overarching theme was the change in the language used by participants as the project progressed. 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 definitely 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.

Data from the 18 participants was grouped into three dual categories:

1. Mentors and pre-service teachers
2. Early Childhood and Primary
3. Pre and Post placement.

Two of the mentoring pairs did not develop a positive mentoring relationship. This was reflected in some of the responses to open questions and affected the reliability of aggregated responses in quantitative data in such a small sample.

1.4.2 Analysis of the Data

1.4.2.1 Analytical Procedures

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.

1.4.2.2 Results

1.4.2.2.1 Theme 1: Exposure to and understanding of the Standards by working teachers

None of the mentoring teachers had assessed themselves against the Standards and in both the pre-survey questionnaire and at the workshop several expressed concern that they had not seen the Standards and had not discussed them with colleagues before involvement in the project.

After working with the Standards mentoring teachers were overwhelmingly positive. Comments included:

I have moved from virtually no exposure to the Teaching Standards to a clearer understanding of how they work and their impacts on the teaching profession.... They provide a clear direction, articulation of the skills teaching requires and the movement towards being highly accomplished teachers.

They will provide teachers with a greater understanding of professional requirements. They will be a good reference point for professional discussions, for identifying areas of strength/concern or areas to be further developed. Those seeking promotion or on selection panels for those seeking higher duty positions will have specific indicators to support decision making.

At the beginning of the pilot three pre-service teachers had assessed themselves against the national Standards. Two from ACU had provided evidence of their achievement against the Standards as an activity at university. None of the other students had assessed themselves against the Standards although their university assessments were all based on the NSW teacher standards.

After the pilot all pre-service teachers reported greater understanding of the role and importance of the Standards to their careers. Comments included:

I've realised that it's nice to have something to assess my own teaching against. Similar to when assessing students you teach, you often place them in levels or stages of learning. Having the National Standards available gives me the opportunity to assess where I am as a pre-service teacher and how to make leaps and bounds in becoming a QUALITY teacher.

University has opened my eyes to a broad range of theories behind education and learning, however this program and placement helped me focus on different ways students think, their intellectual abilities and developmental processes rather than just different ways of teaching a number of different students. (Primary placement focus on Standard 1)

A number of mentor teachers and pre-service teachers highlighted the lack of exposure to and understanding of the Standards as a key issue in implementing assessment of preservice teachers against the Standards. Comments included:

We as teachers should have had some discussion around the Standards. (Mentor teacher)

All teachers need to become extremely familiar with the Standards document – both its content and purpose. (Pre service teacher)

While acknowledging that this is a very small sample, pre-service teacher and early childhood mentor teacher participants were generally positive in their beliefs about the effectiveness of the Standards and did demonstrate some improvement in their response to questions about the potential effectiveness of the Standards in the assessment of and the provision of feedback to pre-service teachers.

Table 1-1 - Early Childhood Mentor Teachers: Perceived Effectiveness of Standards

Question	Pre survey (Average)	Post survey (Average)	% Change
How effective do you think that the Standards will be in supporting:			
Assessment of pre-service teachers	3.0	4.0	+20%
Provision of feedback to pre-service teachers	4.0	4.3	+6%
Improvement in classroom practice	4.0	3.6	-8%
Improvement in outcomes for students	3.6	3.6	0

Table 1-2 - Early Childhood Pre-service Teachers: Perceived Effectiveness of Standards

Question	Pre survey (Average)	Post survey (Average)	% Change
How effective do you think that the Standards will be in supporting:			
Assessment of pre-service teachers	3.6	4.0	+8%
Provision of feedback to pre-service teachers	3.3	4.0	+14%
Improvement in classroom practice	4.0	4.0	0
Improvement in outcomes for students	4.3	3.6	-14%

Primary mentor teachers were initially unsure of the potential effectiveness of the Standards across a range of measures but were generally positive after engagement with the Standards.

Table 1-3 - Primary Mentor teachers: Effectiveness of Standards

Question	Pre survey (Average)	Post survey (Average)	% Change
How effective do you think that the Standards will be in supporting:			
Assessment of pre-service teachers	4 of the 6	3.8	NA
Provision of feedback to pre-service teachers	participants in this group	3.8	
Improvement in classroom practice	responded 'Don't Know' to all items	3.1	
Improvement in outcomes for students		3.8	

Table 1-4 - Primary Pre-service Teachers: Perceived Effectiveness of Standards

Question	Pre survey	Post survey	% Change
How effective do you think that the Standards will be in supporting:			
Assessment of pre-service teachers	4.3	3.8	-10%
Provision of feedback to pre-service teachers	3.8	3.8	0
Improvement in classroom practice	3.8	3.8	0
Improvement in outcomes for students	3.8	3.8	0

The negative percentage change in the perception of the effectiveness of the Standards in the assessment of the pre-service teachers was affected by the two people who did not develop positive working relationships with their mentors.

1.4.2.2.2 Theme 2: Provision of Evidence Guides

The Draft Evidence Guide was developed at the workshop in response to the discussion about an assessment rubric and the lack of a clear agreement on the purpose(s) of a report format for graduate teachers. When it was clear that we would not develop an assessment rubric the group decided to look at possible sources of evidence that pre-service teachers could use to demonstrate their achievement of the Standards.

Mentor teacher pre survey responses to the questions of what evidence/activities they could use to model the Standard descriptors and what evidence/activities they could use to assess pre service teachers varied in quality from ‘observation’ and ‘discussion’ to detailed descriptions of specific activities and expectations e.g.,

Table 1-5 - Mentor Teacher: Example of pre survey response

Standard Descriptor	Evidence/activities
6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff meetings 2. Team planning 3. Staff PD events’
	<p><i>I find it hard to comment at this time. I am not sure how this will look for pre service teachers. (EC teacher)</i></p>
	<p><i>Participate in staff meetings. Offer ideas and participate in grade level planning. Active weekly planning with associate teacher. Join professional conversations with other staff members and contribute to the life of the school. Be in the staffroom at various times and capitalise on opportunities to network. Have a positive attitude, even when things may not be that exciting. (Primary teacher)</i></p>

The language and understanding in the responses to the post survey from mentor teachers tended to be more varied and complex and there were more comments indicating self-reflection.

Pre service teachers referred generally to documentation of observation and discussion and use of specific teaching models and strategies e.g. Gardner’s multiple intelligences in the pre survey responses.

Comments about the usefulness of the Draft Evidence Guide reflected the different ways it was used, the development of shared understanding through professional discussion and the need for some more specific annotated illustrations. Comments included:

It made for great discussion as it was hard to understand what was required.

Some of the evidence indicators were a little confusing.

My only concern is that feedback and assessment may become too prescriptive if teachers don’t think creatively when it comes to gathering evidence.

I became more aware of things that could be used as evidence and how I could use the Standards to develop myself as a role model for beginning teachers.

Two of the early childhood teaching pairs in different schools independently came up with similar processes for gathering and demonstrating evidence using visual aids. They placed the Standards in a prominent position on the classroom wall and when the preservice teacher undertook an activity or demonstrated achievement a sticky note or a photo was attached as an indicator.

These sticky notes were sometimes difficult to place next to just one indicator and often led to some good professional discussion.

Primary mentor and pre service teachers tended to gather evidence using more structured documentation and were interested in the different ways that other teachers used and recorded evidence.

One of the pre service teachers commented that although she had been developing an e-portfolio as part of her assessment for her university course this project had made the idea of 'evidence' much clearer for her.

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 support professional conversations. 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.

1.4.2.2.3 Theme 3: Flexibility of templates for professional conversations and feedback

The Preamble was provided with the template for professional conversations to reinforce the message that this was a flexible document that could be used in a number of ways. It was apparent at the workshop that there was a range of preferred modes of operation – from the big picture thinkers who did not want to bother with the detail to those who preferred to have all the information they needed in a structured format before they started working.

In the post survey and the interviews participants described a range of activities and ways of using the template for professional discussion. Some used the template formally and daily, others used it for weekly feedback or mid-prac and final feedback sessions only. Some used it more informally on a daily basis and used the university report format for more formal feedback.

Participants made a range of suggestions for improving the template. These have been incorporated into further versions that are likely to be used by UC in their revised professional experience practices. Participants also suggested that all prompts and preamble on the template could be mounted onto laminated card and blank forms provided for completion prior to and during discussion.

1.4.2.2.4 Theme 4: Mentoring training for teachers

Within this sample the majority of mentor teachers had undertaken no professional learning in relation to mentoring and providing feedback in the past three years. One early childhood and

one primary teacher had been involved in a program to support beginning teachers with the ACT ETD that included workshops on mentoring and feedback. Experience of mentoring others ranged from nil, through limited experience with university students, to extensive experience as a supervising teacher and through leadership development programs.

Experience of mentoring and receiving feedback varied. One early childhood teacher had a very negative experience of mentoring when she moved from Victoria to the ACT after teaching for 25 years. She was required to undertake assessment reports with a 'mentor' teacher with two years experience. After receiving a permanent position she was required to undertake further probation reports. She commented:

Hopefully with the introduction of National Professional Standards for teachers, such processes for highly experienced teachers will be eliminated'

The benefits of more positive experiences were also highlighted e.g.

The detail provided demonstrated a strong awareness/knowledge of the teacher as a person and of their function both individually and as part of a wider body. I came away with a sense of being highly valued and that those extra tasks and courses undertaken contributed to the well being of our school.

All teachers with the ACT ETD undertake a Professional Pathways process that involves professional learning and development planning linked to system and school strategic directions and goals. Interviews/professional discussions are undertaken twice per year as a formative and summative review. Some mentor teachers had been involved in giving and receiving professional feedback through the Quality Teacher Program, which includes peer observation of lessons and feedback.

In the pre survey descriptions of current practice in mentoring and providing professional feedback were limited. Most responses referred to observing and providing verbal feedback and discussing positive and negative aspects of a specific lesson.

In the post survey mentoring teachers described a range of activities and ways of using the template for professional discussion. The language changed from what 'I' did to what 'we' did as professional colleagues. There was a strong focus on reflection by the pre service teacher. The shared understanding and language was reflected in comments such as:

When providing feedback more informally, such as on lesson plans, we kept the format in mind – strengths and skills observed, challenges faced, and areas for development and ideas for support.

The template was good when we had some more "sensitive issues" to discuss, such as areas for improvement/challenges they are facing. I suppose it made it less personal.

Within this small sample, early childhood teachers and pre-service teachers felt more comfortable/confident in asking for, giving and receiving professional feedback than their primary counterparts. Early childhood mentor teachers said they were more comfortable/confident asking for and receiving feedback after participation in this pilot. As a group they also demonstrated greater improvement in confidence in providing feedback to pre-service teachers who are not fulfilling expectations.

Table 1-6 - Early Childhood Mentor Teachers: Professional Feedback

Question	Pre survey (Average)	Post survey (Average)	% Change
In general how comfortable /confident do you feel:			
Asking for professional feedback	3.6	4.3	+14%
Receiving professional feedback	4.0	4.3	+6%
Giving professional feedback	4.0	4.0	0
Providing feedback for pre-service teachers not fulfilling expectations	2.6	3.6	+20%

Table 1-7 - Primary Mentor Teachers: Professional Feedback

Question	Pre survey (Average)	Post survey (Average)	% Change
In general how comfortable /confident do you feel:			
Asking for professional feedback	3.1	3.6	10%
Receiving professional feedback	3.5	4.0	10%
Giving professional feedback	3.5	4.1	12%
Providing feedback to pre-service teachers who are not fulfilling expectations	3.0	2.5	-10%

The two dysfunctional mentoring relationships were in the primary pairs and this may have affected responses to these items. The reduction in confidence/comfort in providing feedback to pre-service teachers not fulfilling expectations can be attributed largely to one primary teacher who had only ever had positive mentoring experiences before this pilot.

Table 1-8 - Early Childhood Pre-service Teachers: Professional Feedback

Question	Pre-survey (Average)	Post survey (Average)	% Change
In general how comfortable /confident do you feel:			
Asking for professional feedback	4.3	4.3	0
Receiving professional feedback	4.0	4.3	6%
Giving professional feedback	3.0	3.0	0

Table 1-9 - Primary Pre-service Teachers: Professional Feedback

Question	Pre-survey	Post survey	% Change
In general how comfortable /confident do you feel:			
Asking for professional feedback	4.0	4.1	+2%
Receiving professional feedback	4.5	4.1	-8%
Giving professional feedback	3.3	3.5	+4%

Pre-service teachers as a group were more comfortable/confident in asking for and receiving feedback than they were in giving feedback. This is likely to be a reflection of the mentoring relationship but was also a factor in their recommendation that they be able to provide feedback to the university about their mentor teacher and their school experience independently of the university reporting template which many of them use for employment purposes.

Participants recommended that all teachers should have some training in mentoring and giving and receiving feedback. Some suggested that training for mentor teachers could be differentiated and include general introduction for all teachers and training in specific skill acquisition and university requirements for teachers involved in mentoring pre-service professional experience placements.

Another suggestion was that general introductory information about providing constructive feedback and mentoring relationships could be included as an appendix to other material e.g. University course documentation for pre service teachers and mentors, TQI registration publications, AITSL website, employer induction material.

1.4.2.2.5 Theme 5: Consistency of university practices for pre-service placements and assessment

The August workshop was an important opportunity for staff from the two participating universities to meet, learn about the pilot project and how things worked in each sector. Although discussions about the pilot and cross sectoral engagement had taken place at a high

level, between Deans, some university staff had not had an opportunity to discuss the implications of the Standards on pre service teacher education courses and assessment. UC staff were in the early stages of their development of new professional experience structures for implementation in 2012.

The issue of consistent practice between universities was raised regularly by participants in both questionnaires and interviews. Teachers involved with UC pre-service teachers were particularly concerned that in their review of professional experience arrangements UC would be 'getting rid of the internship' and reducing the amount of time pre-service teachers spend in schools. UC is aware of this perception and is currently running information sessions to reassure schools that their new arrangements are consistent with national agreements and practice.

Pre-service teachers also raised the issue of national consistency of courses in the context that they are likely to be employed interstate. They were reassured that all teacher training institutions in Australia would be developing courses that provided teacher education graduates with opportunities to meet each of the Graduate Career Stage Descriptors.

Both mentor teachers and pre-service teachers wanted university assessment reporting to align with Standards and be nationally consistent.

Students from both universities commented that there should be a separate feedback mechanism for pre-service teachers to comment on their practicum experience directly to the university. While there is opportunity for students to comment on their mentor and the mentoring school on their evaluation report, this report is often used for employment purposes and specific comments may be inappropriate. Students saw this mechanism as a way to provide positive as well as critical feedback about mentors and the support they received in schools and appreciated that mismatches can occur and that one person's negative experience of a mentor should not preclude that mentor working with other pre-service teachers.

1.4.3 Summary

All participants were concerned about the lack of exposure to and understanding of the Standards by working teachers. At the beginning of the pilot both mentor teachers and preservice teachers had little knowledge and experience of the Standards. After working with the Standards participants were positive about the use of the standards for assessment of preservice teachers and reported a greater understanding of the role and importance of the Standards to their careers. Most participants highlighted the need for teachers and preservice teachers to be given time to engage with the Standards.

The Draft Evidence Guide developed for this pilot was appreciated as a simple and useful reference document. Participants developed greater understanding of the types of evidence they could use and different ways of presenting and using evidence to support assessment against the Standards. This was reflected in the language used to describe evidence in the post survey and discussions. The need for a more specific evidence guide was identified and the continuing work of AITSL in development of such a guide was acknowledged.

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.

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 all teachers who are mentoring preservice teachers have some initial training in mentoring and that additional training in specific skills be made available.

Participants from both universities saw the introduction of National Teaching 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. Students from both universities commented that there should be a separate feedback mechanism for pre-service teachers to comment on their practicum experience directly to the university.

1.5 Resources

1.5.1 Resources Developed for the Pilot

The two versions of the Template for Professional Conversations, initial draft used in the pilot and the revised version both include a Preamble that provides context and are provided as Appendices 6 and 7. The UC is using the revised draft in their development of reviewed professional experience organisation for 2012.

The Draft Evidence Guide (Appendix 8) was useful in the context of this pilot and generated good professional discussion. It is understood that it will be superseded with the AITSL publication of nationally consistent evidence guides that are being developed through other pilot projects.

1.6 Findings and Outcomes

1.6.1 Implications and Recommendations from the Pilot

1.6.1.1 Exposure to and understanding of the National Teaching Standards by working teachers.

Recommendation 1:

Teachers should be given opportunities to spend time engaging and becoming familiar with the Standards.

1.6.1.2 Provision of Evidence Guides

Recommendation 2:

Provision of on-line illustrations/elaborations for each Standard and Descriptor at each Career Stage should be integrated into the implementation of Standards.

1.6.1.3 Flexibility of template for Professional Conversations

Recommendation 3:

Provide different versions of the template with a common preamble to teachers and allow them to workshop the most useful format for themselves.

1.6.1.4 Training for Mentoring Teachers

Recommendation 4:

All teachers who undertake mentoring roles for pre-service teachers should be involved in training in mentoring and providing feedback.

1.6.1.5 Consistency of university practices for pre-service placements and assessment

Recommendation 5:

Teacher education courses nationally should have consistent course structures, practicum requirements and assessment protocols.

Recommendation 6:

Assessment protocols for pre-service teachers should be guided by the National Professional Standards for Teachers and be nationally consistent.

Recommendation 7:

Provision of practicum requirement information could be linked to mentoring training for teachers supervising pre-service teachers in schools.

Recommendation 8:

Universities provide a mechanism for pre-service teachers to report directly to the university about the quality of their practicum experience in schools.

1.6.1.6 The Local Perspective

No local perspective provided.

1.6.1.7 The National Perspective

No national perspective provided.

1.6.2 Planning for the Future

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.

This pilot was undertaken in Early Childhood and Primary settings. The introduction of registration and Standards for all teachers and all schools in the ACT in 2012 provides an opportunity to pilot a similar project in the secondary sector and in schools with different structures including P-10 schools and senior colleges.

A strong recommendation from the pilot is for mentor training for teachers who are supervising preservice professional experience placements. It would be worthwhile to undertake further investigation into the efficacy of such training. There are options to investigate the effects of a range of implementation strategies such as provision of information only, interactive workshops and ongoing mentoring support.

The ACT TQI will be trialling the initial versions of national Evidence Guides in consultation with AITSL in 2012 and this provides another opportunity for cross sectoral cooperation and research in conjunction with ACT TQI.

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2 AEF

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Setting the Scene

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.

The Asia Education Foundation (AEF) defines Asia literacy as deep and foundational knowledge, skills and understanding of the histories, geographies, literatures, arts, cultures and languages of the diverse countries of Asia.

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.

While it may be argued that if all teachers teach Asia literacy then the Descriptors are general enough to apply to all teachers. However, using the logic of the Standards and curriculum imperative of the Asia Priority in the Australian Curriculum all teachers must therefore demonstrate Asia literacy competency in all Standards.

Put simply, an English, Economics, Mathematics or Health and Physical Education teacher could not progress through the continuum from Graduate to Proficient to Highly Accomplished and Lead unless they ‘evidenced’ the teaching of the Asia Priority.

So, while Standards 2 within the Professional Knowledge Domain (*Know the content and how to teach it*), has particular Focus Areas, namely, 2.4 related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, 2.5 for Literacy and Numeracy and 2.6 referring to Information and Communication Technology, for teachers wishing to demonstrate competency in Asia literacy there is no reference point or even acknowledgement of the Asia Priority in the Standards.

Consequently, the issue for the AEF became how teachers might use the Standards to evidence Asia literacy given the above. Whether the Descriptors could be used by teachers was therefore what was being tested in this pilot study.

Therefore, the AEF undertook a pilot study to trial the use of the National Professional Standards for Teachers (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 and current and developing capabilities, professional aspirations and achievements in relation to Asia literacy and resulted in four case studies to support the development of Asia literate teachers in their career.

The stakeholders and collaborators for this pilot study included:

1. A government primary school teacher from Victoria, a catholic primary school principal from Western Australia, a deputy principal and cluster leader from the ACT and a humanities Head of Department from Western Australia, and
2. AEF staff and consultants from APTA with expertise in Asia literacy, learning areas, particularly English and Humanities (history, geography, studies of society) and primary and secondary teaching.

2.1.2 Contextual Issues

The focus area for the case study was how **Asia Literacy** can best be supported by the Descriptors in the Standards. The AEF explored how Asia literacy is defined, implemented and evidenced by teachers using a participatory monitoring and evaluation technique.

With the implementation of the Australian Curriculum the Asia Priority will become a focus for many schools and teachers across Australia. This pilot study provided an important context for the development of a case study to explore how:

1. The framework provided by the Standards supports teachers to reflect on their practice and their school context in relation to the Asia Priority, and
2. How the Standards inform the development of professional learning goals and/or professional accountability in relation to Asia literacy.

The purpose of this pilot study was to undertake a trial in the use of the relevant Standards through the development of case studies on how Asia literacy can be supported by their use.

In the course of the trial the AEF examined and reflected upon two specific Standards:

- Professional Knowledge Domain, Standard 2 (Focus Areas 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3) – *Know the content and how to teach it*, and
- Professional Engagement Domain, Standard 6 (Focus Areas 6.1 to 6.4) – *Engage in professional learning*.

During the course of the pilot project, the AEF developed a self-assessment tool to support teachers and principals in applying the identified Standards in relation to Asia literacy. The self-assessment tool, it was thought, could be used at different stages of a teacher's career and be particularly focussed, on what is for many, an emerging area of focus requiring new knowledge, skills and understanding.

2.2 Research Questions

2.2.1 The rationale of the pilot study

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 continuum.

- **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?
- **Research Question 2:** How can teachers be supported in identifying their place on the continuum of the career stages in the National Professional Standards for Teachers in relation to Asia literacy?

2.2.2 Focus

A number of key perspectives informed the focus of the Pilot investigation and these are now detailed.

Asia literacy is now a policy supported by the authorising document *The Melbourne Declaration of Education Goals for Young Australians* and enacted through the Asia Priority in the Australian Curriculum. There is a gap in the National Standards in relation to the Asia Priority in that two of the Australian Curriculum's Priorities – the Asia and Sustainability Priorities – are not mentioned.

Given that much of the Australian Curriculum is involved in standard practice (with the roll out of the English, History, Geography and Science Curricula) in the near future, the AEF was interested to explore how the new priorities in the Australian Curriculum, may be evidenced in the Standards and what emphasis will be placed on the Cross-Curriculum Priorities.

More specifically, with the advent of the Asia Priority in the Australian Curriculum, the AEF wanted to explore how teachers on the ground perceived themselves on a career path on the Standards continuum.

Further, the AEF wanted to find out what practitioners were currently doing in the field to evidence their perception of their place on the continuum.

Finally, the AEF wanted to know what support was being offered and provided at the school, systemic and organisational level for teachers wanting to plan a career path using the Asia literacy elements in the Standards by focussing on teachers' stories.

The AEF is keen to support teachers in identifying their place on the continuum of the career stages in the Standards in relation to Asia literacy. And, to that effect created and then evaluated support materials in the form of a self-reflection tool. This self-reflection tool was used with the teachers/principal during the interviews and later re-evaluated.

2.3 Methodological Considerations

The overall Pilot plan is best represented by a sequential overview:

- Engage two project officers to work on cases.
- Two-day meeting with AITSL and SiMERR July 27 and 28, 2011 to refine purpose of project and plan next steps.
- August: Meet with project team to decide on common agreements and analyse approaches to be taken. Interrogate and interpret the Standards. Analyse the language in the Descriptors and how these might be measured and evidenced by two third parties: one of whom was the Principal, the other a colleague and whose role it was to act as a critical friends and verifiers of the statements made by the teacher. Discuss the involvement of the third party who is providing evidence to support or otherwise the teachers place on the continuum in the Standards. Set milestones and dates for project activity. Ensure that pilot design and allocation of tasks is clear.
- August: Meet with project team to decide the range of teachers to be approached including: representation from a range of sectors, states and territories, experience and positions held in the school and teaching experience. Decide which teachers/principals would be approached to participate.
- Four educators were chosen for the pilot study: one fourth year out Primary School teacher, one Humanities Head of Department, one Deputy Principal and cluster leader and one Catholic Primary School. The fourth year out teacher has taught Mandarin for two years, the Humanities Head of Department and Deputy Principal and cluster leader are experienced studies of Asia educators and the Principal is in his first year of introducing studies of Asia with a focus on the Asia Priority in the Australian Curriculum.
- August: First contact made with school principals and the purpose of the Pilot study explained. Formal follow up letter of introduction sent to principals and a supplementary letter sent to all participants explaining purpose of pilot study. Third party 'verifiers' contacted and agreement obtained to participate in the pilot study.
- August: Project team introduces themselves to the teachers and principals and sets a time and date for a lengthy interview for up to five hours, at the school if possible.

- August: Project team meets to create and evaluate a self-assessment tool.
- September: Interviews conducted with teachers/principals.
- September/October: First drafts of the cases are written and team meets to discuss learnings. Third party verifiers contacted and their responses are added to the draft cases.
- September/October: Project team has a number of meetings (via teleconference and email) to comment on and analyse what is in the drafts and to ensure that the two research questions have been answered.
- October 5: Project team meets with Dr Greg McPhan (SiMERR) and Gavin Pinnington (AITSL) during the scheduled Site Visit for the Pilot. Roles and approaches are clarified and next steps put in place.
- October: Subsequent interviews with educators.
- Team grapples with suggested changes to cases and explores the application of the ideas proposed by Dr McPhan during the Site Visit. After much analysis, two redraftings and re-contacting of teachers/principals (to reflect on earlier discussions), draft cases were submitted to the Project Director in their semi-final state.
- Team discusses the key learnings, messages and recommendations from the pilot study.

2.4 Results from the Engagement

2.4.1 Data Collection and Management

This section provides a summary of the data collected and how it was managed and organised for analysis.

- Teachers/principals were interviewed face-to-face.
- Interviews were taped.
- Taped interviews were transcribed.
- Transcriptions were then crafted into linear narratives based on the Descriptors in the Standards and cases were written using a number of sub-headings including: context, the interview and then the Descriptors in the Standards.

- First drafts were discussed and evaluated by the team and rewritten using a more uniform and systematic approach.
- Cases were discussed, analysed and re drafted by the project team.
- There were three iterations of the draft cases.
- Project manager maintained data records and project information.

2.4.2 Analysis of the Data

2.4.2.1 The Standards:

The first step for the team was to understand what the Standards actually meant and then analyse how the language in the Descriptors might be applied and evidenced by teachers.

One challenge encountered was that while the Standards reflect the authorising document *The Melbourne Declaration of Education Goals for Young Australians*, the Standards document does not refer to two of the new Cross Curriculum Priorities in the Australian Curriculum: the Asia Priority and the Sustainability Priority.

This perceived gap provided an opportunity to explore the Asia Literacy with the teachers who were being interviewed through the language in the Descriptors which is quite general and therefore applicable to a range of interpretations and teaching areas.

The project team debated whether it would be helpful to break up the Descriptors into component parts and measureable outcomes via a scaffolded checklist, for example “current and comprehensive knowledge” might include x, y and z. Or whether we could develop indicators or exemplars for teachers to refer to. This, of course, became problematic and outside of the parameters of this pilot study.

The project team interrogated particular Focus Areas within each of the Domains before the interview in the following way. For example, within the Professional Knowledge Domain, Focus Area 2.1 Highly Accomplished, key aspects were highlighted: Support colleagues using current and comprehensive knowledge of content and teaching strategies to develop and implement engaging learning and teaching programs.

The questions the team posed included:

1. What do each of the underlined words above mean in practice?
2. What is the minimum and maximum a teacher would have to do to achieve and satisfy each of the underlined words above?
3. How does a teacher verify with any authenticity the areas underlined above?
4. What does the verification or evidence mean in different contexts, schools and states?

5. More importantly, how do teachers/principal verify that this is impacting on student outcomes?
6. Can engagement, support, comprehensive knowledge or current knowledge be standardised across schools and states and territories?

A further question posed here was one of 'perception'.

- What if a teacher perceived himself or herself, as Highly Accomplished or Lead and their principal or colleague did not?
- What if, Asia literacy was not a high priority for the principal and the school leadership team and how does this impact on the evidence provided by the teacher?
- And, what impact would this have on the pilot study?

2.4.2.2 The interviews

The team conducted the interviews with a full knowledge that the work we were undertaking was a pilot study in using Asia literacy and the Standards to plot career paths for educators on the Standards continuum. We had to keep this at the forefront of the interviews because we knew that the process we were undertaking was the first step and that to do this work full justice it would require an longitudinal study if it were to be meaningful a range of teachers across Australia who either were or were about to engage with the new Asia Cross-Curricular Priority in the new Australian Curriculum.

With that in mind, once the interviews had been conducted, transcribed, read and analysed the team posed a number of questions including:

- Is this information useful or helpful to the project's purpose, that is, have we fulfilled our aims?
- Have we gathered enough information?
- Have we delved deeply enough into the Descriptors?
- Can the process we used be duplicated in real life contexts?
- What have we learned?

The short answer to these questions was that more work needed to be undertaken over a longer period of time to provide authoritative, substantial and meaningful advice to teachers using the Standards in concert with the new Asia Priority.

2.4.2.3 Self-assessment tool

The self-assessment tool was a useful discussion starter in having teachers begin the process of self-reflection, analysis and thinking about the Standards. However, the self-assessment tool, while helpful for the team in this particular pilot study, is still a work in progress and needs

refinement, exploration and testing if it is to be used by a broader range of teachers in variety of contexts.

The team, in discussions about the self-reflection tool, pondered the following questions:

- To what degree is the self-assessment tool helpful?
- Is it too general?
- Is it too specific?
- What would need to be reworked if it were to be published on a website or presented in professional learning situations?
- Could the self-assessment tool be used by individual teachers/principals in real life settings?
- What contextualisation needs to surround the self-assessment tool?

2.4.2.4 Teacher/principal comments

One of the issues for teachers interviewed in this pilot study was the tension between self-reflection, the teachers' intuitive knowledge of their craft and documenting this against the Standards. A perception from the interviewers was that teachers sometimes struggled to articulate the corpus of their achievements because of the attitude that "all teachers do this" and what I'm doing is not unusual. However, the teachers had such an in depth and detailed intuitive knowledge of teaching, often built up over many years, that aligning their practise against the Standards Framework took sometime to articulate. The teachers needed to readjust their reflection of their professional qualities and experiences to the language in the Standards Framework.

To be able to articulate an in depth and often intuitive knowledge is a skill required in any self-evaluation process. It is quite a sophisticated process and requires not only 'self-analytical' skills (and an exposure to and experience of these skills) but, in this case, an intellectual understanding of Asia literacy, in theory and practice, as well.

Given this, the following questions were considered:

- Given the nature of the pilot study how might the results be different if teachers/principals were to complete the same exercise over a longer period of time, especially given that they were unfamiliar with the Standards?
- How does what the educators have said apply specifically to Asia literacy – could it/does it apply to all teachers?
- What unique messages about Asia literacy have we received that could be useful to all teachers?

2.4.3 Analytical Procedures

At the beginning of the project *The Most Significant Change (MSC) Technique* (Rick Davis and Jess Dart) 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:

- The project team conducted interviews and received information (though interview or discussion with a third party).
- 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.
- The information received was mapped against the purpose of the project.

An example of this is the self-assessment tool. Questions were written as discussion starters and all other options and approaches were put on the table for consideration. It was soon realised that the self-assessment tool was another project in itself and it was decided that to meet the project deadline that we would use a series of three types of questions to elicit responses:

1. **General questions** which were designed to reveal the kind of attributes an Asia literacy teacher might have.
2. **School-based questions** which focused on how the implementation of Asia literacy in schools can be used to demonstrate what a teacher does in school and how this activity may be translated into the career path continuum in the Standards.
3. **Standards based questions** which were intended to examine and interrogate the meaning for a particular context so that they could be used to identify where an individual stands and to determine any areas of further professional development that may be needed to assist in their achievement.

For the team, the creation of a useful self-assessment tool became a challenging exercise as we were balancing how this self-assessment tool may eventually be used against the needs of this pilot study.

We realised the self-assessment tool needed to be refined and contextualised for a range of audiences including: the interviewees, the AEF, all teachers, principals, subject associations, AITSL and SIMERR.

In short, it had to serve many masters and the self-assessment tool that was created cannot, without further refinement and testing, serve the needs of these disparate audiences and be confidently published in the public domain as a meaningful tool for educators to use. However,

it did serve us well for the pilot study and may serve as a discussion starter about how the Standards can be used for Asia Literacy teachers and the Cross-Curricular Asia Priority.

2.4.4 Results

General

The pilot study to trial the use of the Standards with teachers of Asia literacy has created more questions than answers.

While some general conclusions can be drawn from the work undertaken over the past four months, further analysis with a larger sample of teachers is required to progress and verify preliminary findings.

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?

While this question appears to be straightforward, the answer to it is in fact very complex.

Asia literacy is now a policy supported by the authorising document *The Melbourne Declaration of Education Goals for Young Australians* and enacted through the Asia Priority in the Australian Curriculum but this is not reflected in the Standards.

While it may be argued that if all teachers are teachers of Asia literacy then the Descriptors are general enough to apply to all teachers. However, using the logic of the Standards and curriculum imperative of the Asia Priority in the Australian Curriculum all teachers must therefore demonstrate Asia literacy competency in all Standards. An Arts teacher cannot be regarded on the continuum as Graduate, Lead, Highly Accomplished or Lead with out evidencing the teaching of the Asia Priority.

Professional Knowledge Domain, Standard 2 – *Know the content and how to teach it* is fundamental to all teaching. The omission of the Asia Priority in the Standards meant that teachers in the pilot study relied on their own interpretation of the Standards as there is no specific information on this new element of the Australian Curriculum. The pilot study could therefore focus only on Descriptors themselves and what they mean for teachers.

The Descriptors within the Standards use a language that is open to a range of interpretations and this is a positive for as range of reasons. For example, what is regarded as “innovative practice” (Focus Area 2.2) by one teacher or school may be considered passé by another. Similarly, is “participating in learning to update knowledge and practice” (Focus Area 6.2) enough – or should one do more than “participate” and if so, what does this mean in practice? Further, how is “comprehensive knowledge of content ...” (Focus Area 2.1) measured? And, how does this apply to Asia literate teachers?

The educators who were interviewed grappled with the openness of the language of the Descriptors during the interview and in subsequent interviews and what it meant for them as Asia educators. Because there were no exemplars or definitions the teachers/principal spoke freely and laterally about what they had achieved in relation to what they thought the descriptors meant. Their work was evidenced in a range of ways: through their principals and colleagues, units of work, lesson plans and the presentation of a range of documentation. Because the Descriptors are not prescriptive they were interpreted in slightly different ways by the teachers/principals interviewed, that is they brought their own knowledge, contexts and experiences to the analysis of the Descriptors.

Of note, is that while the principals/colleagues generally agreed with the interviewee as to where they were on the continuum in the Standards, this was not always the case. 'Perceptions' and evidence of Standard attainment are a grey area in this pilot study and require further analysis.

However, what can be stated with a tentative confidence is that what links and distinguishes a Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead teacher as defined in the Standards is praxis. All four educators involved in this pilot have grappled with understanding the philosophy of Asia literacy and the need for Asia literacy and have enacted it in their own classrooms and school settings.

All of them have explored and engaged with Asia literacy and with a range of contemporary educational theories and policies, such as: the Asia Priority in the Australian Curriculum, Cooperative Learning, Inquiry Learning or Learning by Design to name a few. They have not stagnated in their professional growth and appear to be constantly searching for new ways to teach and learn. To that end, they have all participated in a range of professional learning to enable that praxis.

Proficient and Highly Accomplished teachers in the pilot study shared similarities in that they "initiated, engaged, analysed, participated, contributed, undertook or applied" (taken from the range of Descriptors in Standards 2 and 6) and they could evidence this through comprehensive portfolios of actions.

A very strong message that came from the interviews is that what distinguishes Lead teachers in Asia literacy is that they are enablers. As such, Lead teachers may lead from the classroom and not be a principal or deputy principal.

Research Question 2: How can teachers be supported in identifying their place on the continuum of the career stages in the National Professional Standards for Teachers in relation to Asia literacy?

If the Asia Priority in the Australian Curriculum is to be given the full weight of its authorising document, *The Melbourne Declaration of Education Goals for Young Australians*, it needs to be acknowledged by the Standards national authorising agent the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, and represented in the Standards with the due attention that is currently given to: Literacy and Numeracy, Aboriginal and Torres Islander people, and Information and Communication Technology.

Two of the teachers interviewed were clear in their message that school leadership needs to support Asia literate teachers on the ground. Asia literacy is not a discrete subject area and traverses all subject areas and will be taught all teachers. Unless it is a high priority for school leaders, all of a teacher's best efforts and hard work in Asia literacy may go unrecognised – or be less recognised. The Asia Priority in the Australian Curriculum will go some way to addressing this challenge as the case story of the Catholic Primary School Principal demonstrates.

Teachers need to be supported professionally through a range of approaches and agents, which may include:

1. **The continuation of programs that have a proven record of professional development in Asia literacy.** Principals and Deputy Principal in all schools across Australia need to continue to be professionally developed in Asia literacy through established programs such as the AEF managed *The Leading 21st Century Schools: Engage with Asia – An initiative for principals – Professional Learning Program*, a DEEWR funded, three-year project which has been delivered to over 500 principals across Australia. Building on this initiative would ensure that principals are aware of how to implement the Asia Priority and support teachers at a grass roots level.
2. **A revision of existing documentation in Asia literacy.** *The Asia Scope and Sequence – Engaging young Australians with Asia* documents produced by the AEF, could be revised to incorporate the new Asia Priority in the Australian Curriculum. The revised documentation could be used by teachers in conjunction with the Standards.
3. **Subject associations:** Cross-Curriculum priorities, such as the Asia Priority in the Australian Curriculum, are unique and new, and operate somewhat differently to Key Learning Areas. As such they need to be supported more strongly by all subject associations.
4. **Systemic support.** Support from systems, sectors and local teacher registration agencies to strengthen teachers understanding of the Cross Curriculum elements of the Australian Curriculum and how these work in concert with the Standards.

2.4.5 Summary

A number of 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 for Teachers.
3. 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 distinguishes a Lead teacher in Asia literacy is that they are enablers and evaluators and as such they can lead from the classroom as well as from Principal, Deputy Principal or other school leadership positions.
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 needs to be developed to support teachers and principals.
7. The development of indicators or exemplars at each level 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.

2.5 Resources

2.5.1 Resources Developed for the Pilot

A self-assessment tool was created for use in this pilot study that comprised:

1. **General questions** which were designed to reveal the kind of attributes an Asia literacy teacher might have.
2. **School-based questions** which focused on how the implementation of Asia literacy in schools can be used to demonstrate what a teacher does in school and how this activity may be translated into the career path continuum in the Standards.
3. **Standards based questions** which were intended to examine and interrogate the meaning for a particular context so that they could be used to identify where an individual stands and to determine any areas of further professional development that may be needed to assist in their achievement.

2.5.2 Existing Resources Used in the Pilot

The Leading 21st Century Schools: Engage with Asia – An initiative for principals – Professional Learning Program 2011 was developed to engage school leadership, specifically principals, with Asia literacy. This document was used in developing the self-assessment tool.

2.6 Findings and Outcomes

2.6.1 Implications and Recommendations from the Pilot

2.6.1.1 The Local Perspective

The AEF takes the local perspective, in this context, to mean teachers and schools. The pilot study did not focus on systems and sectors.

Teachers need to be supported in their engagement with the Asia Priority and Standards consciously and systematically through an up-skilled principal class, an agency such as the AEF and systems and sectors and the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. And,

that this may address what the AEF has called in this pilot study differing perceptions between principals and teachers of where teachers are on the Standards continuum.

Teachers need to be professionally developed and supported in exploring how the Standards apply to Asia literacy and to all teachers.

Teachers who define themselves as Proficient and Highly Accomplished in the National Standards need to be fully engaged in praxis. That is, they need to be supported and professionally developed in their understanding of the Asia Priority before they apply it in practice.

Teachers who define themselves as Proficient and Highly Accomplished need to have exemplars and indicators that demonstrate how Lead teachers in Asia literacy became enablers and evaluators.

The Standards need to support the concept that a Lead teacher can lead from the classroom.

The development of indicators or exemplars at each Career Stage within the Standards may aid educators in understanding the how their career path in Asia literacy can be manifested through the Descriptors in the Standards.

2.6.1.2 The National Perspective

The Asia Priority in the Australian Curriculum needs to be given the full weight of its authorising document *The Melbourne Declaration of Education Goals for Young Australians* and needs to be represented in the Standards as a reference point for Asia literacy educators.

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership as the national authority on teacher Standards needs to be at the vanguard of support for teachers given the new Cross-Curriculum Asia Priority in the Australian Curriculum.

The AEF, as a nationally recognised expert in Asia literacy, is well positioned to provide leadership for teachers, states and territories, systems, sectors and other organisations.

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.

A more rigorously tested self-assessment tool needs to be developed to support teachers and principals.

The principal class needs to continue to be professionally developed in Asia literacy through established programs such as the AEF managed *The Leading 21st Century Schools: Engage with Asia – An initiative for principals – Professional Learning Program*, a DEEWR funded, three-year project which has been delivered to over 500 principals across Australia. Building on this initiative would ensure that principals are aware of how to support teachers at a grass roots level.

The Asia Scope and Sequence – Engaging young Australians with Asia documents produced by the AEF, could be revised to incorporate the new Asia Priority in the Australian Curriculum and support teachers in identifying their place on the continuum of career paths in the Standards.

Cross-Curriculum priorities, such as the Asia Priority in the Australian Curriculum, are unique and new, and operate somewhat differently to standard practice in Key Learning Areas. As such they need to be supported more strongly by all subject associations.

Support from systems, sectors and teacher registration agencies to strengthen teachers understanding of the new elements of Cross-Curriculum Priorities in the Australian Curriculum and how these work in concert with the Standards.

2.6.2 Planning for the Future

For the AEF, the case stories presented in this pilot study require further work if they are to serve as useful models of how the Standards apply to teachers of Asia literacy. The teachers, already interviewed could be re-interviewed and cases re-written.

In addition, the self-assessment tool was developed in a formative way and requires refinement if it is to be used effectively and meaningfully by a range of teachers across Australia.

Exemplars of professional learning models could be developed by the AEF to support teachers in identifying their place along the Standards continuum for Standard 6 – *Professional Engagement*, and Standard 2 – *Professional Knowledge*.

Finally, the AEF needs to 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 Standards.

2.7 References

Davies, R. and J Dart (2005) *The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC): A Guide to Its Use*. Version 1.00 – 2005

The Leading 21st Century Schools: Engage with Asia – An initiative for principals – Professional Learning Program 2011

Developed by the Asia Education Foundation (AEF) in partnership with Principals Australia and peak principals associations and funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations under the National Asian Languages and Studies in Schools Program.

The University of Melbourne, Asia Education Foundation, 2011

3 AIS NSW

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Setting the Scene

The purpose of the study was to pilot with a range of primary and secondary schools the initial phase of a process that aligns the National Professional Standards for Teachers (hereafter referred to as ‘the Standards’) to school goals for improvement. The pilot study involved investigating how the Standards for teaching can be used to support teachers’ understanding of the professional expectations of the school. In addition, the schools used the Standards for teaching to identify professional learning and support that assists teachers to support the school in achieving its goals for improvement.

In the study, the Standards were used as a means to assist teachers to:

1. understand the actions they can take to assist the school to meet the goals
2. identify evidence of their practice that demonstrates the extent to which they are assisting the school to meet the goals
3. reflect on the extent to which they are supporting the school to achieve the goals
4. identify professional learning that will support them in working towards the achievement of the goals.

Three schools were invited to participate in the pilot. The pilot schools comprised one primary and two K-12 schools. Schools selected the teachers to participate in the study and determined the appropriate Standards for the teachers’ Career Stage. Staff members involved included classroom teachers and those with positions of formal leadership responsibility such as heads of departments or stage coordinators.

3.1.2 Contextual Issues

Following the initial meeting with the project stakeholders in Melbourne in July 2011 the parameters of the pilot study with the three schools were revised. The three month project timeline shaped the ways the professional standards for teaching could be used by teachers to:

1. ‘unpack’ the school goals for improvement and relate it to their professional role
2. identify actions they can take to contribute to the school goals for improvement
3. collect evidence of their practice that contributes to meeting the school goals for improvement.

The Standards provided the basis for schools’ and teachers’ systematic review of practice and for identifying future professional learning and support plans.

3.2 Research Questions

The pilot study in the New South Wales Independent sector was focussed on how the Standards can be used to support teacher understanding of school goals. The process involved teachers:

mapping the Standards to school goals

identifying actions for teacher practice aligned to the Standards

recognising and identifying evidence that can be used to demonstrate improvement in teachers' professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement

assisting teachers to evaluate their current professional knowledge, practice and engagement

selecting areas for whole school and individual teacher professional learning and support.

The research questions for the study were:

Research Question 1: How do the National Professional Standards for Teachers assist teachers to understand their school goals for improvement?

Research Question 2: How does teachers' engagement with National Professional Standards for Teachers impact on their:

- a. confidence to meet the school goals and
- b. preparedness to engage in self-evaluation as part of the appraisal process?

3.3 Methodological Considerations

3.3.1 Project context

Three schools in the Independent sector participated in the pilot project. The schools varied in size, location, economic status and focus of their school goals. School A is a K-12 school in western Sydney. All K-12 teachers including stage and subject leaders participated in the pilot that involved four school goals and the Standards at the Proficient Teacher Career Stage.

School B is a Pre-school to Year 6 school in the northern beaches area of Sydney. The principal and senior executive identified three school goals to focus their mapping to the professional teaching standards at the Highly Accomplished Teacher Career Stage.

School C is a K-12 school in south western Sydney area. The principal, senior executive and stage and subject coordinators selected three school improvement goals at the Highly Accomplished Teacher Career Stage.

3.3.2 Project implementation

In a series of facilitated workshops at each school, the participating teachers used the Standards for teaching as a basis for:

1. engaging in collaborative professional dialogue to deepen their understanding of the school goals for improvement
2. identifying actions of their practice that could support the achievement of the school goals and evidence of their contribution to the school goals
3. evaluating their practice in relation to the school goals
4. identifying individual professional learning to improve their practice
5. contributing to the design of a whole school professional development plan.

Table 1 below provides two examples of school goals for improvement, professional standards for teaching that align to the school goals, a sample of the type of action teachers can take to assist the school meet the goal and an example of evidence that teachers identified that could use to demonstrate the extent to which they were supporting the achievement of the school goal.

Table 3-1 - School goals, standards, actions and evidence

School goals	Standard	Example of a suggested action	Example of suggested evidence
Designing high quality academic and co-curricular programs	2, 3, 4 & 5	Evaluates teaching programs in terms of student learning and achievement	An evaluation of a program based on the extent to which the activities assisted students to learn
Effective use of high quality resources including ICT	2, 3	Designs lessons which utilise resources including software applications, web –based student centred activities and information that link directly to the learning goals and promote student engagement and learning	Teaching program, unit of work or student tasks that include a range of software applications and student activities and research information accessible through the internet that have been selected to engage the students and promote learning in line with the selected goals and/or outcomes

3.3.3 Methodological approach

A Grounded Theory approach was used for the study to inductively gather from the data how teachers and schools can use the professional standards for teaching to inform future professional learning plans both for individual teachers and the whole school. Data were collected and analysed in three phases aligned to the timeline for each school. The second and third data collection and analysis phase was guided by the theoretical developments that emerged (Punch, 2009). For the purposes of this study it was considered that data saturation was reached after the third case study. Figure 4.1 captures the methodical approach for the data collection and analysis.

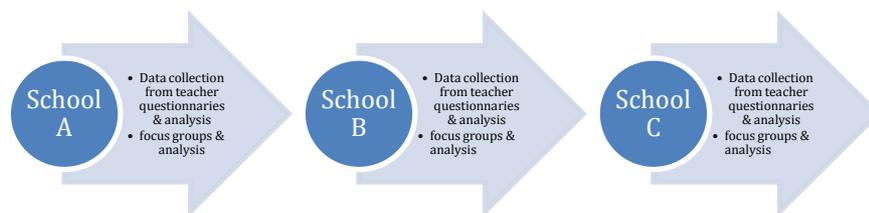


Figure 3-1 : Methodological approach for the data collection and analysis

3.3.4 Data collection instruments

Three data collection instruments were designed to capture the data from the participating teachers in the three schools. Two instruments comprised a teacher questionnaire (Appendix A) and an executive questionnaire (Appendix B) that captured quantitative data using a four point likert scale: not at all, limited, moderate and high. In addition teachers could provide a written comment giving a reason for their rating. Focus group interviews were conducted with a sample of teachers identified by each school. Each focus group explored issues about the processes they were involved in during pilot study.

The focus group meetings were structured around the following questions:

1. How did you feel about the Professional Review and Development System process that linked professional teaching standards, actions and evidence to the school goals? What did you feel that you gained from the process?
2. During the first phase you identified actions that would support teachers at your school to contribute to the school goals. You also identified evidence that teachers could provide about how they could meet the school goals. How did this process help you understand the school goals? What else would have helped you to better understand the school's expectations?
3. What would you like to happen as a result of completing the self-evaluation and meeting with your reviewer?
4. Is there anything else you would like to share about the process?

The focus group interviews were audio recorded with informed written consent from the participants.

3.3.5 Timelines and all the procedural details

Table 3-2 - Project timeline

Action	Date	Resources
Initial contact and confirmation of school participation	By mid August 2011	
Principal and /or school executive briefing	August 2011	
Facilitated workshops with teachers and school executive to map the standards to the school goals*	By September 2011	School goals, AITSL National Professional Standards for Teachers
Set dates for participants to collect evidence *	By September 2011	School generated documents for mapping of standards to school goals
AITSL pilot study Interim Report completed	By October 2011	Report template
Teachers self evaluate their contribution* to the selected school goals and participate in collegial meetings with supervisors	By October 2011	School generated documents for mapping of standards to school goals
Teachers and school executive participating in the pilot study complete questionnaires	School A September 2011 School B November 2011 School C November 2011	Teacher and executive questionnaires
Identified teachers participate in focus groups	School A September 2011 School B November 2011 School C November 2011	Focus group interview schedule
AITSL pilot study report	By November 2011	Report template

3.4 Results from the Engagement

Something in here perhaps ...

3.4.1 Data Collection and Management

Table 5.1 below presents the data sources and type of data collected in the three pilot study schools.

Table 3-3 - Data Sources

School	No of completed teacher questionnaires	No of completed executive questionnaires	No of focus group interviewees
School A	28	2	8
School B	4	1	5
School C	11	4	6
Total	43	7	19

3.4.2 Analysis of the Data

3.4.2.1 Questionnaires: Quantitative data analysis

The quantitative data were collected through teacher questionnaires (Appendix A) and executive questionnaires (Appendix B) from the 43 teachers and 7 executive teachers who participated in the pilot project in the three schools.

Item 1: How did discussing what actions teachers at your school can take to meet the standards at the staff professional development session assist you to understand how you can meet the school goals?

The data revealed that most teachers reported that discussing the actions teachers can take to meet the Standards assisted them to understand how they could meet the school goals. For School A, 93% of respondents rated this item as moderate or high; at School B all teachers rated this item moderate or high; and at School C 73% of teachers and all executive rated this item as moderate or high.

Item 2: How did working together at the staff professional development session help you to develop an understanding of what kinds of evidence teachers in your school could provide to demonstrate they have met the school goals?

The response to this item by participating teachers was overwhelmingly positive. Teachers reported that by working collaboratively either as a whole school staff (School A) or whole executive staff (School B and C) they had developed an understanding of the kinds of evidence that demonstrated the professional standards for teaching at the Proficient Teacher or Highly Accomplished Teacher career stage and how they could use this evidence to demonstrate meeting the school goals for improvement. All teachers at School C rated their response to this item as moderate or high. Only one teacher at each of School A and B indicated that the staff

development session had a limited impact on their understanding of the evidence that could be provided to meet the school goals.

Item 3: To what extent does your understanding of the school goals, developed at the two staff professional development sessions, help you to identify how your current practice meets the school goals?

In response to this item, all 15 teachers at School C reported that to a moderate or high extent they were now able to identify how their current practice meets the school goals. At School A, 96% of teachers and at School B 75% rated this item as moderate or high because the professional standards for teaching provided a focus for the professional dialogue.

Item 4: As a result of completing your self-evaluation, how confident are you in identifying areas for professional action and support that will help you meet the school goals?

Participating teachers confirmed that by completing the self evaluation using the professional standards for teaching they were more confident to identify further actions for both individual teacher and whole school teacher professional learning. All teachers at School A and School B agreed to a moderate or high extent that they were more confident while teachers at School B were equally divided on this item with respect to their confidence to identify their own professional learning. Two teachers at School B indicated that they felt they were already fully meeting the school goals and therefore would need to identify further actions to deepen their contribution to meeting the school goals at the Highly Accomplished Teacher career stage.

The seven responses to the executive questionnaire at Schools A, B and C followed a similar pattern to the data reported above with the respondents reporting a moderate or high rating to all items except one response for Item 2 at School A and 2 responses to Item 3 that indicated in their view discussing actions to meet the Standards had limited impact on their understanding about how teachers could meet the school goals.

Summary ??

3.4.2.2 Qualitative data analysis

The qualitative data were collected from the 50 teacher written responses on the questionnaires and focus group interviews conducted in the three sites with a total of 19 teachers. The data were coded and analysed using the following four themes that answered the two research questions stated above.

3.4.2.2.1 Individual understanding of school goals for improvement

Teachers in the three schools engaged in a series and range of collaborative processes to map the professional standards for teaching to the school goals for improvement. The nature of school goals were that they are broad statements of intent and as was the case in the three schools designed for a range of purposes. For some teachers this was the first time they had been exposed to the school goals. As one teacher commented at the outset of the pilot project “there was a bit of confusion as to what exactly the school goals were” (School A, Teacher 17).

For others this was the first opportunity they had to participate in robust discussion and professional dialogue about what the school goals meant in terms of their individual classroom

practice or to understand the purpose of having school goals to guide whole school improvement.

Not only was it interesting to find out what the school goals were but how the goals and standards relate to each other. To completely understand how the two correlate you really had to break them down and understand the working and the context in which they were meant. Through discussion with other teachers I found myself questioning if the correct standard was chosen. (School 3, Teacher 2)

For some teachers the professional conversations and activities that focused on goals and the Standards contributed to their understanding in tangible ways. In other words, what teachers needed to do to meet the school goals as the career stage specified in the selected Standards was more visible and shared in terms of their teaching practice.

It was interesting to see how the standards were interpreted differently which lead to great discussions amongst the staff. (School C, Executive 4)

It made me realise that the [school] goals are more achievable than they seemed on paper. (School A, Teacher 12)

It has helped me acknowledge the things I am doing well, as well as the things I can improve. (School A, Teacher 9)

Working in groups, discussion, expert groups, working on one goal and sharing with other groups, to develop actions to meet the goals and evidence provided the opportunity for me to extend my understanding. (School 3, Teacher 4)

On the other hand for some teachers the discussion surfaced frustrations and concern about the clarity of what evidence they could use to demonstrate how they were contributing to meeting the school goals. While this viewpoint was reported by a minority of respondents it is an important consideration in how the standards are communicated and workshopped.

The brainstorming session was good, however, I feel that the staff did not fully understand that their ideas [for action and evidence] had to be realistic. (School A, Teacher 17)

3.4.2.2.2 Shared understanding of goals for improvement

Teachers reported that a range of strategies assisted them to use the professional standards for teaching to focus and build a shared understanding of their school goals for improvement. “The PD sessions were useful in understanding more the philosophy of teaching and expectations of all stakeholders” (School A, Teacher 20). Using the standards to map to the school goals increased teachers’ understanding of what the school goals mean in terms of their practice as a teacher, subject or stage coordinator or member of the school executive. Largely this was achieved by using a range of professional learning strategies that included:

1. participating in small groups to brainstorm actions and evidence that demonstrate the Standards
2. being exposed to a range of colleagues’ viewpoints about how the Standards relate to the school goals

3. engaging in professional dialogue with colleagues to identify actions that teachers could take to meet the Standards in relation to the school goals
4. breaking down the process of mapping the Standards to school goals and aligning actions and evidence to the Standards into small manageable steps within a collaborative framework
5. using the Standards to make visible the expectations required of teachers to meet the school goals.

Teachers were actively involved in the critical conversations in somewhat unfamiliar areas of school practice such as school goals, what these mean in terms of classroom practice and how they can be demonstrated using a set of professional standards for teaching and learning as a basis. This built teachers' sense of ownership and buy-in that empowered them as key actors in the process. "The staff came together to come up with suggestions [for actions and evidence]. We had a say, ownership of the outcome. This makes me feel good about the process." (School A, Teacher 19)

Teachers' comments that reflected the value of using the Standards as a foundation for the professional development sessions included:

After a very good discussion a barrier was crossed. The list of evidence to support school goals grew. A better understanding of how we can meet the school goals was made. There was a sigh of relief. (School 3, Teacher 2)

[We] made them more concrete/less wordy as we discussed them. Particularly important for staff members who are not familiar with the standards. (School B, Teacher 4)

The PD session provided ideas for me to understand the standard of the goals and what kind of activities I should take to follow those standards. (School A, Teacher 3)

Aligning the goals was useful for executive and the outcome resonated with New Scheme Teachers and helped the entire staff to become aware of the standards. [The process] assisted our thinking in making the goals reasonable and achievable. (School A, Executive 1)

It really focused us in breaking down our school goals to be able to work toward meeting them. (School B, Teacher 1)

Prior to the process, the school goals were not at the forefront of our thinking. They were written as part of the strategic plan. Completing the process has linked the school goals to daily practice. (School B, Teacher 3)

However, not all teachers universally agreed that the professional learning sessions to map the Standards to the school goals had increased their clarity of understanding about what evidence was required to demonstrate the Standards.

I felt there could be more clarity on the list of evidence. (School A, Teacher 9)

[While] it gave a clear picture of what the school focus would be and even though it was clear in my mind, I think it could've been beneficial for us to have spent more time as executives discussing the areas in greater detail. (School C, Executive 4)

Our starting point was weak. [The standards] helped to understand and identify this. (School B, Teacher 2)

It was considerably more difficult to match evidence to standards, but collaborating with staff outside my KLA and grade levels was very beneficial. There has been some lingering confusion about the ways in which particular goals could be met, particularly in leadership activities, it was none-the-less beneficial to identify areas for future professional action. (School C, Teacher 8)

3.4.2.2.3 Increased confidence to meet the school goals

The process of teachers using a standards-based approach to collect evidence of their current contribution to meeting the school goals raised a number of challenges. One challenge was related to how evidence could be collected. One teacher indicated that their effort towards meeting the school goals would be “hard to prove without observation” (School A, Teacher 9). Another teacher reflected that “the goals seemed easy and achievable but broad and thus, it is difficult to pinpoint my progress in achieving these goals. I need to know what the expectations are” (School A, Teacher 14). Another challenge was related to how teachers perceived identifying areas for improvement as weaknesses, demonstrated by the following comment:

As a coordinator and teacher I need to be able to see where there are areas of weakness as a teacher with my staff and to use it as an example to see how we can learn from it and how we can work together to find ways of overcoming this weakness. (School 3, Teacher2)

When I applied the standards to my subject area, it was clear what evidence I needed to collect . . . working together allowed me to discuss with secondary teachers especially the types of evidence needed. (School 3, Teacher 7)

3.4.2.2.4 Preparedness to use professional standards for teaching to review practice

Teachers consistently reported that using the Standards provided a structure and foundation to support their collection of evidence to demonstrate their contribution to meeting the school goals for improvement. The process affirmed teachers’ areas of strength while in a constructive way assisted them to identify areas for further development directly related to the school goals.

I realise that I have areas for development. I need to make sure to file evidence whenever possible. I did not have the habit of keeping evidence and [now] realise it was important to keep evidence. (School A, Teacher 5)

Great to know what direction we are heading . . . self-evaluation is a powerfully educating process. (School B, Teacher 2)

I know my areas of weakness. Through this process I can identify them and work on further development. (School A, Teacher 24)

Understanding the school goals has allowed me to reflect on my current practice. I was able to recognise the elements that are necessary for student success. I will ensure these elements are addressed so that I can meet the school goals. By doing this, I have evaluated my programs and strategies and attempted to draw a connection of how my teaching addresses the school goals. I plan to address the goals I have neglected in future. (School 3, Teacher 10)

However, not all teachers expressed a strong level of confidence in their capacity to take the further actions required.

I am confident in identifying places in which I need to improve on, but unsure of how I can actually go about implementing these changes to my particular [teaching] units and programs. (School A, Teacher 6)

Found this difficult because a lot of our actions were retrospective – we are achieving them. Needed to consider [future] actions that we will take to meet goals. (School B, Teacher 3)

3.4.2.3 Results

An analysis of the data highlighted three key drivers: capacity building; group solutions; and integrated professional learning strategies. These key drivers are reported below in the context of using the professional standards for teaching to improve professional practice and to contribute to the achievement of the schools' teaching and learning goals. These results align with Fullan's (2011) drivers for whole school reform.

3.4.2.3.1 Capacity building

First, using the Standards for teaching assisted teachers to understand what contribution they could make to their school goals for improvement. Rather than focusing on accountability, the process built teachers' capacity to participate in a rigorous and supported activity for self reflection anchored in professional standards and evidence-based practice. The professional dialogue teachers engaged in assisted them to identify high priority actions they need to take to demonstrate aspects of their practice that contributed to meeting the school goals.

3.4.2.3.2 Group solutions

In addition, the collaborative processes that included small group discussion and whole group synthesis of actions and evidence established clarity about the expectations of what teachers need to know in relation to subject content and expanding teachers' repertoire. Furthermore, teachers' and school leaders' interactions in the review interviews established that there can be flexibility in how individual teachers demonstrate the standards through their classroom practice while ensuring that, collectively, the scope of evidence communicates the expectations of what evidence demonstrates that the school goals have been met.

3.4.2.3.3 Integrated professional learning strategies

Thirdly, teachers' engagement with the standards through collaborative and supported processes built ownership of and trust to review their current contribution and future needs to meet the school goals. These aspects of a school's social capital were developed and tested in the pilot project. This process resulted in an agreed set of actions and evidence that represented synergies between the school's expectations and the school's commitment to support professional learning directly related to achieving the school goals for improvement. Teachers reported a shift had occurred from a perceived fragmented approach to traditional

forms of professional development to more coherent, focused and strategic activities within the school to support their future professional learning.

3.4.3 Summary

Mapping professional standards for teaching to school goals when conducted in a supported and collaborative environment represents a strategy lever for whole school change (Fullan, 2011). The process models the 'right drivers' to 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. In summary, using the professional standards for teaching highlighted the need for program coherence between the school goals and future plans for professional learning and the structures and organisation that the school put in place to ensure that both the strategies and resources are targeted and effective. The Standards provided a strong structural framework to guide the development of the three schools' future professional learning plans.

3.5 Resources

3.5.1 Resources Developed for the Pilot

3.5.1.1 Questionnaires

A questionnaire for teachers and school executive (Appendix A and B) that captured data related to effectiveness of using the Standards to:

- Develop individual teachers understanding of the school goals
- Link actions and evidence to specific career stages in the professional standards for teaching
- Build teachers' and school leaders' confidence and capabilities to commit effort and resources to meet the school goals.

3.5.1.2 Focus group interview schedule

The focus group interview schedule is provided in Appendix C. The interviews were used to explore more deeply the issues and themes emerging from the questionnaires in each school.

3.5.2 Existing Resources Used in the Pilot

3.5.2.1 AITSL National Professional Standards for Teachers. (2011).

3.5.2.2 NSW Institute for Teachers Professional Standards

3.6 Findings and Outcomes

3.6.1 Implications and Recommendations from the Pilot

6. The Standards document is a useful resource to support teachers' understanding of their school goals.
7. The Standards can be mapped to school goals to identify action and evidence to support the development of a culture of continuous improvement.
8. The Standards, when aligned to strategic actions that are owned and valued by the whole school, contribute to the growth of social capital as a resource for improvement.

Goals, action plans and strategies will fuel my future accomplishments. (School 3, Teacher 3)

3.7 References

Fullan, M. (2011). *Choosing the wrong drivers for whole system reform*. Seminar Series Paper No. 204, Centre for Strategic Education.

Punch, K.F. (2009). *Introduction to research methods in education*. SAGE Publications: Thousand Oaks, California.

4 APC ACSSO

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Setting the Scene

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 have for a number of years worked collaboratively to 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 and personal and social development of young Australians.

The need for positive partnerships between parents and teachers is highlighted by research on factors contributing to student outcomes. Approximately 60 per cent of a student's outcomes are determined by the intrinsic characteristics that they bring to school, which are largely determined by their parents as well as their family and social environments. The remaining 40 per cent of their schooling outcomes is attributable to the school they attend, and about 70 per cent of that 40 per cent is attributable to the quality of their teachers and their teaching practices.

4.1.2 Contextual Issues

These factors highlight the imperative for effective collaboration between parents and teachers. Connecting student learning at home and school contributes to the maximising of student outcomes, however many teachers feel ill equipped to engage positively and meaningfully with parents. A 2008 study by Monash University found that 82 per cent of teachers felt the need for more professional learning in the area of parent and community involvement (Doecke et al., 2008).

The recently endorsed National Professional Standards for Teachers (hereafter referred to as 'the Standards') make explicit what effective teachers should know and be able to do. Two of these Standards specifically address the relationship between teachers and parents / carers:

3.7 Engage parents / carers in the educative process

7.3 Engage with the parents / carers

Identification of the practices and behaviours that characterise effective teacher engagement with parents / carers will give teachers a deeper understanding of what these Standards mean and thereby support their implementation.

4.2 Research Questions

The overarching 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?

In order to facilitate discussion within the focus groups, this research question was further broken down into three sub-questions. These sub-questions were:

5. **Research Question 1a:** What do you believe are the important attributes, behaviours and processes for teachers when they engage with parents?
6. **Research Question 1b:** How do these attributes, behaviours and processes show up differently across the four categories of teachers (Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead)?
7. **Research Question 1c:** What are some examples of what this looks like in practice?

4.3 Methodological Considerations

The Pilot enlisted professional support and utilised the networks of the APC and ACSSO to plan and conduct seven focus groups to identify specific knowledge and practices that are necessary for teachers to develop and demonstrate efficacy in engaging with parents / carers, specifically in relations to Standards 3.7 and 7.3.

4.3.1 Project Management and Governance

The Pilot was jointly managed by the Executive Director, APC, and the Chief Executive Officer of ACSSO and was oversighted by a steering committee comprising APC and ACSSO representatives.

The Pilot engaged a consultant to support the Pilot. The consultant, Dr Janet Smith, an Educational Consultant and Associate Professor at the University of Canberra, was responsible for the design of the focus group process, facilitating the focus groups and analysing the information and feedback elicited from the focus groups and reporting thereon.

4.3.2 Sampling and Scheduling

It was seen as important to ensure the focus groups were as diverse as possible, and genuinely representative of various parent and teacher constituencies. Such considerations meant ensuring that the focus groups:

- Were genuinely cross-sectoral and contained an even balance of parents and teachers from Government, Catholic and Independent schools
- Represented an even balance of parents and teachers
- Represented all of the four Career Stages for teachers
- Represented early learning, primary, and secondary schools
- Represented a cross-section of socio-economic circumstances
- Represented to the extent possible a cross-section of ethnicities and cultures (although another pilot project was considering these two standards in a specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander context)

It was also acknowledged that whilst all diversity issues are enormously important, nevertheless, the full range of issues could not be addressed with only seven focus groups that did not include rural and remote locations. In particular, it was decided that both special needs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander considerations could not be specifically addressed.

However, fortuitously parents of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and parents of students with special learning needs were represented in some of the focus groups.

Each jurisdiction used their pre-existing APC and ACSSO networks to invite a number of participants to the focus groups (see sample invitation in Appendix A), and each of the focus groups contained approximately 8-10 people. The focus group design intentionally included three focus groups that were a mixture of parents and teachers, two focus groups that contained only teachers, and two focus groups of only parents. The focus groups lasted for approximately two hours, and most were held in the afternoon or early evening.

The schedule for the focus groups is shown below:

Table 4-1 - Focus Group Schedule

Location	Focus Group Participants	Date
Queensland (Gold Coast)	Parents and Teachers	19 th October, 2011
New South Wales (Sydney)	Parents	7 th November, 2011
New South Wales (Sydney)	Teachers	7 th November, 2011
South Australia (Adelaide)	Teachers	9 th November, 2011
South Australia (Adelaide)	Parents	9 th November, 2011
Tasmania (Launceston)	Parents and Teachers	10 th November, 2011
Australian Capital Territory (Canberra)	Parents and Teachers	17 th November, 2011

4.3.3 Focus Group Process Design

The consultant developed a draft set of research questions (instrument) to guide the focus group discussion, which were discussed with the steering committee. The instrument was provided to participants as an agenda (see Appendix B) at the beginning of the focus group as well as a copy of the relevant pages from the Standards. At the end of each session, participants were also given a copy of the *Family – School Partnerships Framework*. Each focus group followed the agenda and included an Introduction and Background given by the facilitator, followed by an invitation to discuss each of the following 3 questions (which are the research questions):

4. **Research Question 1a:** What do you believe are the important attributes, behaviours and processes for teachers when they engage with parents?
5. **Research Question 1b:** How do these attributes, behaviours and processes show up differently across the four categories of teachers (Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead)?
6. **Research Question 1c:** What are some examples of what this looks like in practice?

The facilitator established 'ground rules' at the beginning of each focus group to ensure the group process was focused and effective. These ground rules were:

- There would be one conversation through the facilitator, and participants should signal to the facilitator when they wished to speak
- Participants should respect the process and other participants' views
- Focus groups commonly represent a diverse and even contradictory range of views, and this is okay. The aim of a focus group is not to achieve consensus or to disagree with or change other people's views. Divergence of views is welcomed and they will be reflected in the report
- The discussion would necessarily focus on the practices of teachers that lead to effective parental engagement to support student learning. If / when the discussion veered into other matters associated with teacher / parent engagement that did not concern student learning, discussion would need to be brought back to focus on the key questions under discussion

The facilitator ensured that approximately 30 minutes were spent discussing each of these three questions. The facilitator took notes during the discussion, and after each session summarised and synthesised key findings. In the days following each session, participants were sent a thank you letter or email (see Appendix C).

4.3.4 Analytical Methods

The research for this Pilot was qualitative. Analytical methods were used in two aspects of the Pilot. During the focus group's discussions, the facilitator used questioning techniques to focus discussion in order to draw out areas of agreement, explore differences and elaborate ideas presented by participants. The process was based on the facilitator's independent analysis and synthesis of the discussion.

The facilitator analysed the summary notes of the focus group discussion to identify common themes and differences, synthesise key findings and identify learnings.

4.4 Results from the Engagement

4.4.1 Data Collection and Management

The facilitator recorded summary notes of the focus group discussions, and after each focus group, summarised and synthesised key findings, looking for recurring themes, patterns and any new and significant learnings.

4.4.2 Analysis of the Data

The data has been analysed and summarised into the key themes that emerged. In some cases, these themes have been attributed to either a 'teachers only' group or a 'parents only' group. In most cases the themes were not specific to either teachers or parents, and applied to both.

4.4.2.1 Analytical Procedures

The research approach was qualitative in nature. Summary notes for the focus groups were analysed for commonalities and differences and key themes and findings were synthesised from the summaries.

4.4.2.2 Results

4.4.2.2.1 Some introductory comments about the results

Whilst the majority of findings that emerged during the focus groups are linked to the overarching research question and / or sub-questions, other findings also emerged that are not directly associated with the research questions. Therefore, the findings linked to each of the research questions will be discussed below under the relevant headings, and there will also be an additional section for findings not linked to the research questions.

4.4.2.2.2 Research Questions

4.4.2.2.2.1 Research Question 1a

What do you believe are the important attributes, behaviours and processes for teachers when they engage with parents?

In each focus group a uniform and commonly agreed set of attributes and behaviours emerged that participants believed teachers needed in order to foster effective parental engagement and support student learning. It was commonly agreed that teachers needed to have the following attributes, behaviours and skills:

- Good communication skills
- Value and foster good relationships with students/parents
- Caring and calm
- Positive
- Professional
- Approachable, warm and friendly
- Diplomatic, fair, frank and honest
- A good listener and to listen from the heart
- Well organised
- Able to model and develop trust
- Flexible and adaptable
- Notice things
- Respectful of the role of parents as 'primary educators' of their children
- Acknowledge and access parents' knowledge of their children
- Prompt in following-up on questions and concerns expressed by parents
- Prompt in communicating with parents any concerns they have about students
- Mindful of confidentiality
- Passionate and engaged
- Proactive
- Know and care about children, and know the 'whole child'
- Not condescending, intimidating or superior to parents
- Exhibit cultural awareness and sensitivity
- Socio-economic awareness and sensitivity
- Accommodate and acknowledge diversity of families, but treat all children equally
- Reach out to parents, especially those who are apprehensive about the school environment
- Value and contribute to the broader school community

- Communicate that they like, value and understand your child
- Regard each student as an individual
- Regard parents as partners in the education of their children, and engage in a collaborative process with the parents

4.4.2.2.2 Research Question 1b

How do these attributes, behaviours and processes show up differently across the four categories of teachers (Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead)?

Graduate Teachers are commonly:

- More reactive to situations, students and parents, rather than pro-active
- Eager, energetic, diligent, passionate and enthusiastic about teaching
- Fearful of parents and uncertain how to engage and communicate with parents
- Unlikely to understand the role of parents as the ‘first educator’ of their children (unless the graduate teachers have their own children)
- Likely to try to control conversations with parents
- Apprehensive and self-conscious about having parents in the classroom
- May lack sensitivity and diplomacy, and prematurely rush to incorrect conclusions
- Up-to-date with the latest theories, approaches and techniques for enhancing learning outcomes with students
- Needing the support and guidance of mentor teachers, who are either Highly Proficient or Lead Teachers
- Primary teachers more quickly progress from being the standard of Graduate Teachers to Proficient Teachers because they have to communicate with parents more often, and have a smaller number of parents to get to know well

Proficient Teachers are commonly:

- Able to make the shift from theory to reality
- Capable of better control of their classes, and more detailed knowledge of the curriculum than Graduate teachers
- More skilled at communicating with parents, and knowing when and how to contact them, including one-on-one conversations, phone-calls, emails
- More familiar with school policies, processes and protocols
- Able to diffuse difficult situations
- Collaborative with parents and other teachers
- More comfortable with parents in the classroom, and can spot opportunities and communicate with parents how they can help
- Able to converse with the principal to check on policies and what is expected of them in a given situation
- Understand the school context, and know what strategies will work in particular schools
- Aware of what professional learning they need

Highly Accomplished Teachers are commonly:

- More collaborative with parents
- Able to set targets, achieve targets and be explicit about the sort of engagement they desire with parents
- Able to make interventions with children's learning and relationships with families
- Starting to hold some of the 'corporate knowledge' of the school
- Able to create a sense of 'Welcome' to parents
- Have an 'open-door' policy with parents
- Far more confident and skilled in understanding the curriculum
- Known and respected within the school
- Known by parents, and likely to have earned their trust and respect
- Able to support parents and other teachers
- Likely to write articles in the school newsletter
- Able to communicate to parents that "I get your child"
- Sometimes hard to distinguish from Proficient teachers
- More competent than standard 7.3 would indicate, as they're able to be pro-active and plan ahead and not just be responsive / reactive

Lead Teachers are commonly:

- More global, and have a whole school perspective
- Likely to be change agents
- Able to mentor Graduate and Proficient teachers
- Able to have collaborative, two-way conversations with parents, including seeking parents' opinions
- Don't regard parents as an 'add-on' to the deal, but rather a vital part of the learning relationship
- Able to be proactive and anticipate learning needs, such as assistance with literacy, numeracy, well-being
- Committed to working more than the minimum number of hours
- Able to create opportunities on behalf of others
- Able to quickly accommodate changes
- Able to recognise and cater to gifted and talented students
- Able to recognise and cater to students with special learning needs

4.4.2.2.3 Research Question 1c

What are some examples of what this looks like in practice?

- Parent-teacher interviews
- Parent-teacher information sessions
- Conducting phone-calls and / or interviews with parents early in the school year to get to know the parents, and to value and access the knowledge that parents have about their children
- Creating opportunities to give feedback to parents, especially if there are concerns about a student's progress
- School newsletters that are engaging, frequent and accessible
- Creating individual learning plans for students

- Welcoming parents to assist in the classroom, and attending excursions and school camps
- Tutorial system where a teacher has responsibility for a small number of students that they get to know very well
- Diary system where parents and teachers can easily communicate
- Teachers participate in events associated with the school community, such as fetes, concerts, sporting carnivals, musicals, P&C / P&F
- Mentoring schemes for new teachers, including appointing parent representatives on the selection panels for the mentoring teachers
- Learning Clubs for students (and parents), e.g. Maths Club, Homework Club
- Open plan classrooms, where an experienced teacher is paired with a new teacher, and the new teacher can learn good communication skills with parents
- Home Visits for teachers, especially Kindergarten / Reception, to get to know the student's family
- Teachers formally communicate with previous teacher(s) who have taught this child, to find about the child's learning and family
- Schools providing workshops for parents on topics such as 'Tips for Parent-Teacher Interviews', 'Conversations with the School'
- Schools present parents with a 'Kit' with the information they need to understand the schooling system, and be able to communicate with teachers

4.4.2.2.3 Findings not linked to the research questions

A number of additional findings not directly linked to each of the research questions were identified.

4.4.2.2.3.1 The Focus Group process

- Most parents were enthusiastic about attending the focus groups, and found them stimulating and affirming – many lingered afterwards for quite awhile
- Diversity was sometimes hard to accommodate in the focus groups, as the groups brought together disparate experiences and circumstances. For example, when groups contained a broad spectrum of socio-economic circumstances of schools and parents, the dynamic felt somewhat challenging for parents and teachers from different situations
- Discussion was slightly different with parents and teachers together, compared to when they were in separate groups. When they were together, the conversations were still highly productive and respectful, but they were less focused on the unique needs of teachers in fostering relationships with parents that would enhance learning outcomes for their students, and the unique needs of parents in engaging in relationships with teachers to enhance learning outcomes for their children. It was helpful having some of each type of group (teachers only, parents only, mixed), as it provided a combination of meta-perspective and specificities.

4.4.2.2.3.2 The Standards

- Teachers in some states / territories seemed more familiar with the notion of Professional Standards for Teachers than others. For example, NSW teachers were very used to working with standards
- Teachers were generally aware of the Standards, but parents were not. This therefore meant that a more detailed explanation of the standards was necessary for parents than for teachers
- Many questions were raised about the relationship and interplay of the Standards to teacher salaries and other industrial issues
- Standards 3.7 and 7.3 seemed indistinguishable from one another for both teachers and parents. The facilitator explained that 3.7 was principally concerned with 'Opportunities' and that 7.3 was concerned with 'Communication', but participants found this distinction hard to follow. This confusion was compounded by the fact that 7.3 only mentions communication once (and it also mentions opportunities once)
- Nearly every focus group commented that both Standards 3.7 and 7.3 felt too 'reactive' and not sufficiently 'pro-active' to describe a teachers' responsibilities, especially for the Highly Accomplished stage, where participants commonly said they would expect teachers at this level to have shifted away from a more reactive nature. For example, Highly Accomplished teachers in 7.3 ". . . demonstrate responsiveness in all communications" and it was frequently commented that this should instead read something like ". . . be proactive and responsive in all communications"
- There was excitement by parents about the notion of the Standards providing a common and accessible language about the nature of teaching and learning, and about teachers' work, which some parents mentioned would prove very helpful to them when speaking with teachers
- There was confusion over the notion of a Lead teacher by parents, as some found it hard to understand that a Lead teacher could still be a classroom teacher. In contrast, teachers didn't find this category at all confusing
- Parents and teachers found it easy to describe and classify Graduate teacher attributes and Lead teacher attributes, but often found it hard to distinguish Proficient teachers from Highly Accomplished teachers
- Some parents and one principal said that the Highly Accomplished Standards were the minimum they wanted any teacher in their school to have, and that the Graduate and Proficient Standards weren't high enough

4.4.2.2.3.3 School / Parent Partnerships

- Both parents and teachers uniformly commented on the vital role that the school principal plays in setting the tone of the school, and modelling a culture that values parents
- None of the focus group participants had previously heard of the *Family-School Partnerships Framework*, and they were very grateful to receive this resource for their schools which they believed would be useful
- Parents generally felt very affirmed as the ‘first educators’ of their children as a result of participating in the focus groups, and having their views sought. Many parents reported how much they appreciated the opportunity to have input into this pilot, and to participate in discussions alongside teachers
- Many parents commented on the way that their own negative experiences of schooling continues to impact the ways they interact with the school now
- Some teachers commented on the increasing demands of their jobs, such as NAPLAN, new curriculum, reporting systems and initiatives, and that these demands are pushing out other competing demands for teachers’ time, such as communicating with parents. One teacher quoted that “the things I have to do are now excluding the things I want to do”
- Attention was drawn to the difference between teachers merely providing information *to* parents and actually communicating *with* them. When information is conveyed, parents may feel like clients who are “done to”, rather than feeling the collaboration and reciprocity of real communication

4.4.2.2.3.4 Professional Learning

A range of Professional Learning needs for teachers were identified and recommended for teachers. All or some of the following suggestions arose during each focus group:

- Communication (Listening, Difficult Conversations, Conflict Resolution, Mediation)
- Mentoring new teachers (at Graduate and Proficient levels)
- Writing school policies, including those referring to parents/carers
- Legal and Ethical issues
- Working with the Standards

4.4.3 Summary

The following six main themes consistently emerged from each of the focus groups:

1. All parents and teachers involved in the focus groups were unanimous that the Standards document is a good initiative, and were most enthusiastic about their potential for encouraging teaching practices that would lead to more effective parental engagement, and therefore support student learning
2. Parents regard themselves as the ‘first educators’ of their children, and want to be closely engaged in their children’s schooling and learning, to increase their learning outcomes.

3. Teachers are respectful of the role of parents, and would like to closely involve them in their student's schooling and learning, in any ways that can increase students' learning outcomes.
4. The education endeavour is primarily all about relationships, which are grown by effective communication between principals, teachers, students, and parents. It was commonly agreed that strong and healthy relationships between teachers and parents were likely to result in increased student learning and engagement.
5. The attitude and skills of the school principal matters enormously and sets the tone for the school culture and all teacher-parent relationships and communication within the school community.
6. It was perceived that teachers at each of the four Career Stages have unique and differing skills and sensibilities associated with parental engagement, and that teachers at each stage could positively impact student learning by improving their relationships with parents. However, whilst it was seen that each career stage entailed a particular combination of strengths and weaknesses, most participants believed that Lead Teachers were likely to be the most skilled and able to establish successful parental engagement.

4.5 Resources

4.5.1 Resources Developed for the Pilot

No resources were developed for the Pilot.

4.5.2 Existing Resources Used in the Pilot

Two resources were used during the focus groups:

National Professional Standards for Teachers

As the AITSL Standards were used as the basis for consultation with parents and teachers attending the focus groups, it was a fundamental resource for the Pilot.

Family – School Partnerships Framework: A guide for schools and families

This framework underpins approaches to developing positive partnerships between parents and schools and informed the design and implementation of the Pilot. It was developed by the Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) and the Australian Parents Council (APC) with the support of the Australian Government and in consultation with other key stakeholders, including State and Territory government and non-government school authorities and school principals' associations. In 2008 it received unanimous endorsement by the then Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA).

4.6 Findings and Outcomes

4.6.1 Implications and Recommendations from the Pilot

A range of Professional Learning needs for teachers was identified. These recommendations were constant across each of the Australian States / Territories and the different school sectors, and there didn't appear to be any suggestions or perspectives that were limited to a particular location, jurisdiction or sector.

The Professional Learning offerings that were **suggested for teachers** included:

- Communication Skills, including Listening, Difficult Conversations, Conflict Resolution, Mediation
- Mentoring of new teachers at Graduate and Proficient levels
- Writing school policies, including those referring to parents / carers
- Legal and Ethical issues pertaining to parents and students
- Working with the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*

Parents also requested opportunities for learning and support in how to more fully engage in their children's education. This might be more appropriately structured as a peer learning or peer support process rather than a formal training program.

Some participants also suggested that a resource such as a book or other publication was needed to document current exemplary practices already occurring in Australian schools for parent-teacher engagement, with an explanation of how this could enhance student learning. Some participants referred to US publications describing exemplars of parent-teacher engagement, and their desire to have an Australian version.

4.6.1.1 The Local Perspective

There weren't any particular implications or recommendations that were only relevant at a local level.

4.6.1.2 The National Perspective

There weren't any particular implications or recommendations that were only relevant at a national level.

4.6.2 Planning for the Future

Parents and teachers expressed their hopes that funding would be allocated to provide the necessary Professional Learning and resources to enhance teachers' skills in the domain of parental engagement leading to improved student outcomes.

4.7 References

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (February 2011). *National Professional Standards for Teachers*. Melbourne, Victoria: Education Services Australia.

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (undated). *Family – School Partnerships Framework: A guide for schools and families*. Canberra, ACT: Author.

Doecke, B., Parr, G. & North, S. (November 2008). *Report of the National Mapping of Teacher Professional Learning Project*, Faculty of Education, Monash University.

5 ASPA

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Setting the Scene

Many principals will not have engaged with the National Professional 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 critical that AITSL is cognisant of the challenges facing these principals in particular and is ready to provide the support and encouragement necessary to ensure the successful roll-out of the Standards.

In the concluding remarks of the Executive Summary of the "Final Report on the Validation of Draft National Professional Standards for Teachers" the following comments were made.

The range of issues identified in the commentary across both Surveys and the Focus Group Workshops indicate that the profession has many questions about implementation that need to be fully worked through and resolved before taking the Standards to the implementation phase. Issues such as contextual variations in teaching and learning, access to resources, integration of the Standards with existing State and Territory processes, and integration of the teaching standards with leadership standards are but a few of the major considerations identified. (p ix).

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

5.1.2 Contextual Issues

Key contextual issues of the study of principals and their readiness to implement the Standards related to which state or territory jurisdiction they came from and how far they were from major population centres. Additional contexts were the level of experience of principals, whether they were early in their career (less than or equal to 5 years experience) or later in their career (greater than 5 years) and the staffing profile in their schools, that is were the staff early in their careers or later in their careers.

5.2 Research Questions

After taking into account the current situation that exists in schools regarding the Standards and the likelihood that a number of principals proposed to be interviewed may not have engaged at all with the Standards an online "pre-interview survey" was developed (Appendix 1). This survey aimed to provide interviewed principals with an introduction to the Standards, the issues involved and to have them think about what challenges they may face when required to implement the Standards in their schools.

A feature of the survey was to also gather data about them and their schools to make sure the study encompassed as wide a range of contexts as possible so as to gain a sense of the breadth of issues and challenges faced by principals.

Each principal was then interviewed and topics covered mirrored those in the pre-interview survey to a greater or lesser extent.

A brief outline of the research questions proposed is below.

1. What strategies do principals propose to use to engage staff in implementing the standards?
2. What kind of structures might they put in place to do this?
3. What kind of things do they need to know and understand before they can start implementing the Standards?
4. What kind of support do they think could be helpful? And what things do you think will help principals implement the Standards?
 - (i) Materials?
 - (ii) Training?
 - (iii) Personnel?
 - (iv) Other?
5. What are the professional learning needs for your school?
 - (i) Examples of strategies?
 - (ii) A general introduction for the whole staff?
 - (iii) What are needs specific to your school, leadership team, you as a principal?
 - (iv) What kind of follow up to the Standards will be needed?
6. What things do you think will help principals implement the Standards?
7. What barriers do you think there will be to implementing the Standards?
8. How prepared is are you to implement the Standards? And how will the school context influence how the Standards are implemented?

5.2.1 Focus

As already mentioned the prime purpose and focus of the study was to

- Provide a report detailing the challenges principals expect to meet in rolling out the Standards for teachers
- Identify support materials currently being used by principals when discussing with their staff about the standards
- Identify support and materials needed by principals to assist them implement the standards

5.3 Methodological Considerations

Principals were selected by 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. Such conversations were conducted on four occasions, three in a small group situation and one as a single interview. The small group situations provided the opportunity for teachers and principals to bounce ideas and concepts off one another and also triggered greater consideration of the "bigger picture" than might otherwise have been the case.

As noted above Principals were provided with a preparatory survey as a tuning in exercise to the one-on-one, face-to-face interview conducted by ASPA's President, Ms Sheree Vertigan.

A set of questions (see Section 3 above) was designed to ensure comparability of input between different principals and their responses recorded by the interviewer by taking notes or, as in most instances, by audio recordings. These audio recordings were transcribed and the written notes analysed for common themes and challenges. These were cross-referenced to the pre-interview survey.

Not all questions were given equal weight in the interviews and in some instances it was not possible to cover the whole set of questions. It was intended to also gather some semi-quantitative data using a Likert Scale in the interviews on a variety of aspects of implementing the Standards but this proved to be impractical. It was found however, that the transcripts of interviews provided excellent insights into what principals thought about implementing the NPST.

Analysis of the pre-interview survey results provided quantitative data prior to the interview and were also used to show differences in responses by principals from the range of contexts outlined above. A download of the raw data from the pre-interview survey is provided in Appendix 2 and reference will be made in the report to these findings.

5.4 Results from the Engagement

5.4.1 Data Collection and Management

Data from the study was collected via the pre-interview survey, audio taped and transcribed interviews, and notes from interviews of a group of far north Queensland principals.

Survey data was downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet to examine written responses of principals at different stages in their career. On the survey site, data was cross-referenced to examine, quantitatively, responses from early career principals and from principals later in their career to questions about their understanding of and readiness to implement the Standards. Graphs of these responses were produced. However, owing to the small number of principals surveyed compared to the numbers of principals in Australia caution must be used in interpreting and generalising the results.

Two interviews were listened to by two people and themes emerging were identified, discussed and agreed upon. Transcribed interviews were read and themes highlighted. Themes were then identified as challenges to be faced or a strength, weakness or opportunity presented by implementation of the Standards. Challenging themes were grouped into like

categories and sorted according to their frequency of mention and reported on below. In the introductory section to the results strengths of the standards as perceived by the principals was also reported on.

5.4.2 Analysis of the Data

17 of the 24 principals individually interviewed filled in the pre-interview survey and provided their perspectives of the Standards and insights into models implementation. The raw data set for the whole survey is at Appendix 1.

Cross-correlation of principals' thoughts about the implementation of the NPST versus their time as a principal were made and the results recorded and presented in the section on Results. Analysis of the survey data and the interview transcripts showed the broad agreement between the two modes of data collection.

As mentioned previously themes from the transcription of the audio tapes of the interviews were identified, checked with the interviewer and categorised according to the type of theme. Comments made in the online survey were also read and combined with the themes from the transcriptions.

Examples of support materials currently used by principals in their discussions with staff were sought and examples from three schools provided. Principals also identified the kinds of support materials they were accessing to implement state "standards" materials would be useful when implementing the national Standards.

5.4.2.1 Analytical Procedures

In addition to the cross-referencing of views about the NPST against the principals level of experience, state/territory and region the majority of transcribed interviews was entered into a word frequency diagram generator, common words ignored and the final diagram checked for consistency with the major themes identified. There was significant overlap between this diagram and the themes.

5.4.2.2 Results

In the responses to each of the questions, detailed in the pages below, the challenges facing principals have been focussed on rather than their more balanced views of the Standards as a whole. In order to address this imbalance the authors of the report thought it was appropriate to provide AITSL with some statements about the positive aspects of principals' responses to the Standards.

Generally, principals praised 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.

A number also commented that articulating expectations of good teacher practice and developing a culture of reflective conversation based upon self reflection using tools based on the standard would be very helpful to implementing the standards. The point was made that to develop such a culture a "language", as provided by the standards, will need to be used to

clarify and agree on what is being observed and to discuss the observations. It was felt that the standards provided an important scaffold for self-reflection and rating and could inform professional conversations.

Responses to each of the questions follows.

5.4.2.2.1 What strategies do principals propose to use to engage staff in implementing the standards?

There were a range of responses to this question 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 [of] a change to what is already in place”*

They see the Standards as acting to *“support the work we are currently doing and add another dimension.”*

A number of principals mentioned that they intend to use the standards as a *“tool for encouraging teachers to reflect on their practice. They are also extremely useful for commencing 1:1 conversations with teachers as they provide a range [of] entry points that are clear and unemotive.”*

Another principal will use the Standards in a more whole school manner. *“The school has experienced significant change in leadership. Policies and procedures are in urgent need of review and updating. The national Standards for teachers will underpin much of our review work.”*

All but 4 of the 17 principals filling in the “Pre-Interview Survey” agreed or strongly agreed that they were clear in their mind about processes to use to implement the Standards. It is worth noting that principals early in their career seem not as clear about the processes they will use. See Figure 1.

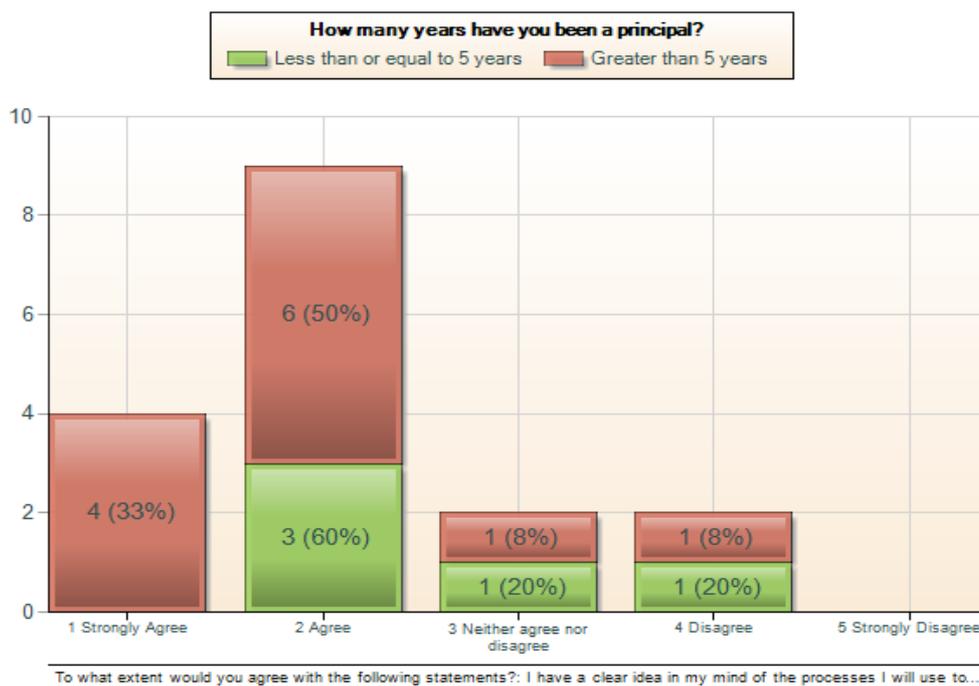


Figure 5-1 : Processes for Implementing the Standards

5.4.2.2.2 What kind of structures might they put in place to do this?

Many principals indicated that their current structures that exist 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.

Another indicated that:

We have an established beginning teacher program that is overseen by a Head Teacher, each faculty has an appointed Head Teacher with responsibility for the development and support of staff, we have a whole school Teacher Professional Development team, we have an executive team that is regularly involved in professional development activities

Many structures are similar in that they involve working with school leadership teams and committees to implement initiatives such as the Standards. This in turn may be seen as a professional learning and growth program. Many also commented on using “coaching” or “mentoring” strategies to support professional learning goals and priorities.

5.4.2.2.3 What kind of things do they need to know and understand before they can start implementing the Standards?

Perhaps obviously a clear and detailed knowledge and understanding of the NPST was commented on as being of critical importance to implementing the NPST. A number of principals indicated that they had a good understanding of the Standards with 11 out of the 17 respondents saying they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they “have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the National Professional Standards for Teachers?” However, the degree of understanding expressed in the survey by participants was not as evident in the interview.

A concerning aspect of these results is the observation that only 1 principal early in their career agreed with this statement. See Figure 2.

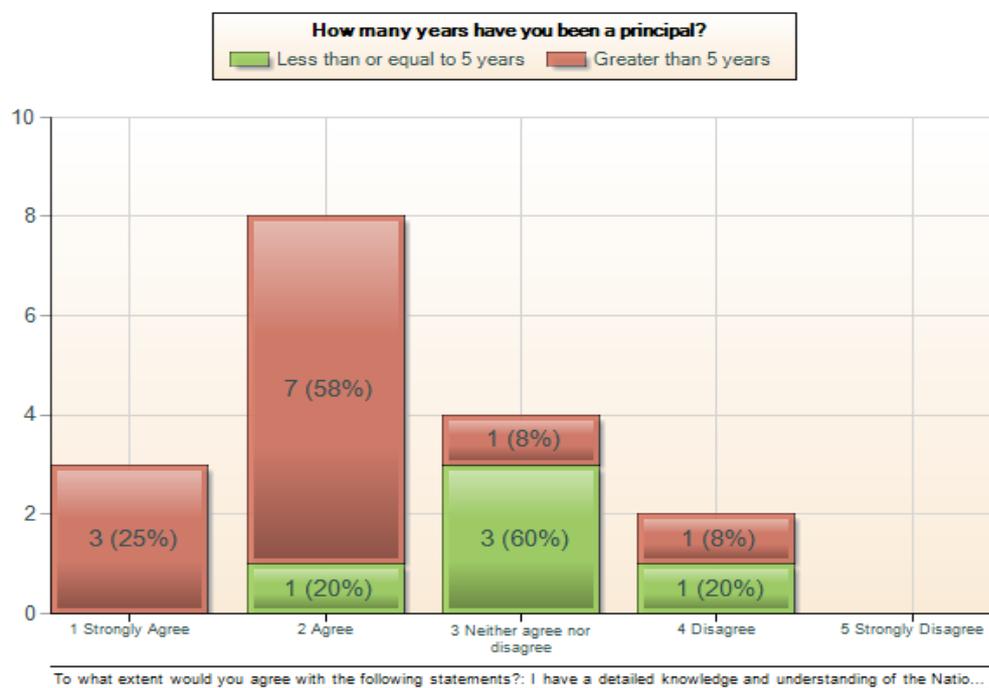


Figure 5-2 : Knowledge and Understanding of the Standards

When data for this same question was analyzed on a state-by-state basis it was clear that principals from one state were lacking knowledge of the Standards. See Figure 3. This will require further investigation to test the veracity of this finding.

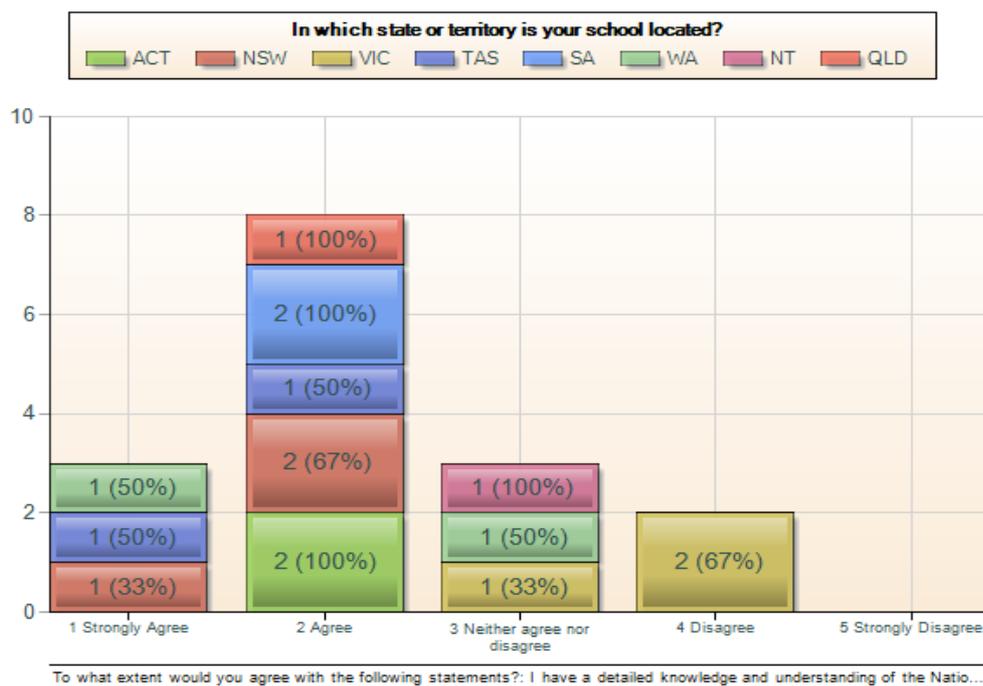


Figure 5-3 : Knowledge and Understanding of the Standards - State/Territory Distribution

Other comments related more to needing an understanding of the rationale behind the whole Standards initiative and what was trying to be achieved by engaging in its implementation. This seemed more a function of principals early in their career who had not been involved in lead up discussions about standards. In a number of cases principals indicated that between being approached to form part of this study and the interview their local jurisdiction had briefed principals in their system about the Standards.

5.4.2.2.4 What kind of support do they think could be helpful? And what things do you think will help principals implement the Standards?

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. One principal called for a “clearly understood framework for leading for improved practice.”

Clarity of what is required ranged from requests about the “clarity of purpose of the standards” to “best practice models of utilising the standards to lift capacity rather than as a deficit tool”.

Time of course was mentioned especially related to system “staffing allocations” to schools and “appropriate allocation of time for teaching and preparation and professional learning within industrial agreements.” Some also called for linking the Standards “with other professional standards developed at the State level”

Other kinds of support mentioned are quoted under the headings below and examples of state or school based instruments are in Appendix 3.

5.4.2.2.4.1 Materials

- Models of approaches to implementation
- A well structured online learning module that unpacks the Standards.

- Supporting templates to allow for self and collaborative reflection against the standards and domains
- Supporting examples of what "demonstrated or achieved looks like".
- Interactive on line tools - matrices that can be downloaded.
- Access to new documentation (hard copy) as well as online, easily available
- Apps for smart phones
- Pre-prepared material for unpacking the Standards to be used with staff

5.4.2.2.4.2 Training

- Workshops for teachers on the Standards.
- Inclusion in pre-service training.
- More discussion around and empowerment of staff in the process. Coaching skills provide confidence for talking to teachers about their performance and stimulating thinking and planning for future action and growth.
- Use of the standards as a means for giving and receiving feedback by teaching teams.
- Adequate training in the process for key stakeholders will also be needed, especially to ensure consistency of judgement across sectors and states.
- Identifying school based measures such as classroom observation and working with observers (all staff) to develop agreed benchmarks they would see in the school. Consistency is critical.

5.4.2.2.4.3 Personnel

- Adequate resourcing in the form of support materials and time [outside the classroom] within staffing allocation to free both mentors and new teachers from face to face teaching.
- Support for principals to “reflect on their current practices that target improved professional practice and then rejig the landscape to ensure the new standards complement existing practice and in some cases replace existing practice.” ...the inclusion of significant practicing school leaders in AITSL planning group(s) responsible for planning implementation.

5.4.2.2.4.4 Other

- Quality accreditation processes, owned by the education profession, not employers or government.
- Change the culture around professional learning to move 'from workshop to workplace'.
- There needs to be a recognition of current teachers' very diverse roles and responsibilities and the added pressure that high community expectations of student achievement and results/outcomes now place on teachers.
- An explicit systems performance management/accountability process that reflects the standards will be useful.

5.4.2.2.5 What are the professional learning needs for your school?

Many of the professional learning (PL) needs indicated above apply to this section and will not be repeated here. Matters worthy of note have been placed in the appropriate section below. A number of principals commented that Professional Learning is critically important 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.”*

5.4.2.2.5.1 A general introduction for the whole staff

There was a call for *“a balanced view of how the professional standards can enhance teacher practice and promote professional growth... there will be a performance aspect to this which is reasonable and if handled well will help underperforming teachers understand what they need to do to improve their practise.”*

5.4.2.2.5.2 What are needs specific to your school, leadership team, you as a principal?

Time was yet again mentioned in comments relating to the Standards: *“Time, interest from teachers to buy in, alignment to performance and registration processes in states”*.

A point was made in the interviews that schools from a low SES background or with large numbers of students and parents from a language other than English background would have trouble engaging their communities in discussions about the Standards. Some thought will need to be given as to how to effectively manage this context.

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, because of this, a “two tribes” culture can develop and is something that has to be guarded against.

Again in interviews 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.

5.4.2.2.5.3 What kind of follow up to the Standards will be needed?

As quoted in 4.2.2.5 above a major issue will be *“about how consistency will be established, maintained and ensured across the country.”* Many principals commented upon the need for clarity (an oft quoted positive of the Standards) and consistency across schools and systems.

Almost in the same breath principals said system support for the standards was highly important if this initiative was to have any chance of success. Principals also called for a clear link to be established (as noted above) between the NPST and state standards or equivalent.

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 the Standards will need to become even more rigorous as the graduates who were first introduced to the standards move through the system.

5.4.2.2.6 What things do you think will help principals implement the Standards?

Many of these things have already been identified in 5.2.2.4 however some additional points are made under the headings below.

7. Global perspective

Continued system support and inservice for principals and their staff.

If the language of the standard is to become the language of the profession then that language must be used in other documents that describe current best practice.

8. Professional conversations

A number of principals in interviews and in the Pre-Interview Survey mentioned the importance of tools or instruments to assist them or their leadership team have conversations with teachers about their teaching. Such tools related especially to classroom observations, self-evaluation (to give a beginning to the conversation), guides on how to develop a climate of co-operation, guides to the giving and receiving of feedback etc. A more extensive listing will be entered in Section 7.

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 were characterised with the same explicitness and clarity.

9. Easiest aspects of the standards to implement

Early career staff were seen as being the easiest to inculcate into the new standards environment and if there was already a culture existing in the school of conversations about teaching, walk through classroom observations and a language related to that of the standards then implementation of the Standards would be quite straightforward.

5.4.2.7 What barriers do you think there will be to implementing the Standards?

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. Some key barriers identified are in the quotes below:

- Teachers need to be very aware of what the standards are and what they mean for them.
- Time, interest from teachers to buy in, alignment to performance and registration processes in states.
- Possible Union activity.
- Lack of high quality professional learning for principals and supervisors.
- Time management within heavy workloads will be an issue. Interest levels of staff in the performance standards. Industrial issues.
- In general discussions with staff:

Teachers concern over the intention of the Standards

Perception of how this is valued by the system, remuneration etc

A climate of add on and accountability without authority

- Lack of time, not enough Professional Learning and professional discussion because of competing topics/areas of professional development needing their attention, e.g. Australian Curriculum and understanding NAPLAN analytically are but two.

5.4.2.2.8 How prepared is the principal to implement the Standards? And how will the school context influence how the Standards is implemented?

Principals were asked to self assess their readiness to implement the Standards. The following two figures (Figure 4 and Figure 5) indicate this self-assessment by experience and by state and territory. It would appear that less experienced principals feel less prepared to implement the Standards and some states and territory principals feel likewise.

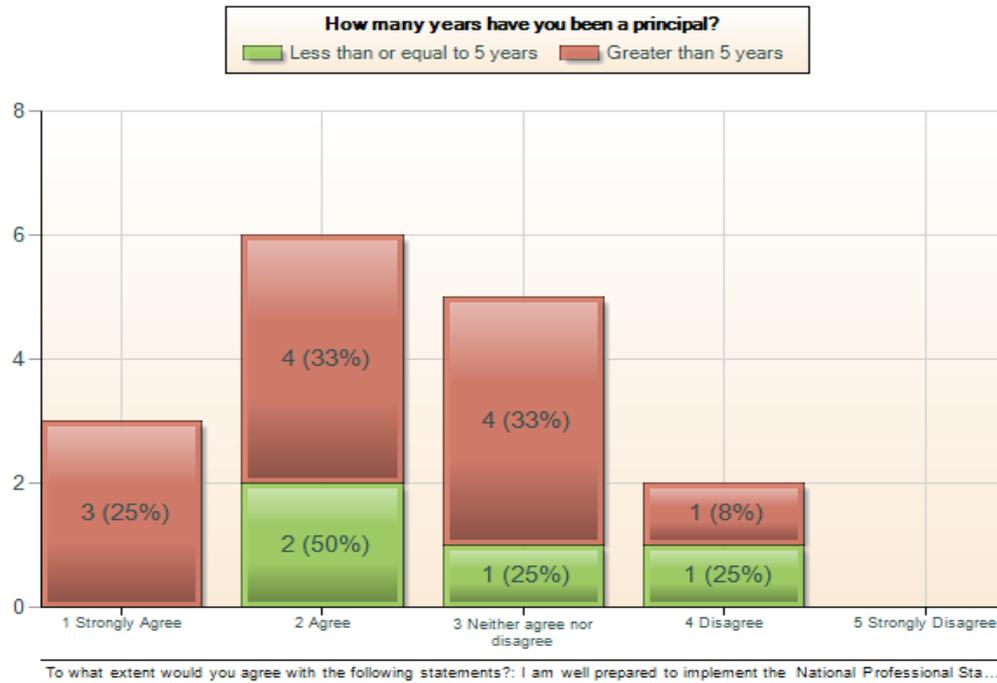


Figure 5-4 : Preparation for Implementing the Standards

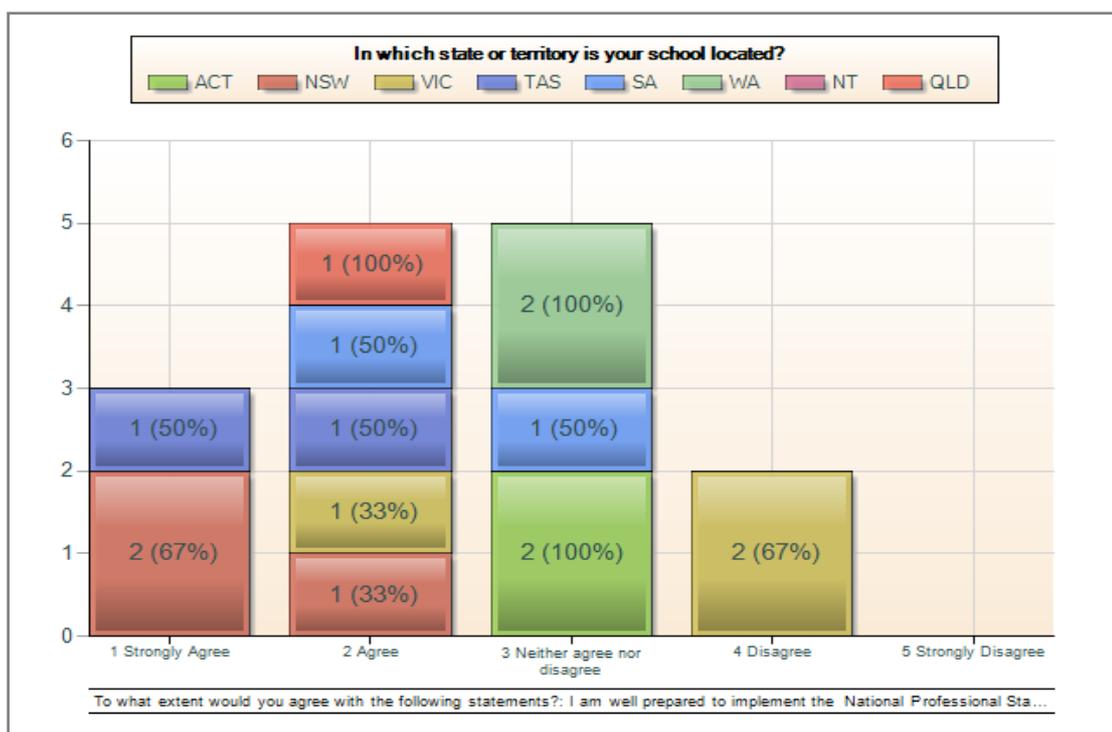


Figure 5-5 : Preparation for Implementing the Standards - State/Territory Distribution

Matters relating to a schools context mainly concerned the staffing profile of a school although mention has been made above of the multitudinous initiatives and situations currently existing in schools. Points made by principals included:

- Those related to the “tools” challenge in that different tools are needed for each level.
- Age and stage issue – early career teachers more adept with language and willing to get involved whereas “older career “ teachers more sceptical and potentially more disengaged
- This profile (early and much later career teachers) in a school can lead to a two tribes effect
- There may be a need to challenge the notion that the more years of experience a teacher has the higher the quality of their teaching.
- Managing the transition from the old culture to the new.
- Entering a new school and building a new culture can be a matter of reframing what the standards are about and developing a professional growth model. The principal has a key role in doing this reframing and envisioning.
- Also a question of how much do you invest in permanent staff as opposed to temporary staff.

5.4.3 Summary

In summary principals thought the challenges that exist for the implantation of the Standards centred on a number of things that are listed in rank order in Table 1 below.

Table 5-1 - Challenges

Challenges
Tools for
Self assessment
Reflection
Data gathering
Classroom observation
Culture – developing or changing
Professional growth
Supportive structures
Staffing profile
Engagement of teachers in the NPST
Incentive/imperatives for teachers
State Structures
Links to performance management
Language

A complete listing of the challenges identified from the discussions with principals can be found in Appendix 4. A word frequency “representational diagram” of the transcribed interviews can be found at Appendix 5.

5.5 Resources

5.5.1 Resources Developed for the Pilot

The resource developed for this pilot was the Pre-Interview Survey used as a preparatory instrument to “tune” principals into the issues involved in implementing the Standards. The questions asked and responses provided can be seen in Appendix 1.

5.5.2 Existing Resources Used in the Pilot

Constant reference was made to the National Professional Standards for Teachers and the National Professional Standard for Principals

5.6 Findings and Outcomes

5.6.1 Implications and Recommendations from the Pilot

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., Standards will increase the focus on teaching and learning and it has the capacity to raise the quality of teaching in all schools and then they will commit to the use of the National Professional Standards for Teachers.

The following are recommendations to support implementation of the Standards.

1. For those principals in states and territories where standards and/or frameworks exist, it is critical that there is an understanding around the purpose and status of the standards and the relationship between the two documents. AITSL must show how the documents interconnect.
2. Furthermore there is a recommendation that there is a determination of the relationship between the standards and employment and industrial regulations. This was seen as an area for potential conflict particularly when teachers who have expert status achieved under a prior model, are not viewed as having achieved a similar level (e.g. highly accomplished or lead status) when NPST becomes the new evaluation instrument.
3. It is recommended that the AITSL Clearinghouse offer schools some 'how to packages' or a suite of implementation tools that schools can use as the starting point. Developing structures, processes, proformas, templates or record keeping takes time and without the time to develop these supports schools may resist beginning the professional conversations which are critical to implementing the Standards successfully. Principals and school leaders stated that there is so much information available it is difficult to determine the most effective or appropriate tools. For many schools there is also the issue of cost and many of the tools are very expensive.
4. AITSL should and consider recommending tools or providing tools to address the following areas of need:
 - A getting started kit for staff at all levels – from Graduate to Lead Teacher
 - High quality but inexpensive coaching and mentoring professional learning or models based on coaching and mentoring where the focus is on knowing what questions to ask, or the provision of guides on how to have a challenging conversation.
 - 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. Data must be both quantitative and qualitative and include data from classroom observations/instructional rounds.
 - Models of Record keeping – electronic templates developed against the standard, simply ways of recording information from conversations etc.

5. For many principals this is a more thorough process of reviewing and managing staff growth and development. It adds another layer of complexity of the role for the principal. To be effective principal, in this new context, must have the following knowledge, skills and understanding and AITSL must examine the nature and extent of professional learning to ensure current school principals and aspiring principals have:
 - Sound knowledge of the Standards
 - The skills to manage multiple staff reactions to engaging in the standards process
 - An understanding of what needs to be achieved and how this process will contribute to improvements in teaching and student outcomes.
 - Skills in instructional leadership
 - A capacity to build quality relationships and to be capable of knowing what people need to do to get to the next level or to perform better at their current level.
 - Knowledge and understanding of the Principal standard.

5.6.1.1 The Local Perspective

Although each school context is unique, there are a number of common features or recommendations from school communities that are engaged in rich professional dialogue focused on quality teaching and learning.

The implementation of Standards is dependent upon the development of a culture of trust and collegiality rather than 'private practice' and a shared understanding of the role of the standards.

Standards are most effective when they are tied to school and systemic expectations and priorities. They should be incorporated in school improvement or transformation plans.

As stated by a number of principals, *"we need to be clear about what we want, what we expect and what we mean when we use the term high quality."* There is a need to create deliberate intentional processes, working with staff to unpack what the Standards mean.

The school's staffing profile does impact on a school's capacity to begin these conversations with principals reporting that early career teachers were more familiar with the language and willing to get involved whereas "older career teachers" tend to be more sceptical and potentially more disengaged. For some the paradigm has changed from the notion that the more years of experience a teacher has, the higher the quality of their teaching.

It is highly important that the leadership team focuses on the needs of teachers at all stages, providing incentive, imperative and support. Poor management can lead to teachers feeling devalued and result in a "two tribes" effect.

For an incoming principal or a beginning principal entering a new school and building a new culture can be a matter of reframing what the standards are about and developing a professional growth model. There may be value in developing a quick audit tool to promote a quick review of current context.

A number of principals raised the issue of investment as it relates to permanent and temporary staff.

Transparency and consistency are critical. All members of the team must know the process and the structures that will be used to support professional conversations and to make the judgements about a teacher's level. Principals must take the time to frame the conversations even if not directly involved in each and every conversation.

To be effective and demonstrate the value of the professional conversation, the Principal must:

1. Allow time for the process including preparation, interview, and follow up. As one principal stated, *"a lack of time can be used as an excuse but people do like to talk about themselves,"* and another estimated that it takes approximately 2 to 4 hours per person per "conversation".
2. Invest in people/the team who are leading the conversations. It is important to realise that this investment has cost implications and there is no doubt that this is potentially easier to do in a larger school with a large management team to share implementation of the process.
3. Identify and involve key stakeholders (parents, students, peers at other schools)
4. Guarantee access to professional learning at all stages in the process.

5.6.1.2 The National Perspective

If one purpose of the Standards is to raise the profile of teaching and increase awareness about what is good practice, Standards must be shared with multiple audiences. Identification and involvement of key stakeholders (parents, students, peers at other schools) has the potential to be more difficult in some contexts e.g.: at lower SES schools and schools with a high population of ESL speakers, remote communities.

Language is both a barrier and an enabler. There must be a clear set of guidelines, carefully worded definitions that are applied consistently across all jurisdictions, and a decision to avoid any potentially punitive language. It is about a growth and development culture that challenges the individual, the team and the community to keep the focus on what makes a good teacher.

AITSL and all states and territories must get the balance right between incentive and imperative and realise that at one end it is about performance management but this can be seen as being at odds with professional growth. There is a need for a "managing in and managing out" process but many question who has responsibility to articulate this process. If it is at a state level then effort must be made to make the approach consistent across the nation.

There will always be staff at both ends of spectrum as yet there is little clarity around the financial incentive or professional incentive at each stage within the Standards.

Graduates and Proficient have an incentive to gain higher levels if extra pay is involved – this is not as pronounced for staff already at those levels

If staff fail to continue to perform at higher levels would they be "demoted" and thus lose the extra pay? If this did happen they would seek assistance from the union and it could quickly become an industrial issue.

The successful implementation of Standards depends upon the level of commitment and support for the Standards by the state jurisdictions. There is a need to map the relationship of the Standards to state standards or frameworks. The connection between the Standards and employment conditions must be determined, as this will have a bearing on the negotiation of EBA's, staff selection and promotion.

All principals interviewed stressed that above all else the implementation of the NPST is dependent upon professional learning, professional learning from both the ground up and the top down. The focus is on transformation and a system or a school can only transform when there is new relevant learning.

5.6.2 Planning for the Future

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 NPST and continued engagement with the profession, especially those charged with implementing it in schools, that is principals, will be critical.

It is clear from this study that these principals have engaged with the National Standards for Teachers and are aware of the implications both positive and negative of the standards for them, their staff and their school communities but some have yet to fully appreciate and understand the implications and possible advantages of this initiative. There is a significant danger that many principals, especially in regional and remote areas, will ignore or pay scant attention to the Standards.

5.7 References

“Final Report on the Validation of Draft National Professional Standards for Teachers”, University of New England, November 2010.

National Professional Standard for Teachers, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, February 2011.

National Professional Standard for Principals, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, July 2011.

6 Australind

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 Setting the Scene

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. Our Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value is 969, yet we consistently perform above statistically similar schools, especially in Numeracy.

We run a series of key academic programs including Thinking Science (University of Western Australia), Aviation, Jazz Performance and Composition, Japanese (Language Hub for the South-West Region) and our flagship Department of Education WA, Academic Specialist Program - Mathematics and Philosophy.

We are a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) with the ability to provide Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate I and II courses in, Business, Hospitality, Engineering, Building and Construction, Information Technology and Community Service (Child Care).

We have developed strong international education partnerships with highly performing schools, Preston School (UK), Moka (Japan) and Jinan (China) to embellish research, Asia literacy and cross-curricular perspectives as outlined in the Australian Curriculum. We are engaged with these schools through student and teacher exchanges and regular professional discourse on teaching and learning.

Australind Senior High School has a rich tradition of research based school improvement programs. The school has developed a culture of success that is measured against both student achievement and progress. Each of our school improvement strategies is reviewed against key performance indicators including progress and achievement targets across a range of student assessment. In 2007, the school won a *Teaching Australia: Award for School Improvement* utilising a Department of Education (WA) program called *Assessment Literacy*. In this program, teachers were trained to analyse student performance information from a range of formative and summative assessments and then use the data to monitor student performance, differentiate learning and plan for classroom improvement.

The opportunity to undertake a pilot around engagement with the National Professional Standards for Teachers (hereafter referred to as 'the Standards') builds upon that practice and provides a new complimentary focus. That focus is utilising student voice. Specifically, student surveys designed to inform teachers of their professional practice and video footage of lessons. The surveys were designed to align with the focus areas defined in the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Professional Standards for Teachers (the Standards). For the purpose of this project we have narrowed the focus of our research to the Professional Practice domain, more specifically, Standards 3 and 5. Feedback garnered from the student surveys was used to inform classroom planning with the aim of improving teachers' professional practice. Seeking feedback from students was deemed potentially confronting by

teachers in the initial stages of the program. Thus, collaborative pairs of teachers were written into the project design. This resulted in six pairs being invited from six different learning areas to support one another, provide mentor support in some cases, observe classroom practice, analyse survey data and plan for improvement.

The introduction of video footage was inspired by the work of Dr David Clarke and his talented team at the International Centre for Classroom Research (ICCR) based at The University of Melbourne. The rationale behind the use of classroom footage was to provide a powerful record of classroom practice that could be used by teachers in the trial to reflect upon. The nature of video data was an important material actor, since it could bring the classroom to the discussion, be viewed over and over, and 'saw' things literally from different perspectives (Gorur & Clarke, 2008). We felt that it was a crucial tool for teachers to use as it would reveal the multi-dimensional and intricately embedded practices of the classroom, and allow teachers a rare opportunity to assess their performance against set criteria, represented by the Standards, through a self-reflective vocational mirror.

6.1.2 Contextual Issues

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. We have also seen the introduction of the inaugural School Board consisting of 15 members from our wider school community. However, with greater autonomy comes greater responsibility and expectation stemming from the school community, school administration and the Department to improve student performance. This places greater pressure on all staff and so it is important to seek methods of school improvement that are effective yet manageable within an already tight teacher schedule and even tighter budget constraints.

There is a conundrum that lies at the heart of school improvement - the struggle to balance the potential shortfall between proposed school priorities (targets, KPIs, goals) and finite human, material and financial resources. School improvement circulates through a constant cycle of assessment, planning and action. This cycle requires time and focused effort from all staff to succeed, yet relies significantly on whole-staff good will, fuelled by a genuine desire to improve student performance. Thus, it is essential that programs implemented are directly connected to our strategic direction and sustainable in practice. A key priority outlined in the school business plan is *Quality Teaching* and a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) linked to this priority is to have all teachers mapped to the AITSL standards by 2013. The KPIs embedded in the plan form the basis for future school review and provide points of focus for the School Board to discuss and evaluate using a range of formative assessment that guide the school toward the ultimate goal of attaining its KPIs and targets.

When writing the business plan we felt strongly that it was necessary to align teacher performance to a nationally accredited set of standards that could be linked to teacher performance through a combination of self-reflection, mentor/collegial observation and student feedback. Thus, teacher performance could be self-monitored through metacognitive understanding, mentor/collegial observation then linked to professional development based upon individual teacher need. Further, the language of the Standards could be discussed on a national scale and linked to teacher development and school improvement programs throughout Australia that are highly tailored to individual school contexts.

ASHS has, like many large high schools, run a traditional leadership structure. However, with the advent of IPS status and thus governance by a school board, the appetite of staff for greater ownership of decision making has been evident. This has led to a restructuring and redistribution of school leadership defined by a series of school committees that inform the school board. This will place more responsibility on all staff to drive school improvement through engagement with decision making processes. We currently have 100% of administration, 67% teaching and 30% of support staff enrolled in our school committees providing leadership opportunities and empowerment at all levels of school management.

Our teaching staff is highly experienced and characterised by an average age of 45 years. Due to this, the staff have experienced many curriculum and policy changes in their respective careers. 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 discussing the potentially confronting nature of student voice. It is uncommon for schools in our context to seek student feedback, and a greater ask to use this data to inform the quality of teachers' professional practice. Teacher concerns were treated with respect and the main issues identified in the following:

- 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?

In order to allay some of these concerns it was decided that Standard 4 would not be used for the pilot as it refers extensively to classroom management and this was perceived as an area that teachers may be seen to be 'judged' by administration and students rather than assessed in line with the intent of the trial.

Filming of classes was also treated with some scepticism. Would it be used as an accountability measure by senior administrators? Some parents were also suspicious of their children being filmed and so we sent permission letters home explaining the nature of the project. It was very encouraging that all parents allowed their children to be filmed for the purposes of teacher improvement and research.

6.2 Research Questions

The following will outline the rationale for the research questions below citing our formative academic research and describing how contextual issues have informed the particular questions.

The introduction of student voice into the classroom improvement cycle was challenging for many of our teachers, as indicated above. However, a paradigm shift was needed in our school to move from, largely, teacher-centred to more student-centred teaching and learning. Thus, student voice was included in our analysis of classroom performance through video footage of lessons and the introduction of student surveys.

There is an established responsibility placed on school administrators to use all available data to inform school improvement planning and for classroom teachers to use a range of formative and summative student assessment data to inform classroom planning. The reliance on data, especially with regard to population tests such as NAPLAN, have exposed schools to much greater public scrutiny through government endorsed data programs such as *My School* and subsequently schools' exposure to the media.

The measure of a school's effectiveness is now, predominantly, evaluated through student performance. Therefore, it is logical to change the focus of school improvement from teaching to learning. Further, we should focus on the greatest source of variance that can make the difference – the teacher (Hattie, 2003). In simple terms, teachers should assess their performance against the performance of their students. If teachers assess their own performance through guided self-reflection and then focus on how to improve student learning, the teaching will adapt to cater for the individual needs of students. It is interesting that when assessing information from tests, the majority of teachers see such feedback as providing information about children, their home backgrounds, and their grasp of curricula – and too rarely do they see such feedback as reflecting on their expertise as teachers (Hattie, 2003).

From a consideration of these points, we developed the first three focus questions:

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

The recent introduction of our inaugural Independent Public School (IPS) Board has brought sense of greater accountability from the school community to our school strategy and operations. Thus, the results from the pilot will help to inform decisions about future summative and formative strategies needed to engage our wider school community. The intent of this goal will be captured in answering the following question:

4. What summative and formative strategies can be used to engage the community and to monitor student feedback?

Two additional research questions were developed around the identification of priority areas and challenges associated with professional learning:

5. What are the three priority areas for improving teaching identified from student feedback?
6. What issues and challenges arise from the pilot for using the National Professional Teaching Standards to inform a schools professional learning program?

6.3 Methodological Considerations

The impetus to apply for the AITSL pilot project was, as stated above, to attain a KPI under the priority area of *Quality Teaching* listed in the school business plan. The pilot was initially tabled at a school Academic Research and Development Committee meeting. A sub-committee was then formed to shape the proposal for submission to AITSL. The committee saw the pilot as the perfect opportunity to accelerate progress toward the goal of having all teachers mapped to the Standards by 2013.

The purpose of the pilot is 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 3).



Figure 6-1 : Data Triangulation Pyramid

Within the context of this Pilot, teachers mapped themselves against the Professional Practice domain of the National Professional Standards for Teachers (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.

We were determined to run the pilot study within existing school structures and in alignment with the school improvement cycle illustrated (Figure 4) in the Department of Education WA, *School Improvement and Accountability Policy* (2008).



Figure 6-2 : School Improvement Cycle

To ensure alignment of processes between the pilot and our school improvement cycle we will focus 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)

With the pilot directly linked to existing school systems and processes we were left with the logistical operations to deliver. We believe that this will be most useful outlined in a chronological order of events:

Week 1: A whole day meeting with the project team was conducted by the program coordinators. Collaborative pairs were organised prior. The coordinators reviewed findings from the pilot symposium held in Melbourne. The focus questions were discussed in detail and the Standards unpacked and linked to classroom evidence. This was done with the assistance of Level 3 Classroom Teachers (L3CT) whose advanced standing in the Department is closely aligned to the Lead teacher phase of the Standards. A decision was made to concentrate on foci within the Professional Practice domain only. Staff were required to identify classes to be surveyed and which focus areas they would concentrate on. Staff were given the opportunity to write survey questions linked to their selected focus areas. All issues surrounding surveys and classroom filming were raised for discussion. Timelines, participant responsibilities and resources were distributed to staff. Prior to this meeting, potential partnerships were identified by the lead team. The main criteria to ensure the success of the pilot was that these mentors were trusted 'critical friends'. The relationship needed to be an open and honest one with a focus on self-improvement. For this reason the traditional line manager/subordinate partnership was avoided unless requested by both partners.

Weeks 2 & 3: Complete sets of surveys were designed and stored on a shared drive for easy access by staff. This required feedback from the school pilot team and the Centre for Science, ICT and Mathematics Education in Rural and Regional Australia (SiMERR) staff. A four point, *Likert Scale*, was adopted ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree [Appendix 1]. Teachers were trained to use digital video cameras and radio microphones to capture classroom footage. Permission letters were sent to parents.

Weeks 4 & 5: Initial surveys were conducted in hard copy and classes were filmed. Collaborative pairs organised time to meet and discuss findings. The standard collaborative session was planned to be two hours in length.

Week 6: Initial survey data was collated and input into a master spread sheet, organised by focus areas. Classroom footage was stored in the shared drive.

Week 7: Teachers were issued with a classroom improvement planning framework [Appendix 2]. They planned to improve areas revealed through student surveys and/or video footage.

Weeks 8 – 11: Lessons were delivered with the aim of improving performance in the focus areas identified.

Weeks 12 & 13: The same classes were surveyed using the same surveys to establish whether students could identify improvement in teacher performance. Some teachers filmed their classes again to assess their performance. Collaborative pairs met to discuss results.

Weeks 14 & 15: Survey data was collated and input into a master spread sheet, organised by focus areas. Classroom footage was stored in the shared drive. A summary sheet was prepared to enable data from the first and second survey to be compared. Improvements and regressions were colour coded and graphs produced for analysis [Appendix 3].

Weeks 16 & 17: Final report drafted for SiMERR and AITSL.

6.4 Results from the Engagement

6.4.1 Data Collection and Management

The focus of our pilot was the investigation of how the student voice could be used to inform teachers' professional practice. We decided to rely on the tried and tested method of survey data utilising a four point, *Likert Scale*. The four point scale was preferred to a five point scale as we wanted to avoid students selecting the middle point, essentially forcing them to commit to a positive or negative assumption about their teachers' professional practice.

We decided to make the surveys anonymous to protect students from being identified as we felt that this would result in more honest responses. The surveys were designed to translate the developmental stages of a specific focus area from the Standards into student-friendly language [Appendix 1]. Eight questions were written for each of the focus areas selected for the Pilot in an attempt to elicit students' perspective of classroom evidence that would be reflective of the Lead Career Stage.

After consideration we decided to present the surveys in hard copy as this was, logistically, a better option than trying to get a large number of students (approximately 300) to complete the surveys electronically in computer labs. This method also added immediacy to the students' feedback as the surveys were given at the end of the teachers' lessons.

Hard copies of surveys were collated and filed and individual spread sheets were created for each focus area, including a weighted mean score [Appendix 4]. The weighted mean score was a valuable addition provided by our SiMERR project mentor Dr Bruce Mowbray. This is extremely useful because it accounts for the difference in number of students in each class.

A summary of weighted mean scores was created 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). This formatting provided an excellent overall picture of student voice and will become a valuable tool when providing feedback to teachers in future.

Finally, individual teachers have been provided with simple bar graphs that illustrate pre and post survey data. An example of this has been provided with names removed for confidentiality (Figure 6).

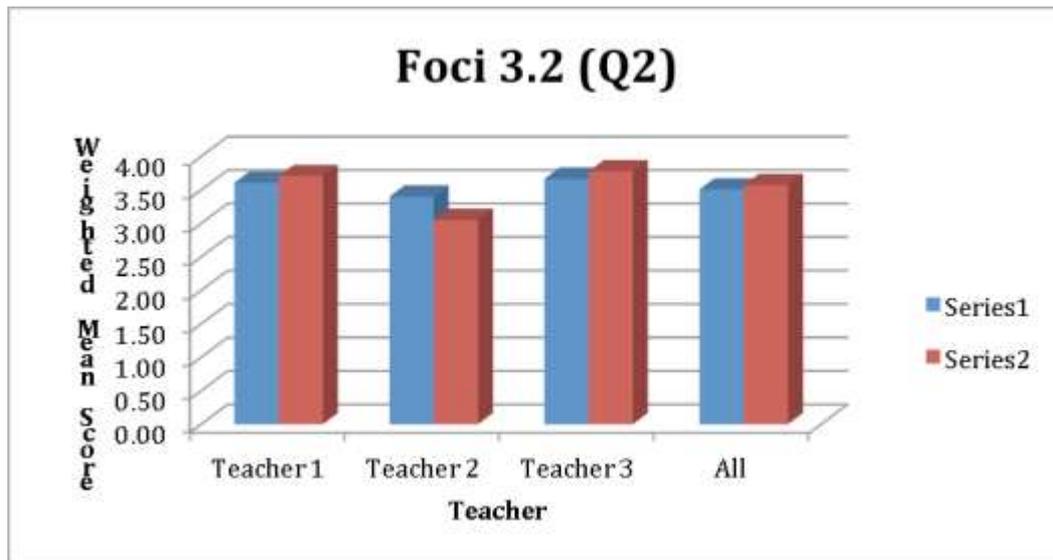


Figure 6-3 : Chart - Comparison of Pre and Post Survey Weighted Mean Scores

A complete set of charts is provided in Appendix 5. These charts provided a focus for professional conversations around improvements in teacher practice. Included in these conversations were possible reasons for observed trends, such as, the decrease in post-survey results for Teacher 2 evident in Figure 3. A certain degree of ‘latitude’ was exercised when interpreting such results, taking into consideration aspects of the Pilot process, e.g., timing, clarity of questions asked, student familiarity with the process etc.

6.4.2 Analysis of the Data

The analysis of student survey data in the pilot requires rationalising. It was very important to our team that the survey data be used in a balanced way, as only one point of focus in the highly complex cycle of school improvement. It has yielded some excellent points for conversation and provided revealing yet sound feedback for our teachers. Analysis of the data was organised within three main categories:

6.4.2.1 Individual Teacher Data [Appendix 4]

- Provided a raw score tally for each focus question organised by *Likert* category
- Weighted mean score organised by focus question

Teachers, predominantly, concentrated on two focus areas each from the Standards. The areas of focus were regarded by the teacher as areas of professional practice requiring improvement. Results from the first survey provided a raw score tally and mean score. This was a raw but very useful way for teachers to analyse areas of concern. For example, under Focus area 3.3 students were asked ‘we regularly get to do group work’. Of the eight teachers participating in the first round, seven exposed results that have been deemed of concern. Teachers responded positively to these results and the second round or surveys identified only three teachers that had not seen a significant improvement in results. This was also reflected in the weighted mean score (*All*) with the first survey round yielding 2.03 (concern) compared with the second round 2.59 (neutral). Thus, significant individual improvement resulted in significant overall improvement.

6.4.2.2 Group Data [Appendix 4]

- Provided a 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)

Teachers were provided with group data. However, as the focus was on individual teachers and collaborative pairs, no attempts were made to analyse the data for any group oriented improvement planning. From the perspective of the pilot coordinator and school administrator the charts do serve as a clear illustration of student voice across a number of classes. For example, in the example listed above, it was clear that group work was not being widely used across a significant number of classes in the school. Without group work it is impossible for teachers to rate highly in Focus area 3.3 (Use teaching strategies). The Standards state that a *Lead* teacher will modify and expand their repertoire of teaching strategies to enable students to use knowledge, skills, problem solving and critical and creative thinking (Education Services Australia, 2011). Further, without group work, constructivist learning cannot effectively take place, a practice that many consider essential to effective learning.

6.4.3 Summary Data [Appendix 3]

- Weighted mean score responses (as above)
- Summary page organised using conditional formatting (outlined in 5.1)
- Percentage distributions comparing survey 1 and 2 weighted mean scores

Summary data was organised to give pilot coordinators (school administrators) a quick overall view of the weighted mean scores. This aggregated data provided a traffic light system that was able to be converted into a percentage distribution of scores outlined in (Table 1)

Table 6-1 - 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 (*)

6.4.4 Results

6.4.4.1 How can the Professional Practice domain be used to audit current professional learning practices and structures?

The Professional Practice Domain provided an excellent initial point of engagement with the Standards to consider what a Lead teacher should do in the classroom. This is what our participants referred to as 'the nuts and bolts of teaching' because in the early stages of the pilot the team was able to decipher the developmental stages of each focus area easily and more importantly link this information to classroom evidence. This is the key to any set of criteria designed to inform teaching practice. This clarity enabled teachers to map themselves to the Professional Practice domain and thus identify potential areas for improvement.

The role of the Mentor was important during this part of the process, as these partnerships were based within learning areas and with colleagues that participants felt comfortable with. This familiarity of the teaching context within the pilot enabled teachers to relate the Standards to their current practice and more importantly, envisage how improvement might be created and demonstrated.

This practice brings much greater definition to the individual needs of teachers and thus much clearer direction to staffs professional learning needs. Initially, this concept was foreign to staff because professional learning in our context has often been delivered to whole staff based upon broad school priorities such as literacy or Aboriginal education. This can be frustrating for teachers who are strong in these focus areas and for the majority, who could benefit from such professional learning, they often find it an inadequate inoculation against a host of highly complex problems.

Clearly, using the Professional Practice Domain as an agent for bringing about far more individualised professional learning is of great advantage to schools. The Institute for Professional Learning, Western Australia is currently designing their programs to align with the Standards, a resource that schools should utilise. There appears to be an appetite for teachers to drive their own development in our State system and the Standards are a great way to chart that course.

6.4.4.2 What issues and challenges arise from the pilot for using the National Professional Teaching Standards to inform a schools professional learning program?

A considerable amount has been learned from involvement with the pilot. Key issues will be outlined in the following:

- Question design: Far more research would need to be put into question design before using the data as a quality measurement tool. It is questionable whether students, at all times, clearly understood what they were being asked. Thus, further research could focus more on gaining consistency in student response to the Standards. Regardless, the surveys did provide some data trends that support findings already identified from other sources. Most importantly, it became the vehicle for rich professional dialogue focusing on student perception and teacher performance.
- Maintaining adequate resources: To continue the program with the same level of intensity will be challenging in the future. Pilot funding from AITSL gave us the flexibility to provide ample time for workshops, classroom filming, collaboration sessions and planning time over a condensed period. We are currently investigating how we can expand the program across the school year with existing funding sources.
- Unsuitable time frame: The pilot was conducted in a compressed time frame and out of alignment with the teaching and learning cycle of improvement. In our context, the initial survey would have been best implemented at the beginning of Term 2. This would give teachers the opportunity to build relationships with students and to compile rich data about their learning. Conversely, students would have experienced their teachers' professional practice and be able to provide informed feedback. Further, teachers have the opportunity during the year to seek professional learning opportunities and make multiple adjustments to their practice. We envisage small groups of teachers having similar issues and would be better able to broker

professional learning opportunities for them if the assessment stage occurred earlier in the year.

The following will answer two interrelated questions:

6.4.4.3 How can students contribute to improved teaching and learning?

6.4.4.4 How can student feedback data assist schools to improve practice?

From the outset, our pilot was focused on the potential value of student voice in contributing to improve teaching and learning. This drive stems from a more holistic school strategy that includes significant resources being allocated to student leadership, peer support and mentoring. Essentially, we are acknowledging the value of student voice more now than ever before. This is the first step in the process of tapping the source for our quality teaching programs.

The student surveys conducted during the pilot were extremely revealing. The process assisted the paradigm shift from teaching to learning, i.e. What are my students learning? How well are they learning? What do I need to adjust in my professional practice to improve results? Asking students what it was that we could improve, to assist them to learn, supported existing school priorities that had been revealed through other forms of school data. For example, attitude, behaviour and effort data from school reporting had indicated a concerning trend. Students were lacking the ability to set and achieve challenging learning goals. This data had been shown to all staff at a meeting earlier in the year. In consideration of this issue and through personal recognition - explicit teaching of this skill was deemed necessary. When the survey data was returned, two key areas were identified as 'concerning'; *I set goals for my learning* (W/Mean 2.52) and *My teacher clearly explains why we are doing set tasks* (W/Mean 2.5). This information was explicit and targeted. It spoke to the teachers, almost pleading with them, to explicitly teach this skill. It also indicated that they (students) needed to understand the relevance of lessons and how this learning could help them to achieve their learning goal. These findings also provide evidence about the potential lack of formative assessment in teaching and learning.

The actual process of translating the foci into classroom evidence and then further into student friendly survey questions was formative. The line of inquiry moved from having questions asked of one self (self-reflection/metacognition) to asking our students how we were going. Further, it was the pilot team that were writing (asking) questions that they were seeking answers for. Thus, students can contribute to teaching and learning if we value the potential of the feedback and can discuss with them the things that may be achieved through combined focus and effort.

It is not surprising that the surveys were extremely revealing for teachers. In many cases they illustrated issues in professional practice that the teacher had identified during the mapping process; in some cases issues were unexpected. From an administrators point of view the aggregated data exposed issues that may be reflective of wider problems in teaching and learning; in some cases the data confirmed issues that we knew already existed. The common factor with all of these findings is that the data was extremely useful to inform the need for improved teaching and learning; the feedback could also be quite targeted.

6.4.4.5 What summative and formative strategies can be used to engage the community and to monitor student feedback?

Although only one of our pilot team explicitly attended to Focus area 3.7 (Engage parents/carers in the educative process), the data was revealing and supported concerns that we have about parental disengagement from the teaching and learning process and whole school decision making. In fact, all eight responses of the survey were of 'concern'. Further, the teacher involved is outstanding and the students selected were academically gifted from a Department accredited Specialist Program called Mathematics and Philosophy (MAP).

The teacher responded to the student data positively with a range of formative strategies including regular emails, letters home (including assessment schedules), commentary in diaries and formulation of a set task where parents and students conducted a cooking experiment together. Many teachers in our school use a combination of these strategies but a more structured whole school approach to seeking parental support and feedback is required.

The School Board, that constitutes is our community representative body, has been made fully aware of the AITSL project and updates have been given during board meetings. A summative analysis of the results and findings will be delivered upon completion of the pilot report.

6.4.4.6 What are the three priority areas for improving teaching identified from student feedback?

It has been recognised throughout this report that a great advantage of the Standards is that individual teachers can recognise areas for improvement and seek professional learning opportunities to improve student performance. However, an aggregation of the data has revealed some key areas that could be prioritised and thus better resourced.

- *Focus area 3.3 – Use teaching strategies:* The first set of surveys revealed many areas of 'concern' with regard to the limited use of teaching strategies across a range of classrooms. Eight teachers and 147 students were involved in this survey and so the sample was regarded significant. Many students were indicating that teachers spent most of their time talking in front of their classes, did not engage the students regularly in group work, were not able to clearly link lessons to real life scenarios and were limited in their ability to equip students with a variety of ways to solve complex problems. When asked what a lesson strategy was in one class the majority of the class said it was a power point. However, encouraging data was evident in the second set of surveys where percentage distributions in the 'neutral' and 'good' categories combined increased from 59% to 75%. The school will continue to prioritise this area to improve teacher quality.
- *Focus area 3.4 – Select and Use Resources:* A priority area for our school (as many others in the education profession at present) is implementation of ICT into the curriculum in a contemporary and engaging way. We also need to be cognisant of supporting resources that may appeal to a variety of students' interests and learning styles. We have an aging workforce and for many of these teachers, students will be far more advanced in their knowledge and understanding of ICT. In this area only two teachers and 30 students participated and so findings need to be treated with caution. However, the results were not too encouraging with all but one question receiving responses that were of 'concern'. The school has spent significant Federal and State

funding to equip the school with ICT resources. Training programs are also scheduled to assist teachers to make to most of this opportunity.

- *Focus area 3.1 – Establish challenging learning goals:* As stated above it is acknowledged that students in our school need support and direction in how to set and achieve challenging goals. The data indicates students clearly recognise that their teachers hold high expectations for them, acknowledge good effort and they generally feel well supported. However, when students were asked if they knew explicitly what their current ability level was for a particular subject or what targets/goals had been set for achievement, the responses were of ‘concern’. This is essential information for teachers to diagnose and to communicate to students. It forms the basis for formative assessment and differentiated learning. This will form a crucial part of our school improvement strategy in 2012.

6.4.5 Summary

Within the constraints of any pilot and specifically those outlined in this report, this pilot has delivered on its intent. Namely to produce a process by which the Australian Teaching Standards can be incorporated into schools and actively engaged with by practicing teachers in order to engender improved performance.

It must be remembered that the role of the full time classroom teacher is an incredibly demanding one and that teachers’ frequently identify themselves as ‘time poor’. Any increase in time allocation will always be absorbed into the daily demands of each class and the individual needs of students, as well as the expectations placed upon teachers by their school and education authority. Consequently, for the Standards to be effective, they need to be incorporated into the ongoing routine of schools and teachers. The danger always exists that the adoption of the Standards becomes one of compliance rather than of utilisation and that the benefit of the Standards as a vehicle for improving teacher performance is lost. The pilot, as run at Australind Senior High School, provides a process for maximising the adoption and application of the Standards that can be tailored and modified in response to differing circumstances.

At its essence, the process is well described by the figures 1 and 2. Adoption of the Standards as a mechanism for self-improvement becomes part of a year long cycle; an idea that is incorporated into Figure 1 and illustrated in Figure 4 below. Teachers become familiar with the language and intent of the Standards early in the year. As the first term progresses, the teacher, in collaboration with their mentor can establish where they sit in regards to the Standards. As in the pilot, only a small number of focus areas would be addressed to ensure that improvement is significant. By the end of the first term, student input would be sought and areas of potential improvement identified. The rest of the year would involve the implementation of improvement plans.

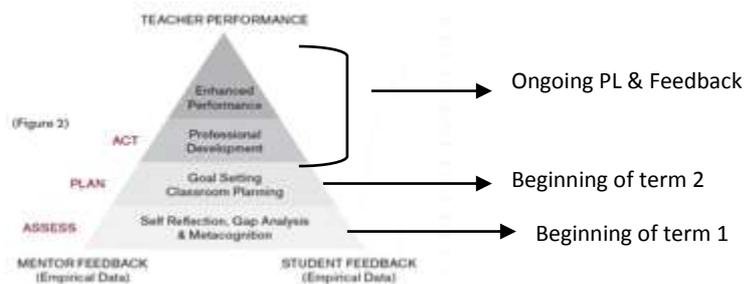


Figure 6-4 : Data Triangulation Pyramid - Modified

Should the Standards be addressed in a system wide manner, it is anticipated that formal and specific Professional Development programmes will evolve to better serve the needs of the profession.

The model outlined above is an expansion of the pilot and one which could be adopted in most schools with minor amendments. The modest gains in some focus areas identified in the pilot could be amplified through such an expansion of the model. The benefits of the common language provided by the practical application of the Standards have the potential to improve the efficiency and application of teacher development and consequently student outcomes.

6.5 Resources

6.5.1 Resources Developed for the Pilot

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

1. Power Point – outlining processes, roles, responsibilities and timelines
2. Classroom film footage and audio
3. Student surveys [Appendix 1]
4. Classroom improvement plans [Appendix 2]
5. Excel – conditionally formatted summary sheet [Appendix 3]
6. Excel - focus area summary sheet [Appendix 4]

6.5.2 Existing Resources Used in the Pilot

1. Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) National Professional Standards for Teachers, 2011.
2. Department of Education Western Australia, School Improvement and Accountability Framework, 2008. This policy document guided the pilot design enabling the school to school to conduct operations within Department endorsed school planning and review structures. This document may be accessed using the following link.
www.det.au/education/accountability/Docs/SIAF%20Final.pdf

6.6 Findings and Outcomes

6.6.1 Implications and Recommendations from the Pilot

Implications

The main implication for our school is the revelation that we need to redesign our professional learning program to be more flexible in what we deliver and when. If the Standards are to be used as a working document (rather than a shelved document), teachers need to see the value in them. This places the onus on teachers to use the Standards as their map of development and conduit to professional learning and thus improved professional practice.

This implication requires school leaders to rethink the way that they resource professional learning and at what time of the year is most beneficial to collate data and distribute to teachers. The State government is currently attempting to substantially increase the amount of school development days. However, one of the conditions is that the meetings need to be whole staff. This decision does not support the findings of our pilot which signifies a far more tailored approach to professional learning.

Clearly, through the very act of surveying students, we are simultaneously increasing our transparency of teaching practice with students and parents. It is doubtful that either group of stakeholders has been exposed to the mechanics of classroom practice in more traditional forms of school improvement programs that are teacher focused. 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. It may be confronting for teachers to have this knowledge base increase because with it will come greater accountability for teachers and administrators.

Recommendations

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. Further, teachers and students need to have had enough time to understand the nuances of the knowledge and understandings implicit in each classroom environment.
- **Coverage:** Use a range of data sources. Student survey data is an excellent source of information but it should not be used in isolation. A triangulation of data sources including qualitative and quantitative sources is an excellent method for analysis.
- **Autonomy:** Give teachers more autonomy with regard to their selection of professional learning. The needs should be identified within the Standards and tailored to individual needs.
- **Self-reflection tools:** Use video footage for classroom conferencing. This is a very efficient way to collect and store visual data that may be used to peruse at a more strategic time and by a number of observers.
- **Collaboration:** Allow teachers time to collaborate with a trusted colleague. This may require strategic coordination of timetables to allow for meeting times.

- **Network:** It is common that a broad range of outstanding expertise exists within local school communities. Thus, geographically close schools should collaborate (network) with the aim of sharing best practice, expertise and build a common set on understandings.
- **Integrate:** Build student voice into existing practice. Change is inevitable but one must be cognisant of staff workloads and honour trusted systems and procedures.
- **Focus:** Start small and build from there, i.e. Focus area 3.1 first. The Standards are quite dense in content and broad in scope. Thus, it would be best to select only 2 – 3 focus areas to concentrate on for each improvement cycle.
- **Distribute curriculum leadership:** Create opportunities for staff to lead curriculum change. It will be highly likely in a school that a number of staff may be concentrating on improvement in the same focus area. Nominating and training a staff member to lead change in select focus areas would cement the knowledge base and build capacity amongst staff.
- **Broker:** Use available resources to assist with professional learning needs tailored to the Standards. All state education systems provide access for staff to attend outstanding professional learning. Western Australia has piloted a project with AITSL that links the Standards directly to professional learning. Make the most of these resources.
- **Transparency:** Be open with all stakeholders about your school improvement strategy. This will build trust and generate future support for projects.

6.6.1.1 The Local Perspective

Findings from the pilot will be distributed throughout the Leschenault Alliance of Public Schools. This small network is constituted of our school and 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 about outstanding teaching and learning and use this information for school improvement.

6.6.1.2 The National Perspective

With the implementation of the Australian Curriculum upon us and Professional Standards for Teachers being trialled, 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.

6.6.2 Planning for the Future

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 funds 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.

6.7 References

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7 CDU-NTTRB

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 Setting the Scene

In December 2010, the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) endorsed the National Professional Standards for Teachers (hereafter referred to as ‘the National Standards’). These National Standards were released by the Education Ministers on 9 February 2011, and will be implemented in the Northern Territory in 2013.

In the second half of 2011, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) commissioned several very small research Pilots to briefly trial the use of the Standards within existing processes and practices in schools, school systems and associated organisations. This report is about one of the very small Pilots. The combined outcomes of these pilots are intended to inform what further is required to support implementation of the National Standards.

The findings outlined in this report are the outcomes from a joint project undertaken collaboratively by the Centre for School Leadership, Learning and Development at Charles Darwin University in the Northern Territory, and the Teacher Registration Board (TRB) of the Northern Territory. The pilot was supported by all three school sectors in the Northern Territory: the Department of Education and Training (DET); the Catholic and Education Office; and the Association of Independent Schools (AIS) Northern Territory.

7.1.2 Contextual Issues

The Northern Territory covers 1,346,200 square kilometres. It has two main climates: desert climate in the centre of Australia, and a tropical climate north of Katherine. The population of the Northern Territory is 220 000. About one-third of all Territorians are Indigenous. The median age of Territorians is 31.2 years (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

Students in the Northern Territory come from a variety of backgrounds and cultures. There are 190 schools in the Northern Territory: 36 non-government, and 154 Government schools. Over 40% of these schools are in remote or very remote locations. This pilot was conducted with nine teachers in seven schools located in regional, remote and very remote locations. Two of the teachers were located in schools in the desert, and the remainder were located at the northern end of the Territory, with three teachers located in one school, on one of the islands near Darwin. All the teachers involved were provisionally registered, and all the schools in the pilot have sizeable Indigenous student populations.

To ensure that teachers in the Northern Territory are appropriately qualified and competent to teach, all teachers must be registered with the Teachers Registration Board (TRB) of the Northern Territory. Suitably qualified new teachers can seek registration and are allocated Provisional Registration by the Board. The requirements for registration as a teacher in the Northern Territory are guided by the Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Act.

Provisional Registration is provided if the Board determines an applicant does not have the prescribed professional experience and currency of practice for full registration but is

otherwise eligible for Full Registration under the Act. 'Currency of practice' requires teachers to demonstrate they have a minimum of 180 days of teaching in the previous five years. Provisional Registration is granted for a period of three school years and teachers are supported with an induction program into the teaching profession in the Northern Territory. During this time the provisionally registered teacher works towards gaining the professional experience that entitles him or her to apply for Full Registration. Applications for moving from Provisional to Full Registration require the teacher to prepare a portfolio of evidence against the Professional Standards for Competent Teachers in the Northern Territory (hereafter referred to as 'the NT Standards').

7.2 Research Question

This pilot focused on the following research question:

In their daily work, in what ways can graduate teachers located in regional and remote schools in the Northern Territory, demonstrate their engagement with the National Professional Standards for Teachers, at the transition from Graduate to the Proficient career levels, and in their movement from Provisional to Full Registration?

7.2.1 Focus

The focus of the pilot was for each participant to undertake the two following activities concurrently:

5. 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
6. 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 Professional Standards for Teachers.

As such, participants concurrently focused on both the NT Standards and the National Standards.

This project did not focus on the quality of evidence gathered by the participants, nor did the researchers make judgements about whether the evidence collected by the participants was of a suitable nature and standard to meet the requirements of either the National Standards or the NT Standards. The focus of this study was to listen to the views of the nine graduate teachers, located in remote and very remote locations, about how they could or could not engage with one or both sets of Standards in their daily work. Given the nature of this investigation, it was a qualitative study.

7.3 Methodological Considerations

This pilot focused on the ways in which early career teachers located in regional, remote and very remote schools in the Northern Territory might be able to collect evidence of their achievements in their daily work. The participants considered the types of evidence that could be collected in their teaching practices, that might meet the Northern Territory teacher registration requirements for moving from Provisional to Full Registration, as measured against the NT Standards. They also reflected upon how the local processes and evidence matched

those that could be used for the transition from the career stage of Graduate to Proficient, using the National Standards.

7.3.1 Participants

The study involved the participation of nine provisionally registered teachers in schools in the Northern Territory. The teachers that agreed to participate in this study were drawn from both the government and non-government schools sectors. These teachers were located in regional, rural or remote urban, remote and very remote schools.

All the participants were aged in their 20s or early 30s. Three of the teachers had come to teaching with prior work experience in other jobs, while the other six were young teachers who had progressed directly through school and university into teaching. One teacher had only been teaching for four weeks, while other teachers were in their first six months to a year of teaching, and two other teachers were in their second year of teaching. Two teachers were male and seven were female. The teachers involved in this study, spanned primary and secondary education, and included one teacher in a special education school. All participants took part with the active support of their respective school principals.

All the teachers taught Indigenous students in their classes, with numbers dependent upon location of the schools. One very remote school in the study had a completely (100%) Indigenous student demographic.

7.3.2 Research method

The project commenced with a workshop that all participants attended. The purposes of the workshop were to provide the participants with:

- an overview of the research project;
- time to identify and plan which focus area and Standards within the National Standards they would focus their efforts upon during the research period;
- opportunity to map the National Standards and the NT Standards; and
- time to plan an approach to collecting evidence against the Standards they identified.

The following activities were undertaken at this workshop:

- the nature of the research was outlined;
- both the Professional Standards for Competent Teachers in the Northern Territory and Standards for the Proficient Career Stage of the National Standards, were introduced;
- mapping between the two sets of Standards was undertaken;
- the sorts of evidence required to move from Provisional to Full registration in the Northern Territory were discussed; and
- three different types of eportfolio software were demonstrated to the participants.

The participants identified the specific Standards in both the NT Standards and the National Standards, upon which they would focus their efforts during the project. Each participant left the workshop with a three-month plan prepared, about how they would collect evidence of their work at their school, that would meet the Standards they identified. All participants were encouraged to use a portfolio approach and in particular, an e-portfolio system, to record and annotate their evidence. A summary of the focus areas identified by each participant is included in Appendix A.

Interviews with the participants were conducted at the beginning, mid-way and at the end of the research period. The first interview was conducted as a group interview at the workshop convened at the commencement of the project. This first interview was a group interview. It was used to gather data about each individual's teaching background and aspirations. Two further interviews were conducted, and each individual's plan formed the basis upon which these two subsequent interviews were conducted. The questions used for interviews two and three are available in Appendix B.

The data collected through these interviews has been used here to inform understandings of the following:

- The ease or difficulty of collecting evidence suitable for Full Registration, or movement from one Professional Standard to another;
- The types of evidence that are suitable for the purposes of moving from Provisional to Full Registration; and
- The types of professional learning that graduate teachers require to enable successful transition from Provisional to Full Registration, and to move from Provisional to Full Registration.

7.4 Results from the Engagement

The brevity of this qualitative research project means that the findings and the emerging themes reported here, are not generalizable and require further investigation.

7.4.1 Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected from the three sets of interviews that were conducted with the nine participants in the study. The first interview was a group interview, conducted at the workshop held to introduce the project. The second interview was conducted individually by telephone. The third interview was undertaken during a site visit to each school. The interviews mostly used open-ended questions. As indicated earlier, the questions used in each interview are included at Appendix B and were based around the participants initial plans outlined in Appendix A.

The data collected from each of these interviews was prepared as textual data and the major themes from the interviews were identified through a thematic analysis of the texts.

7.4.2 Results

The results of this research outlined here should not be seen as definitive or generalised. Information collected in the first, group interview is included in the contextual and participant information outlined above. The results from the second and third interviews are summarised below.

7.4.2.1 How are you going with your plans?

Two participants indicated that as part of their daily work they had been able to collect and organise the examples of their work in ways that could be used as evidence. Most of the participants however, indicated that although they had moved some way on their plans to collect evidence against both the NT Standards and National Standards, that they had experienced difficulties. Finding the time to undertake the necessary annotations, and to organise their evidence against the Standards was a commonly reported difficulty. While most

did not meet their planned objectives, they nonetheless reported they had gained some insights into what was required to meet the respective Standards.

All participants reported that it had been of assistance to spend the time at the workshop at the beginning of the project, to think through how they could keep in the front of their mind in their daily work, the Standards they had identified for themselves. All the participants also commented on how it was useful to be familiar with the requirements of the respective Standards early in their career, so they could gear their work towards meeting those Standards. A couple of the participants were interested in gaining an holistic picture of the Standards within and across the career stages.

One participant indicated that the processes of attending the workshop followed by focusing upon the selected Standards at school, had helped them to clarify how to conceptualise the Standards in the workplace. An exit student from Charles Darwin University (CDU) indicated that the requirement to prepare evidence against Standards in order to graduate, had assisted them to understand the concept of 'what is evidence?'

7.4.2.2 Has anything changed?

Some participants did not report changes to their plans but rather, recognised the ambitious way they had approached the planning for their part in the research project. They recognised that they had set themselves tasks that were too large to achieve in the time period allocated for the study. This recognition of the time involved to collect evidence and the extent to which they could achieve outcomes against the Standards in three months, were useful outcomes in themselves.

Other participants indicated that they had reflected on their practice to determine what examples of their work would be suitable as evidence. Some participants indicated that if the project had been longer they may have been able to prepare their evidence for presentation and assessment. While they were not required to prepare evidence for assessment as part of this study, some the participants interpreted 'piloting the Standards' as moving through the full cycle of processes from planning the collection of evidence; collecting the evidence; presenting the evidence; and having the evidence assessed.

One participant reported changing the focus of her plan to more strategically approach the collection of evidence in her daily work. She indicated that it was important to know the students well and to select classes and subjects conducive to the collection of suitable evidence. In other words, she matched the requirements outlined in the two sets of Standards with what she knew about the classes and the nature of the subjects she taught, to work out a strategic plan to the collection of evidence in her daily work.

7.4.2.3 What have been the things you have found easy?

A diversity of views was expressed by the participants about what they had found easy. One participant reported that collecting evidence as part of her daily work was easy. Another participant reported that being organised was a personal strong point. This participant made the following suggestions as a way for being able to collect evidence through teachers' daily work:

- Be aware of the Standards and their requirements;
- Make sure everything you create is archived or recorded;

- File and archive emails;
- Have a timeline; and
- Be focused.

Strategies for conceptualising the required evidence to meet the respective Standards, identified by the participants, varied. One participant suggested: look at the pieces of evidence you have collected and then work out which Standards are met by it. Another participant suggested that those Standards that refer to ‘assessment’ are the easiest with which to start, as “everything flows from there”. Another participant suggested an effective strategy was to work out the place of evidence against the Standards through reflection, rather than including them in her initial planning.

Another participant observed that the ease or difficulty of meeting the Standards was in part dependent upon a teacher’s school context. This participant reported that in the urban, remote school in which she works, there are plenty of community engagement activities. She also observed that at the Graduate to Proficient Career Stages in the National Standards relating to ‘community engagement’, it may be easier to connect evidence where there are established practices within school communities for engagement with their local communities.

One participant talked about the help afforded from attending professional development activities provided at school. She reported the value of having access to consultants and to subject-specific professional development events that provide concrete examples of teaching activities. She felt that the professional development she attends assisted her to understand the requirements of the teachers’ professional standards. Another participant commented upon how important it was to her to have a strongly supportive school principal, who took very seriously the processes of supporting new probationary teachers to move from provisional to full registration.

7.4.2.4 What are the things you have found difficult?

Participants reported a range of issues they found difficult. These issues included determining what evidence meets which Standard? Several participants suggested that having examples of the types of evidence that meets the respective Standards would be of assistance. Several participants also commented that it was better to approach the collection of evidence in an holistic way, rather than meeting each focus area separately. Several participants also reported having difficulty getting time to focus upon the Standards. These first year teachers reported difficulty managing their workloads as well as focusing upon the demands of meeting the respective Standards.

Some participants reported trialing the use of an eportfolio software system. Most of the participants who did so, also reported difficulty with it, although one participant reported that the eportfolio system was ‘helpful’. One participant commented the he had difficulty knowing how to include evidence and annotate it into eportfolio software. He felt that using WORD was sufficient. Another participant reported using the eportfolio system TiddlyWiki (see <http://www.tiddlywiki.com>), and although reporting that he found it difficult, he nonetheless, indicated he would use it again.

Several participants commented on the importance of having strong mentors. Some participants indicated that they felt more comfortable if the initial relationship was initiated by

the mentor. Some participants were concerned about requesting mentoring from more experienced teachers, as they did not want to add to the workload of already very busy people. Others discussed the benefits of regular, formalised meetings with mentors. Some participants commented that they found it difficult to prepare the evidence and associated annotations, without support. Teachers in the very remote schools observed that due to the rapid turnover of staff, they would soon be one of the more experienced teachers.

7.4.2.5 Is there any support you would like?

The participants shared similar views about the types of support they would like. They recognised it would be beneficial to:

- have a mentor to assist them understand the contexts within which they worked, and how these contexts related to meeting the respective Standards: “the longer we’re here the less we know”;
- have time to learn about the formal requirements for the meeting the Standards;
- have time to collect and annotate their evidence to demonstrate achievement of the Standards;
- have annotated examples of evidence that meets the respective Standards; and
- have assistance with understanding ‘what is evidence’?

7.4.2.6 Anything else you would like to say?

All the participants wanted to engage in conversations about what different types of evidence could be reasonably expected to meet the various Standards. One participant helpfully suggested that focusing on the Standards holistically, was a better way to go. This participant suggested that “once you have clarity about each of the Standards then the various pieces of evidence fall in under that”.

7.4.3 Summary

All the participants reported benefits from being involved in the project and for having the opportunity to plan and reflect upon the links between their teaching practices and the collection of evidence to meet both the NT Standards and the National Standards. Participants also discussed the importance of having a mentor. Some of the participants reported positive stories about the quality of the leadership and mentoring available to them within their school and beyond. Others could see the benefits of mentoring, and proposed ways of strengthening the mentoring available to them. Some participants questioned what constitutes ‘evidence’ and also questioned how do those assessing their evidence know if it is of an appropriate standard. The participants also commented upon the shortness of the project, indicating that they would have gained more from the project if there had been more time available to work on it. Some participants also critically commented upon the atomistic nature of the whole research project.

The findings from the research are outlined below in Section 6 (Findings and Outcomes).

7.5 Resources

7.5.1 Resources Developed for the Pilot

No resources were developed that can be shared nationally.

7.5.2 Existing Resources Used in the Pilot

Existing resources developed by the Teacher Registration Board of the Northern Territory were well received. These resources are available from the TRB website: <http://www.trb.nt.gov.au/index.shtml>

7.6 Findings and Outcomes

This report summarises the findings from a brief qualitative research project. As such the findings reported here require further investigation and are not generalizable in their current form.

Key themes that emerged from the research included the participants reporting that their involvement in the project had

- generated valuable and positive experiences for them;
- raised questions for them about the place of the NT Standards compared with the National Standards;
- raised questions about what constitutes evidence, and how evidence is deemed 'satisfactory';
- made them realise that collecting and annotating evidence of their teaching is time-consuming and requires planning;
- highlighted the respective, multiple and similar concurrent processes of accountability they were undertaking to demonstrate their capabilities as teachers;
- highlighted the importance of mentors to assist them to build their portfolios of evidence;
- helped them to plan their strategy for presenting their evidence in advance of the formal introduction in the Northern Territory of the National Standards; and
- raised workload implications for school principals and mentors.

The themes consistently identified by the participants are briefly discussed below. Some early indications of the directions that could be supported into the future, have been identified.

7.6.1 Positive impressions from being involved in the project

All participants commented positively about being involved in the Northern Territory Pilot. The main reasons reported for this positivity were that the provisionally registered teachers gained insights early in their teaching career, about:

- what sorts of demands the requirements for the collection and annotation of evidence to move from Provisional to Full registration is currently required, based upon the NT Standards;
- the likely demands of the National Standards at the transition point from Graduate to Proficient, and the implications of these Standards for their careers and workloads; and

- the likely demands of National Standards at the later Career Stages, for their ongoing workloads as teachers.

Early indications suggest that into the future, new teachers in the Northern Territory will benefit from gaining an understanding early in their career, about the likely demands for the collection of evidence of the Northern Territory teacher registration requirements to move from Provisional to Full Registration, as measured against the NT Standards, and to understand how this evidence may match the processes for collecting evidence for the transition from the career stage of Graduate to Proficient, using the National Standards.

7.6.2 Place of the Northern Territory and the National Professional Standards for Teachers

The participants planned for their processes of evidence collection to be focused within their daily work. As the teacher registration requirements within the Northern Territory until 2013 are based upon the NT Standards, there was more interest by the participants in this study, in the evidence required to meet these local Standards. Notwithstanding this interest, the participants in this study were cognisant of the similarities between these local Standards and the National Standards. That is, the participants' focus in this study, on the NT Standards, was a pragmatic choice based upon the most efficient use of their available time. The participants balanced their involvement in this brief research project, with their personal contexts, which do require that they collect evidence against the NT Standards until the change to the National Standards in 2013.

This finding suggests then, that in the Northern Territory, explicitly described transition processes from the NT Standards to the National Standards would be a useful strategy for building the capacity of early career teachers. This finding also suggests that what is required is professional development opportunities to assist early career teachers to build their understandings about what are the respective Standards; what constitutes evidence; and what strategies are likely to assist the collection of evidence.

7.6.3 Collecting and annotating evidence is time-consuming

All the participants commented upon how time-consuming it was to collect evidence against the Standards, irrespective of which ones they were focusing upon. All participants commented they would have benefitted from being allocated time within the school day to collate and annotate their evidence. Furthermore, all participants indicated that they had found it valuable to meet together as a group from the outset of the project to familiarise themselves with the two sets of Standards and the requirements for evidence. They reported that the meeting had provided them with guidance about how to plan for the collection of evidence, and that this approach had enabled them to focus upon what is the nature of 'evidence' that they could collect in their daily work. All participants commented that having a plan to approach the collection of their evidence had been of assistance.

Early indications suggest then, that for new teachers in the Northern Territory there may be benefits to supporting them to plan their approaches to the collection of evidence to meet the Northern Territory teacher registration requirements to move from Provisional to Full Registration. Similarly, this finding suggests that there will be some benefits to mapping the requirements of the NT Standards, to similar Career Stages of the National Standards.

7.6.4 Collecting and annotating evidence requires planning

All the participants indicated that they had found it beneficial to plan an approach to collecting evidence against the specific Standards they had identified at the workshop. While most of the participants indicated that in the timeframe they had not been able to achieve their plans, they nonetheless reported the benefits of planning to collect evidence in their daily work.

This finding suggests that spending time to plan an approach to the collection of evidence was a beneficial process. Some participants suggested that it would be useful to undertake such a planning process with their mentors.

7.6.5 Concurrent processes

The participants reported that they were involved in three similar processes that were running concurrently:

1. meeting probation requirements;
2. moving from Provisional to Full Registration based upon the NT Standards; and
3. piloting the requirements for the National Standards .

They also reported that for moving from the provisional to full registration and to meet the requirement of the National Professional Standards for Teachers both required they collect evidence of their performances as teachers.

Some of the participants also wondered about what processes would be in place in 2013 when they would be collecting evidence to move from Graduate to Proficient; from Proficient to Highly Accomplished and from Highly Accomplished to 'Lead based on the National Standards . They came to recognise that throughout their careers as teachers they would have to continually collect evidence to demonstrate successful performances.

7.6.6 Role of mentors

All participants observed the importance of mentoring in their daily work, although there was considerable variance of experience between the participants concerning the degree to which they received formal mentoring support. Some teachers had mentors allocated to them, where this relationship was taken seriously by the experienced teacher, while other teachers reported a lack of regular mentoring. Nonetheless all participants reported that they valued the mentoring opportunities as they felt that such opportunities were necessary to enable them to meet the requirements of both moving from provisional to full registration; and for meeting their probation requirements.

The teachers in this study also recognised the value of being in a school where the school principal took an active interest in their development and achievements. In some schools, the principal was also their mentor. Some participants also commented upon the importance of providing school principals with professional development about the requirements of the National Standards, and the implications of these for principals work. These findings suggest that there is an important place for offering mentoring strategies in a systematic way to both new teachers and their principals.

7.6.7 Timing the presentation of evidence

This study highlighted for the participants, the foreseeable demands for the collection of evidence that is likely to be required to meet the planned introduction of the National Standards. As a result, several of these provisionally registered teachers indicated they would like to undertake their movement from Provisional to Full Registration using the NT Standards, rather than the National Standards. The reasons offered reflected the demands for evidence required to meet the 37 Standards included in each career stage of the National Standards compared to the 17 more holistic, Standards outlined in the NT Standards.

This finding suggests that some work is required to develop transition arrangements from the NT Standards to the National Standards.

7.6.8 Workload implications for school principals and mentors

Several participants in this study commented upon the workload involved in providing school-based mentoring. The early career teachers in this study who mentioned this issue, commented that although they had been assigned a mentor, they were reticent to seek out their support as they recognised that the more experienced teachers in their schools were already heavily loaded, and had considerable responsibilities to the local communities. Their concerns were not to add to the workloads of these experienced teachers. Other participants commented upon how seriously their school principals took the processes of supporting new teachers to move from provisional registration to being fully registered. In some schools in the Northern Territory, the majority of the staff are provisionally registered, and so the personnel requirements for school principals, are high. Where there is a significant turnover of staff each year, this demand is even higher. Some participants also commented that due to the large turnover of staff it was hard to build rapport suitable for mentoring.

The participants made several suggestions for improving this situation, particularly for those early career teachers located in remote locations. These suggestions include having regular 'webinars' into which early career teachers could 'login' to chat as required; and to organise meetings in Darwin each term for those early career teachers located on the islands nearby to Darwin.

This finding suggests that further research is required into the workloads and expectations of school principals where the majority of their staff are early career teachers.

7.6.9 Implications and Recommendations from the Pilot

This study has provided some initial insights into the implications of implementing the National Standards. It is recommended that further research is undertaken to meaningfully investigate the implications of these findings.

7.6.10 Planning for the Future

Future work is required in the Northern Territory that can meaningfully inform the implementation of the National Standards. Areas in which future work could be undertaken include:

- Examining the types of professional learning support is required by new teachers about the respective accountability requirements they have to meet.

- Investigating mentoring strategies and ongoing mentoring support for new teachers and their principals.
- Identifying leadership strategies that provide support for new teachers.
- Determining strategies that illuminate the question, 'what is evidence'?
- Creating professional learning approaches about how to use eportfolio software to meet the requirements of the National Professional Standards for Teachers.

Several participants commented that it would be beneficial to have annotated examples, specific to the Northern Territory, for all levels and Standards, that illustrated what is required of new teachers to meet the respective Standards. Further work was also identified to determine the likely workload implications of implementing the National Standards, for early career teachers, their school principals and their mentors.

7.6.11 Meta-approach to the research

Finally, the following comments are offered in relation to the overall project approach for this research.

This project was very small. Once the administration and accountability requirements were addressed, there was a very limited amount of time left to actually conduct the project. It was of concern that the same amount of research time and funding allocated to this pilot was the same as that allocated across all the Pilots, yet the distances involved with this particular project were considerably larger than the other Pilots. That is, the complexities involved in undertaking this Pilot were equated to being the same as for those pilots conducted in urban settings.

A consequence of constructing a number of limited Pilots with high levels of accountability, as has been the case in this project, is that the 'nice to have' elements were not meaningfully implemented.

For example, while there was a Moodle site for the project, the time for using this site was extremely limited within the funds available. The idea of sharing the developments or findings between the respective Pilots was a good one, but the practicalities of implementing this idea were not possible within the time available, given all the other project demands outside of the Pilot itself. As such, the contextual and financial constraints on this particular Pilot, has meant that it was undertaken largely in isolation to the other Pilots. Indeed, although the 'meta-Pilot' project plan included opportunities for each Pilot leader to share ideas throughout the Pilot, the practical realities of the time involved with conducting and accounting for the Pilot, made impractical, the sharing outcomes with other Pilots through the project Moodle site.

Furthermore, the approach used in establishing the 'meta-project approach' to this set of Pilots, replicates the most problematic aspects of meeting the Standards: that is the atomising of the evidence required to meet each Standard rather than aggregating evidence. It is recommended then, that in the future different approaches to the meta-administration method or the 'steering at a distance' approach, so usefully criticised originally by Kickert (1991) and subsequently by Lingard (1996), are not used or implemented again by AITSL. The method is fraught, theoretically and practically.

In conclusion, the findings of this study are commended to the reader with the view that they form early insights that can be verified through future research.

7.7 References

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8 DECS SA

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 Setting the Scene

DECD, Teachers Registration Board, Catholic Education SA and South Australian Principals Associations worked in partnership with the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership to undertake a pilot study to investigate the use of the National Professional Standards for Teachers (the Standards) for self-reflection on practice.

The purpose of this project study is to allow early career and experienced teachers to work with their site leaders to test the Standards as a resource to promote teachers' self-reflection with an emphasis on *observation for and as learning*.

8.1.2 Contextual Issues

This was a cross sector pilot with a partnership between DECD, TRB, CESA and SAPP.

Participating sites included Primary, Middle and Secondary schools and the Australian Science and Maths school as a specialist school.

The pilot focused on teachers' work and consequently a substantial amount of the funding went towards releasing teachers to participate. Implementation was facilitated by site leaders and teachers in the local school context leading to individualised approaches.

8.2 Research Questions

The research question that was investigated in this study was "How can observation and reflection be used to promote learning about the Standards in practice?"

To explore this key question the two key components of the pilot were the:

- Development of observation proforma resources
- Identification of processes to scaffold reflection against the Standards

8.2.1 Focus

The focus was on teachers and leaders in their school sites with the intention of increasing their understandings and capacity to use:

- Reflection on teaching and learning
- Scaffolded observation tools
- The National Professional Standards for Teachers

8.3 Methodological Considerations

Site Participants were selected by invitation to provide:

- a high level of representation of early career teachers

- previous engagement with the Standards

A Steering Committee, representing the Pilot partners, played a key role in the planning and facilitation of the pilot overall.

Newsletters and a Ning were utilised to provide information throughout the pilot.

The Pilot was structured around three phases.

Phase 1: Introduction

A professional learning day held on July 26 2011, brought all participating teachers and leaders together for an introduction to the Standards and the process of reflection through observation. Professor Bill Loudon provided expert advice on the techniques and effectiveness of observation as used in the contemporary research *Teaching for Growth – Effective teaching of Literacy and Numeracy* (Louden, Rohl & Hopkins, 2008).

An observation tool had been previously developed. This tool integrated the three domains and the seven Standards of the Standards framework and promoted an approach to observation that emphasised observation as learning as different from observation for assessment. The tool was made available to all participants with an invitation to modify and use it in their own context.

Newsletter 1 followed the professional learning day to confirm arrangements and expectations of participating sites.

Phase 2: Implementation

Practising teachers and leaders in their local context and in alignment with established site based professional development practices:

- established partnerships between experienced and early career teachers to conduct classroom observations of practice
- trialled the use of the observation tool including a pre-observation conversation, observation and a follow up professional conversation

Newsletters 2, 3 and 4 were distributed to provide timely updates and information.

Two site visits to enable a professional dialogue about how the pilot was progressing in their site, were conducted with a small group of AITSL, SiMERR and Steering Committee members.

Phase 3 Review and report

All sites were invited to a post-study workshop which was designed to celebrate and facilitate a shared review of participants' experiences and insights gained through the pilot.

Each site submitted a narrative describing:

- **processes** used to observe teaching and learning and to scaffold reflection with the Standards to develop teaching practice – What did you do?
- **evaluation** of how effective and useful the observation and reflection against the Standards was – What worked well? What would you do differently?
- **understandings** that have emerged about the Standards and how they will be useful to teachers and leaders – What have you learned about how observation and reflection can be used to promote learning about the Standards in practice?

The final workshop included a 10 minute presentation from each site talking to their narrative. In addition, table conversations were documented to address the following questions:

- What processes were effective to scaffold participation in reflective and professional conversation?
- What are three or four most important elements of a successful observation?
- What are three or four most significant learning's or directions that should be taken from this pilot?

Perception data from participants was collected via an interactive voting process at the final workshop and an online checkbox survey that was distributed to all participants for feedback.

8.4 Results from the Pilot

8.4.1 Data Collection and Management

Pilot numbers:

- 15 sites participated
- 2 teachers and at least one leader per site = 45 participants

It is acknowledge that a range of other teachers and leaders also participated at a local level.

Data was collected via:

- Online survey of participants - 20 respondents
- Interactive Perception data survey
- Documented table conversation:
 - What processes were effective to scaffold participation in reflective and professional conversation?
 - What are three or four most important elements of a successful observation?
 - What are three or four most significant learnings or directions that should be taken from this pilot?
- A two-page narratives of process, evaluation and understandings from each site

8.4.2 Analysis of the Data

The data received via the narratives and surveys have been analysed for:

- Effective processes that support observation as learning
- Understandings of the Standards
- Most significant change narratives

8.4.2.1 Analytical Procedures

Qualitative and Quantitative data was collected from participants at the end of the pilot. This data was considered by the steering committee for common themes and identification of effective processes for observation and use of the Standards.

8.4.2.2 Results

Common Themes

The pilot participants identified three significant directions for the future.

Firstly, the observation of teacher practice was experienced by teachers and leaders as a powerful professional learning activity. Despite some trepidation regarding the observation of colleagues, the overwhelming conclusion was that the observation tool was effective in both

providing a platform for deep professional conversations and was an effective way of engaging with the Standards.

Secondly, the Standards provided both a common language for discussion of teaching practices and a continuum for growth in the profession.

Thirdly, the use of the Standards with the observation tool has the potential to influence school culture. Embedding professional learning and the Standards in whole school structures was commonly described by participants as having the potential to lift the profile and standards of the profession.

Effective Processes Identified by Participants

Pilot participants were asked to identify processes that were effective to scaffold reflective and professional conversation using the observation tool and the Standards. There were four processes that participants identified as foundational to the success of the observation and reflection process. They were

- The importance of scheduling time for a pre and post observation conversation so that there is ownership and clarity of focus and timely feedback. This empowers the participants to engage in observation in an ongoing manner.
- The need to focus on a limited number of standards and descriptors during the observation and reflection. This allowed more focus and specificity in the observation and discussion.
- The purpose of the observation process must be clear to all participants. Discussions about what will be observed in the lesson and the planning that has occurred promoted this clarity for participants.
- The importance of the quality of the relationships between the participants was stressed. “Multi-level trust” was identified as essential for a collegial relationship that is non-threatening and professional, one that fosters discussion through the use of respectful genuine feedback in the “language of a trusted colleague”.

Conclusions

The pilot has shown that the observation of teaching practice of colleagues is a powerful means of communication and professional learning for teachers and leaders.

An observation tool based on the Standards focuses and supports strategic feedback and reflection.

A three-part process which was defined by the observation tool and accompanying instructions promoted the use of observation as learning.

Teachers and leaders in this pilot unanimously valued the common language provided by the Standards as an effective platform to allow teachers to discuss their teaching experience professionally. The standard descriptors provide a rich language which teachers can readily access to talk about their teaching in practice. In this way the observation tool enabled teachers to identify strategies, discuss practice and work together to further their own achievement as professional educators and grow a professional learning community.

The observations conducted within the pilot, had a dual effect enabling both early career teachers and more experienced teachers to reflect on and discuss teaching practice. Many teachers in the pilot commented on the value of being challenged to articulate their theory and practice.

The processes employed by participating sites were collegiate and grounded in leaders and teacher’s commitment to using observation and the Standards. It was noted by both teachers

and leaders that formalising structures for observation of colleagues work has the potential to engage a whole school community in a discussion of exemplary practice.

8.4.3 Summary

The AITSL Pilot, undertaken by The Department of Education and Child Development, the Teachers Registration Board, Catholic Education SA and the South Australian Principals' Associations explored the question *How can observation and reflection be used to promote learning about the National Professional Standards for Teachers in practice?*

The pilot was conducted at school sites by teachers and leaders in their own context. The cross-sectorial nature of the pilot means that it has impact on two sectors in South Australia. It found that:

- Observing teachers professional practice was a powerful experience that led to greater understanding of the Standards in practice and to improved professional learning and teacher conversation.
- The majority of participants endorsed the Observation tool, saying it was able to provide a platform for deep conversations and a way to increase teacher knowledge of the Standards.
- Likewise, they endorsed the power of observation of exemplary practice as a means of improvement.

As a result, of the pilot, observation as a means of facilitating professional conversation was endorsed and the importance of the Standards to provide a common language of discussion enabled depth and a continuum of growth for the profession.

8.5 Resources

8.5.1 Resources Developed for the Pilot

An observation tool had previously been developed by DECD officers. The tool had been developed with the intention of it supporting early career teachers to observe the National Professional Standards for Teachers in the practice of more experienced teachers. This tool was made available to pilot participants to use and adapt as they felt suited their context.

Many participants adapted the way they used the tool by using only part of the tool to document their process or substituting blank paper to record notes and details.

Only two sites modified the tool to create a version of an observation tool that better suited their needs.

8.5.2 Existing Resources Used in the Pilot

All participants used the National Professional Standards for Teachers as a resource document. Participants indicated increased familiarity with the NPST at the conclusion of the pilot study, with 37% participants indicating they had a detailed familiarity of the standards at the start of the pilot increasing to 96% indicating this at the conclusion of the pilot.

8.6 Findings and Outcomes

8.6.1 Implications and Recommendations from the Pilot

- Effective processes that support observation as learning
- Understandings of the Standards
- Most significant change narratives – importance of relational trust and cultural change

While this has been a small and defined pilot, teachers and leaders from Reception through to Year 12 sites have participated and identified Observation and the National Professional Standards for Teachers as effective strategies to develop teaching practice. Many of the site leaders in this pilot indicated intentions to use the observation tool as part of the induction process for early career teachers, and embed the National professional standards for Teachers into school practices.

Recommendations include:

AITSL continue to:

- develop and promote the use of observation as learning
- improve and enhance the observation tool to make the Standards accessible for teachers
- integrate observation as a practical process in the development of AIPS

8.6.1.1 The Local Perspective

South Australia has a well established cross sector approach to the National Partnerships. This pilot was an enabling and positive process that indicated the wide ranging effectiveness of the observation tool and allowed for teachers from all sectors and stakeholders to engage with processes that support the development of professional standards in a variety of contexts.

Teachers Registration Board of South Australia

The Teachers Registration Board of South Australia grants provisional registration status to graduate applicants from Australian higher education providers whose teacher education programs have been approved for registration purposes. This includes achievement of professional teacher standards at the graduate level as well as the graduate meeting all other requirements for provisional registration.

The Board also grants registration to those who have successfully completed 200 days of teaching determined through the achievement of professional teaching standards at the change of registration status level.

The Board will progressively be adopting the national professional standards for teachers at the Graduate and Proficient levels to determine these outcomes in the future. Board involvement in the Pilot has highlighted the role of the Board and the impending changes for those teachers and leaders participating.

The Board will be promoting the use of the Standards with all initial teacher education providers, initial teacher education students and teachers. Links to resources available across Australia will be made wherever possible to support the implementation of the Standards.

South Australian Primary Principals Association

A Professional Standards subcommittee of SAPPA has provided leadership for principal members in the development of the NPST and approaches to using them as a development tool with teachers. Participating Principals agreed the pilot demonstrated the capacity of the Standards in the work of leaders and teachers and published the following list of useful suggestions about how to use the National Standard for Teachers:

- Induction conversations for new staff
- Support for deprivatised teaching and the development of professional learning committees
- Align it for teachers coming off probation to provide feedback to teachers and principals;

- Pre meetings/prior to observation and de-brief after the observation enhance the process.
- To support performance development discussions
- Use by an AST 2 to plan their mentoring role
- Step 9 discussions and review
- TFEL conversations and exploration.

8.6.1.2 The National Perspective

South Australian stakeholders have been active participants in the national Teacher Quality reforms.

8.6.2 Planning for the Future

A second round of pilot studies initiated and supported by AITSL would be welcomed as a potential driver for ongoing reform in this area.

Participants posed two interesting questions:

Will the Standards be a hindrance or support to achieving high quality? This was in the context of the risk that standards might be viewed as minimal benchmarks to be met rather than aspirational standards for teachers to strive for.

How could students be involved? Teachers at the ASMS worked with older students who expressed interest in the process of observation of teacher's work.

8.7 References

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The National Professional Standards for Teachers

9 DoE Tas

9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 Setting the Scene

In educational reform, teaching standards have two main purposes. Firstly they can be used to evaluate teacher performance against an agreed set of professional criteria. Reform that uses teaching standards in this way is most likely to be systemic and top-down in nature. On the other hand standards can be used as a framework for teacher professional learning and development and this is more likely to grow from the profession itself. Where standards have been used solely for the purpose of teacher performance appraisal there are teacher and student outcome performance gains but they appear not to be sustained. Fullan (2006, 2010) describes this “plateau effect” and explains that reform based on top-down models can only do so much to drive better teaching and, therefore, better student outcomes. Standards generally fail to become embedded in the daily lives of teachers because the range of mechanisms to frame conversations about teaching tend to become self-serving and mechanistic and there is a level of mistrust in conversations that are described as developmental but are more likely to be judgemental.

On the other side of the coin reform based on school designed use of standards tend to be ad hoc, sometimes unrelated to the broader aims of the school and not tied to systemic policies and directions.

There are cogent arguments for standards to be used for both purposes and for them to be aligned with individual, school and system priorities and needs. In some instances as in the case of underperforming teachers, beginning teachers or teachers who are seeking recognition of advanced teaching skills, it is imperative that the criteria for their performance assessment are aligned with their professional learning. Such an alignment is common in some parts of the western world but is not commonplace in Australian States. With political acceptance of a set of National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) we will be seeking to embed professional teaching standards in the daily lives of Australia’s teachers it is worth being mindful of the failure to sustain improvement of both system-level and school-level driven reforms in the past.

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.

This report describes action research undertaken by 15 Tasmanian teachers into their own professional practice using the National Professional Standards for Teachers 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.

9.1.2 Contextual Issues

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 there are challenges in such an approach we found that the Standards focus, and discussions among participants both in and outside the Pilot, broadened and deepened educational understanding for everyone involved. As a consequence we will try capturing all participants' inquiries as part of the project and make use of insights gained right across the program rather than be limited to the AITSL pilot participants.

In the broader state context, Tasmania is in the process of setting up a Teaching and Learning Leadership Institute which will provide the professional learning policy framework for the Education Department and all its employees state-wide. Professional standards for leaders and teachers will be a requirement for professional learning policy development. The work undertaken in this Pilot, and the earlier AITSL Pilot into the professional standards for principals, provide valuable insights into how professional learning that is aligned with school and system priorities as well as the professional needs and aspirations of teachers and leaders can contribute to sustained improvement in teaching and in student learning.

9.2 Research Questions

Given this background and context our two research questions were developed around the use of the Standards as a framework for professional learning. The research questions are based on two recognised attributes of exemplary teaching practice, namely work-based research into teaching and leadership, and professional conversations designed to invite teacher self-reflection.

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

9.2.1 Focus

The aim of action research is to address an actual problem in an educational setting and action researchers weigh different solutions to their problems and learn from testing ideas (Makewa, 2008). In the case of participants in the AITSL Pilot, issues may have been of concern to a single teacher, or a single class of students. Alternatively the issues being investigated might be of school-wide or even system-wide concern depending on the context of the participant. The idea of the inquiry is that teachers examine their own practices with some understanding of the wider implications and underpinning literature. It was thought that the NPST might provide a framework for teachers to begin the process of identifying both what they might investigate and what they might do with the outcomes of their inquiry.

Action research has also been called "a spiral of self-reflection" (Kemmis, 1994) and it is the use of the Standards as a tool for self-reflection that the second research question addresses. In

this context we have been interested in creating the opportunity for our participant researchers to share their inquiries with their peers and the program leaders. Developing professional conversations around both the issue being investigated, and what the Standards might say about the issue, have been priorities.

9.3 Methodological Considerations

Participants in the Teacher Leader Program were led through an investigation of the Standards as part of the first two days of the course and the Standards were placed in the context of a critical tool for both teacher evaluation and professional learning. Participants who then wanted to use the Standards as a framework to guide their inquiry identified themselves and became part of the Pilot. Following the two day Pilot meeting in Melbourne in July a template for inquiries was developed and distributed to all participants and this was further developed in September to incorporate the outcomes of the inquiries (Appendix A).

After the two day introduction participants in the Pilot planned and started to carry out their inquiries with email and phone support from the leaders of the course. Participants met again in late September and the course leaders were joined by Prof. John Pegg from the SiMERR National Research Centre at the University of New England and Gavin Pinnington from AITSL who gave insights into the development and validation of the Standards and the work of AITSL respectively. Participants presented their inquiries to their peers using a consultant's protocol (See Appendix H) and the protocol conversations were built around providing guidance to the successful conclusion of each inquiry.

Participants met again in late October and presented the outcomes to their peers and took away ideas to finalise their inquiries ready for inclusion in the final AITSL report.

9.4 Results from the Engagement

9.4.1 Data Collection and Management

Each participant developed an A3 summary of their inquiry using a standard poster template. (Appendix B). They also included any instruments they developed as part of their inquiry and provided their own interrogation of the data they collected.

9.4.2 Analysis of the Data

Each inquiry that has been received has been summarised into a standard two page template that can be linked back to a fuller A3 poster and/or inquiry design. The summary documents (Appendix J-X) form the basis of the Results, Findings and Outcomes that appear below.

9.4.2.1 Analytical Procedures

While the 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 contexts.

9.4.2.2 Results

Table 9-1 - Summary of comments and conclusions relevant to the use of the Standards as a framework to teacher inquiry and as a tool for self-reflection

Teacher No.	Inquiry Title	Comments and Conclusions
1	A model that combines Cognitive Coaching and the AITSL Standards to assist teacher self-reflection and future career direction	<p>The AITSL Framework and Cognitive Coaching approach complement one another. If you have the Standards, and techniques for coaching a staff member, then it will assist in performance management discussions.</p> <p>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.</p>
2	To monitor and to improve my teaching through Standard 5 (effective assessment and feedback processes).	<p>Teaching standards are an objective, organized method of firstly evaluating our present standard then secondly planning goals to achieve growth. This objective assessment against credible and clearly defined skills can only enhance our profession and also support a truly transparent career path.</p>
3	Teachers using data from student feedback surveys (linked to National Professional Teaching Standards) to self-reflect for improved student engagement and motivation.	<p>The direct links made between the student survey questions and the National Professional Teaching Standards allows us to get very specific information about where to go with our professional learning and support to meet the needs of teachers.</p> <p>I can see that this information will be useful in assisting teachers reflect on their teaching practice, and undertake action learning. It will also be a useful tool in Leading for High Performance discussions in the teacher review process. It is evident that my school needs to look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Learning intentions clear • Assessment strategies • Feedback to students.
4	Using the National Professional Standards for Teachers as well as student feedback on teacher practice to assist in improving behaviour management, in particular the use of Restorative Practices, at our school.	<p>Being able to refer to the National Professional Standards for Teachers as part of this process was extremely beneficial in that it allowed teacher to participate in identifying relevant, timely areas of focus in terms of their own professional development.</p> <p>The use of the NPST enabled the inquiry and resulting process to be widely applicable to teacher professional development and practice in our school.</p> <p>The use of the NPST enabled us to draw out particular areas of focus that were relevant to both our school priorities, the</p>

		RP focus group and teacher professional development needs in our school.
5	Using the National Professional Standards for Teachers to reflect on their own practice, in particular the feedback criteria.	Other teachers in my learning area are conducting a similar process with their classes so it will be valuable to have a discussion about how we deal with feedback as a subject team and what we can do to improve. In conclusion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students value feedback • Students need tasks explained clearly • Students value high teacher expectations • Students want learning tasks to be meaningful • Assessments need to be carefully explained, both in terms of how they will be implemented and how the results are arrived at.
6	An evaluation and improvement of the mathematics teaching and learning program	The feedback provided by students through the first survey has been acted upon. Explicit links have been made for the students of the content of the mathematics program and real world application, and greater challenge has been provided to students through differentiation of the content of the program. On completion of the actions, students will be provided with a post inquiry survey to determine the effectiveness of the actions. The evaluation of the mathematics program has led to an awareness of the aspects that determine increases in student learning outcomes. The National Professional Standards for Teachers has provided an avenue for reflection, evaluation and refinement of the mathematics program.
7	What levels of feedback are being used in the classroom?	The knowledge I acquired throughout this research project has and will continue to impact on my teaching and mentoring practice. It has made me think far deeper about what feedback I am giving to students/colleagues; does it address the where and how they are going and where to next?
8	Investigation of how the National Professional Standards for Teachers can be used by teachers to reflect on their practice and how feedback during Mental Computation lessons can affect students' learning.	Throughout the inquiry process, I have been made more aware of my own teaching and the feedback that I am giving students. It has made me assess and critique my own teaching practice, give specific feedback and give it immediately after the behaviour occurs.
9	Embedding the AITSL standards into the Leading for High Performance processes and encouraging teacher reflection and goal setting against the standards.	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.

		<p>Adding the National Professional Standards to this process was both productive and educational as it allowed staff to gauge within a national context their current level of work. It allowed for a more specific set of individual goals that had a developmental layer wrapped around them.</p> <p>The National Professional Standards for Teachers is a document that offers schools and school leadership teams a great tool to assist with staff goal-setting and performance reflection. Embedded properly through the Leading for High Performance processes at a school-wide level could enable progress triggered by not only the external drivers on schools, but also the internal drivers for individual teachers that are reliant upon motivation and professional engagement.</p>
10	<p>Integrating the National Professional Standards for Teachers (the Standards) as a positive planning tool for Individual Professional Learning Plans (IPLP) which will enhance understanding, direction and the learning culture within a school community.</p>	<p>For this model to be effective and worthwhile the timing of implementation each component needs to be gradual and deliberate. Too much information at any one stage could cause individuals to feel overwhelmed and/or negative about the Standards or the process. Even the time allocated on the calendar needs to be considered to ensure that the roll out does not clash with other stressors.</p> <p>Exciting opportunities building on this model could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team of individuals in a school (or a network of schools) working together to achieve Proficient, Highly Accomplished or Lead on a particular standard • Encourage/ embrace student feedback on teaching • Increase professional observation and conversations opportunities across the school
11	<p>How can a networked Professional Learning Community (PLC) engage graduate teachers in using the National Professional Standards for Teachers?</p>	<p>Schools need to be attentive to assigning mentors/coaches to beginning teachers – while a teacher may be give the impression of being an effective classroom practitioner are they competent in ALL the proficient teaching standards?</p> <p>There are benefits in conducting a dual coaching approach to working with the Standards: the networked PLC supports the collective learning and critical dialogue around the same message which can continue without the coach facilitating; while the one-on-one coaching brings the broad message down to the classroom context for the beginning teacher – the application of knowledge becomes personalised and feedback very relevant to each.</p> <p>Over the five sessions the teachers arrived at a collective ‘ah-ha’ moment. In becoming proficient with a fuller knowledge of how students learn and how to plan for this, they had a shared view that their assessment and feedback strategies needed to be better. To achieve this, they believe a teacher would have to be across more than one of the Standards and have access to a significant school leader, independent of their workplace, who could facilitate discussion.</p>

12	<p>The development of “throughlines” (Literacy, Numeracy, Communication and Health & Wellbeing) from our school curriculum in conjunction with the National Professional Standards for Teachers, to inform teaching, assessment and reporting at our school.</p>	<p>The high expectation of teachers in each of the career stages outlined in the National Professional Standards for Teachers has been well received in our school. This document has provided teachers with focus and also accountability of practice. The standards have been clear especially for our setting. They have provided us with excellent professional discussion and debate. The development of our throughlines was the original focus but as time has gone on it has been overtaken by the professional standards for teachers. It has become the default in our ongoing knowledge cycle and our professional practice. The standards have been linked back to our curriculum and have informed our assessment and data collection, providing feedback and reporting on student learning (Standard 5).</p> <p>By a school linking their PL to the National Professional Standards for Teachers there is a platform for evidence based outcomes when facilitating PL sessions for staff. The general feedback process has indicated a positive reaction to professional learning sessions linking in with the National Standards for Teachers.</p>
13	<p>Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning in year 8 . Evaluate and improve teaching programs Standard 3.6 from National Professional Standards for Teachers</p>	<p>Using the NPS as a tool to assist all teachers move from Graduate to Proficient to Highly Accomplished could be a reasonable goal where no one person on a team is responsible for the team. I believe that most teachers are Proficient within the team and at times demonstrate aspects of Highly Accomplished teachers. It was obvious during discussions the valuable contributions each person makes in their classroom, however this is often not shared and celebrated with others and if so it is done in an ad hoc’ manner. The successes individual teachers have with classes and particular students are often not celebrated or recognised due to the lack of team structure or system of communication.</p>
14	<p>An investigation into improving students’ narrative writing through the provision of timely feedback during the learning process.</p>	<p>Assessing, providing feedback and reporting on student learning is a “key element of quality teaching” (Standard 5 National professional Standards for Teachers, February 2011).</p> <p>Many students are now showing that they are enjoying writing more by their active involvement in the writing process. The teachers are writing alongside the students, modeling and sharing the writing process. The opportunity to think, question and talk and provision of more time to write are some of the factors that have increased engagement.</p> <p>Teachers involved in this inquiry have developed a more critical and reflective approach to the teaching of writing and have shown development in confidence and skill as teachers and leaders in writing throughout the school. Having now identified a potential whole school approach to improvement in writing we now intend to act as change agents and activists within our school.</p>

15	Using feedback methods to develop students' Historical Knowledge, Understanding, Skills and General Capabilities of the Australian Curriculum	<p>Targeted feedback was effectively provided through self and teacher assessment using teacher designed rubrics, conferencing and self-analysis questions. Students were aware of the terms of assessment of learning and assessment for learning. The general capabilities of the Australian Curriculum were easily placed into a historical literacy unit.</p> <p>The inquiry achieved its intended outcomes. The research question of</p> <p>What forms of targeted feedback (Standard 5.2: Provide feedback to students on their learning.) can be provided to students' to develop their historical knowledge, understandings and skills? was achieved in the inquiry by utilizing rubrics, self-analysis and conferencing with students. The power of self-designed rubrics emerged in the unit when it was identified that numerous students had not achieved the skill of chronology.</p>
16	Investigation of how beginning teachers can utilise the National Professional Standards for Teachers to evaluate and develop their skills from graduate level to proficient level.	<p>Universal agreement that the National Professional Standards for Teachers were a great idea giving a unified professionalism amongst teachers throughout Australia.</p> <p>Three areas in which professional development activities would most be of benefit to beginning teachers were 'assess student learning' (5.1) and 'manage challenging behaviour' (4.3) (both with 5 participants), followed by 'differentiate teaching to meet the specific needs of students across the full range of abilities'.</p> <p>Colleague teachers may best assist beginning teachers by sharing their own experiences – not 'this is how you must do it' but 'this is what I have found useful'. Advice, collaboration and observation.</p>

9.4.2.2.1 Research Question 1: How useful is the National Professional Standards for Teachers for informing and guiding action research and inquiry?

It is clear from each participant's report that the Standards have provided a useful framework for their inquiries. 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.

The high expectation of teachers in each of the career stages outlined in the National Professional Standards for Teachers has been well received in our school. This document

has provided teachers with focus and also accountability of practice. The standards have been clear especially for our setting. They have provided us with excellent professional discussion and debate. (Teacher 12)

So in a practical sense how were the Standards used by teachers to frame their inquiries? In most cases discussions in the Teacher Leader Program around what makes a sustained difference in schools based on John Hattie's meta-analysis research, and the work of Michael Fullan, had suggested possible lines of inquiry. Teachers took these ideas to the Standards which offered validation of the importance of particular aspects of teachers' work and also suggested through the Focus Areas and Descriptors ways of broadening and/or deepening their inquiry. What stands out from the Pilot reports from teachers is the way that the Standards gained acceptance from their co-teachers, leaders in the school and from students where they were involved in providing feedback based on the Standards. The Standards not only received wide dissemination as a result of the Pilot they gained acceptance because they were embedded in good teaching and learning practice. We believe this speaks volumes about using the Standards to develop internal accountability for sustained improvement in student outcomes.

The use of the NPST enabled the inquiry and resulting process to be widely applicable to teacher professional development and practice in our school. (Teacher 4)

9.4.2.2 Research Question 2: How useful is the National Professional Standards for Teachers as a tool for teacher self-reflection?

In using the AITSL Framework, leaders are able to understand their staff's strengths and weaknesses 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. (Teacher 1)

Throughout the Inquires there are consistent and strong messages about the use of the Standards as a tool for teacher self-reflection (see Appendix I). In a national context where the use of Standards over many years has been largely ad hoc, feedback from all sites suggest that teachers are ready to embrace a consistent and professional teaching language that can guide teacher, school and system development and planning.

Another strong through-line in the reports is that teachers also need tools for professional conversations, whether they are provided by formal participation in coaching and mentoring programs or are developed in a site specific way. 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.

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. Adding the National Professional Standards to this process was both productive and educational as it allowed staff to gauge within a national

context their current level of work. It allowed for a more specific set of individual goals that had a developmental layer wrapped around them. (Teacher 9)

9.4.3 Summary

Amongst the uses of the Standards we have investigated using them to frame teachers’ research into their own teaching practice and the practice of others and using them to frame self-reflective conversations about teaching practice and improved student outcomes. In both instances we have seen the Standards providing both authentication and guidance to teachers’ endeavours especially when they are placed in a wider context of supporting teachers becoming learners of their own teaching.

9.5 Resources

9.5.1 Resources Developed for the Pilot

- a) Student Feedback: Following on from research conducted by Mike Brakey in the senior secondary sector (2007 – 2010) some participants created surveys for students that were based on the Standards. These surveys (Appendix C, D and E) were applied in both primary and secondary school settings and were often accompanied by discussions with students about the Standards and how students might make judgements about teachers’ practice. Some example questions are shown below;

	Rarely	Sometimes	About half the time	Often	Nearly always
I am encouraged to take responsibility for my learning					
The learning tasks in this subject are meaningful					
I understand how I will be assessed for this subject (5.1)					
The learning tasks in this subject give me a number of ways to demonstrate my understanding (5.1)					
I believe rubrics are a helpful way of providing feedback (5.1)					
My teacher has high expectations of me (5.2)					

Figure 9-1 : Student Survey Example

This is a relatively unexplored area of feedback with little research either nationally or internationally. It offers a promising extra data source for teachers who are seeking to both understand and improve their teaching practice. Giving students an insight into what their teachers are striving to achieve can only help the professional relationship

between student and teacher as a high level of trust is required to run such a survey and respond to the feedback provided.

- b) Teacher 11 worked with 5 graduate teachers and developed self-audits on both the Graduate and Proficient career stages as part of their conversations about feedback and assessment practices. An example from the surveys (Appendix E) is shown below.

STANDARD 1: KNOW STUDENTS AND HOW THEY LEARN					
Focus	Descriptor	Need		Strength	
1.1 Physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students.	Use teaching strategies based on knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students	1	2	3	4 5
1.2 Understand how students learn	Structure teaching programs using research and collegial advice about how students learn.	1	2	3	4 5
1.3 Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds	Design and implement teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse backgrounds	1	2	3	4 5

Figure 9-2 : Teacher Survey Example

- c) Some teachers developed surveys for teachers to use in specific aspects of their teaching practice and used the findings to apply improved practices to that area (Appendix F) and another developed a template for teachers to base their professional Learning Plans on the Standards.(Appendix G)
- d) A powerful “Consultants Protocol” was used to give participants a framework for presenting and gaining feedback about their developing inquiries. (Appendix H)

9.6 Findings and Outcomes

9.6.1 Implications and Recommendations from the Pilot

The Tasmanian Education Department, like all government departments in Tasmania, is currently highly constrained by government austerity measures. In such an environment it is imperative that any investment in professional learning and development is made in areas that have the best chance of improving the quality of teaching and student educational outcomes. Given the relative agreement that is emerging from school improvement, leadership and quality teaching literature there is little excuse for investment to be made in areas that will not have a lasting impact. The emerging leadership and learning institute will be based on several

guiding principles (see below) drawn from what we know should work to improve teaching and learning.

- Based on a professional leadership and teaching standard that provides the yardstick by which participants reflect on their own professional lives and learning and identify their strengths and areas for development
- An integral part of the established goals and directions of the Department and consistent with its vision, beliefs and practices
- School/work based and embedded in leaders' daily work lives. This would be Fullan's (2006) "daily relational learning", shared and specific to the situation in hand.
- As close to classroom instruction as is possible, taking advantage of local expertise but plugged strongly into external expert systems.
- Based on inquiry and action research, direct observation of others professional practice and making daily use of assembled data to feedback, inform and plan the next steps.
- Available for all levels of leader across all levels of schooling – school, district, state.
- Cognisant of and based upon adult learning principles- personalised, honouring participant responsibility and choice, providing consistent support and sustained engagement, sharing of professional practice, reflective through the application of mentoring, team learning and coaching principles.
- Cognisant of and based upon current learning and leadership theory particularly the importance of formative feedback, the instructional leader who supports distributed

Figure 9-3 : Professional Learning Guiding Principles (Tasmanian Leadership Institute)

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 NPTS 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. For this reason the Institute's initial programs have a strong focus on inquiry based learning. It should be possible to elaborate inquiry based learning across all sites so that schools can respond not only to centrally collected data like NAPLAN but also have access to valid data from teachers' own work to weigh planning decisions against.

We have found that all teachers involved with their own action research have involved their school-based and work-based peers in their activities so that there has been an outwards impact to other teachers from the work. In many instances Pilot teachers have described the willingness of others to become involved and open up their own classrooms, professional plans and teaching for inspection and discussion. Reading the reports is very affirming for the interest that teachers show in their own work and what they might learn from the teaching of others. Inquiry based learning offers a jemy into the "black box" at a time when there appears to be a professional willingness to engage with teaching standards. We will make the best use of this opportunity by ensuring that the standards are a professional learning as well as a professional evaluation framework. Too much one way or the other will be an opportunity missed.

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.

At the same time the other message that has emerged from the Pilot is that reflective conversations are also a powerful tool for unlocking the black box of the classroom. Participants have reported the importance of well informed and planned conversations often based on their prior knowledge of coaching and mentoring. What emerges is a need to provide all teachers who want to examine their practice with a set of professional conversational tools. The combination of a Standards based framework, inquiry driven learning, data based decision making and professional skilful conversation seem to add up to a variety of practical suggestions for individual, school and system improvement and markers to what might constitute a safe investment in fiscally tight times.

It would be remiss of us not to report three other outcomes of the Pilot and the Teacher Leadership Program. The first is that, for many, probably most teachers in the Program, the work undertaken on formative assessment had an influential resonance. The teacher summaries show that more than half involved some examination of the power of feedback either in a peer-related or student-related sense. This focus came from a relatively low level of initial understanding of the differences between assessment of, for and as learning. In the Program we combined practical exercises with detailed analysis of Hattie's meta-analysis findings especially on "direct instruction", and Fullan's ideas around a set of powerful and aligned assessment tools tied to learning objectives. The result was a strong thread of research interest that seems to have generated important conversations in the sites where teachers were conducting inquiries. Greater understanding of formative assessment and direct examination of its effects and benefits to classroom practice seems to us to be another successful pathway between what we know works and where we want to be. If formative assessment is tied to an understanding and practical use of the Standards then there will be further improvement in understanding as it is difficult to understand assessment without first understanding what it is that a teacher does or sets out to do.

The second related aspect of the Pilot was the interest in using the Standards to frame student surveys. The data collected from these surveys provided teachers with another angle on their teaching and one that is rarely sought. There is also a pattern to the areas of the Standards that interested teachers when they framed surveys with a concentration on assessment (as expected from above) and on classroom environment issues. The conversations that flow amongst teachers and between teachers and students following administering the surveys are probably more important than the surveys themselves. Trusting students to add their views to the data that a school collects to frame future planning seems to be another practical mechanism to open classrooms to reflection.

The third aspect of the Pilot that we can report outside the research questions is the way in which teacher leaders inquiries have been embedded in the school or worksite future planning. In the summaries readers will note several that are already tied into next year's teaching and professional learning programs and this has come about because of the sharing of outcomes with other staff, in many cases the whole staff, of the schools involved. Leaders of schools

would do well to not just initiate inquiry based learning but to implement ways in which teachers can share their classroom-based research with others. We believe built-in sharing of teaching practice has been shown in the Pilot to be a simple but effective way of opening up the “black box” of the classroom.

9.6.2 Planning for the Future

We expect the Teacher Leader Program to become an important aspect of the work of the new Institute and will use the outcomes of the Pilot to re-frame and improve our Program design. At the same time we will seek to incorporate the findings into the state-wide professional learning framework that will emerge to guide the work of the Institute.

We also expect that each group of teacher leaders in the Program will have a similar impact on schools and work sites that we saw with this year’s group. It is difficult to estimate the positive impact that 60 good teachers have had on the professional lives of their peers as a result of the Pilot and the Program.

9.7 References

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10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 Setting the Scene

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; and the design, management and brokering of professional development for all support staff.

The purpose of this pilot study is to examine the usefulness of the National Professional Standards for Teachers (hereafter referred to as 'the Standards') to provide a framework for:

1. Informing the development and delivery of professional learning;
2. Mapping of a professional learning curriculum for the career development of teachers;
3. Development of a self-reflection tool for teachers based on the Standards;
4. Linking the results from the teacher self-reflection tool to relevant professional learning available through the Institute; and
5. Development of an evaluation tool linked to the Standard for course participants to comment on the extent to which course design and content assists them to progress through the career stages of the Standards.

10.1.2 Contextual Issues

The Western Australian Department of Education represents the broadest diversity of schools that exist in Australia, and therefore the challenge that our system faces is preparation of teachers that will be successful across diverse contexts and regions. The Standards provide consistent expectations for the professional capacity of all teachers, regardless of context. The issue is to gain extensive feedback from all regions to ensure a collective understanding of the career stages to ensure that self-reflection and professional learning choices are consistent across the state.

10.2 Research Questions

After ministerial endorsement of the Standards in February 2011, the Institute undertook a program of extensive consultation and feedback with school leaders and teachers to determine their needs with regard to implementation of the Standards. Through this consultation it was determined that self-reflection and links between the Standards and professional learning were considered high priority. From this information 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?*

10.2.1 Focus

Data collected and analysed has been examined and collated. The analysis was then used to develop resources to assist the Institute for Professional Learning in aligning professional learning and teacher self-reflection to the Standards. Through this alignment, the Institute also undertook to create additional resources and tools to ensure that decisions made about professional learning and subsequent course evaluation were also aligned with, and informed by, the Standards.

10.3 Methodological Considerations

A range of consultation groups were established and focus workshops held in metropolitan and regional areas over the course of the pilot study. These workshops resulted in a consultation group of 194 educators being selected as the focus group for the pilot study. This group has provided extensive feedback that has provided options for both quantitative and qualitative analysis, suggestions, and opinions to support the work of the Institute in implementing the Standards.

Commentary has been gathered and analysed within four key areas:

- Familiarisation with the Standards
- Professional learning and support required to implement the Standards
- The use of the Standards as a basis for teacher self-reflection
- The use of the Standards as a framework for professional learning developed by the Institute

As it can be seen from Figure 1, the focus group was representative of the educators in the Department of Education: 52% of the group were teachers, 14% principals, 18% deputy principals, with the remaining members being curriculum leaders and heads of department. Therefore, 48% of the focus groups represented line managers.

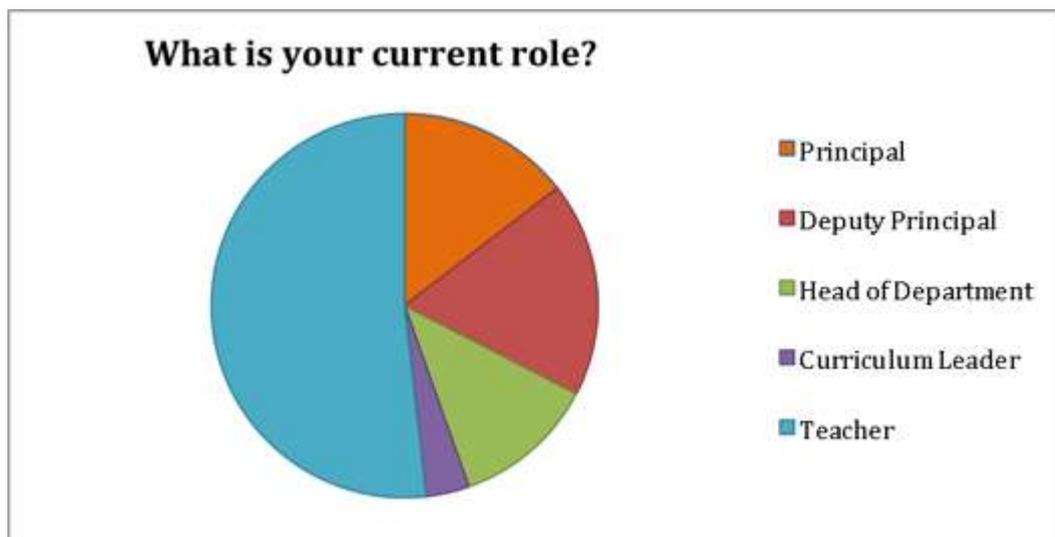


Figure 10-1 : Role of Focus Group Members

To ensure feedback was collected from a range of contexts, the focus group also represented diverse educational settings, from primary and secondary schools, education support, district high schools (K-10) and consultants from central office who are educators employed to support school based employees (see Figure 2).

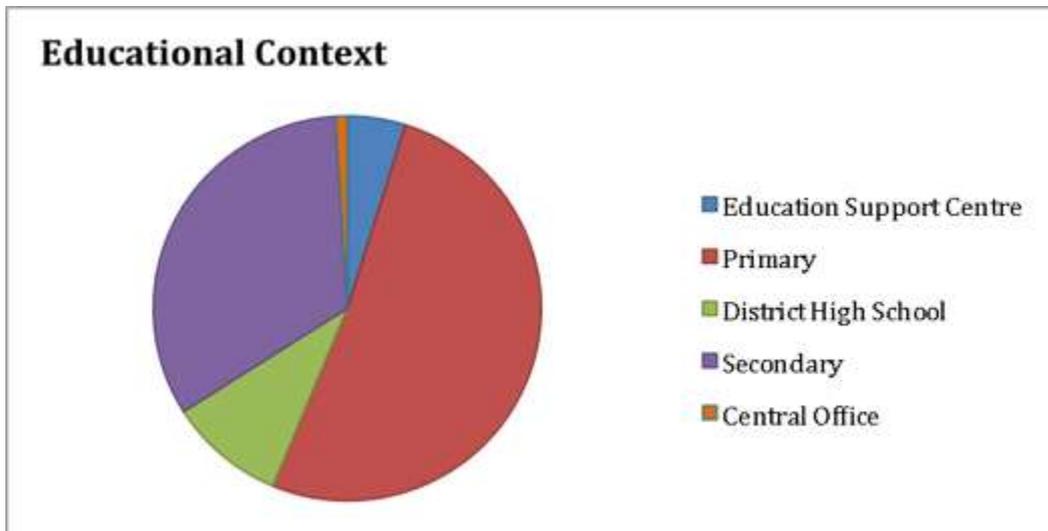


Figure 10-2 : Educational Context of Focus Group

The focus group was formed to represent a variety of experience with 47% of the group having worked in education for over 20 years and 30% in the first five years of their career (see Figure 3).

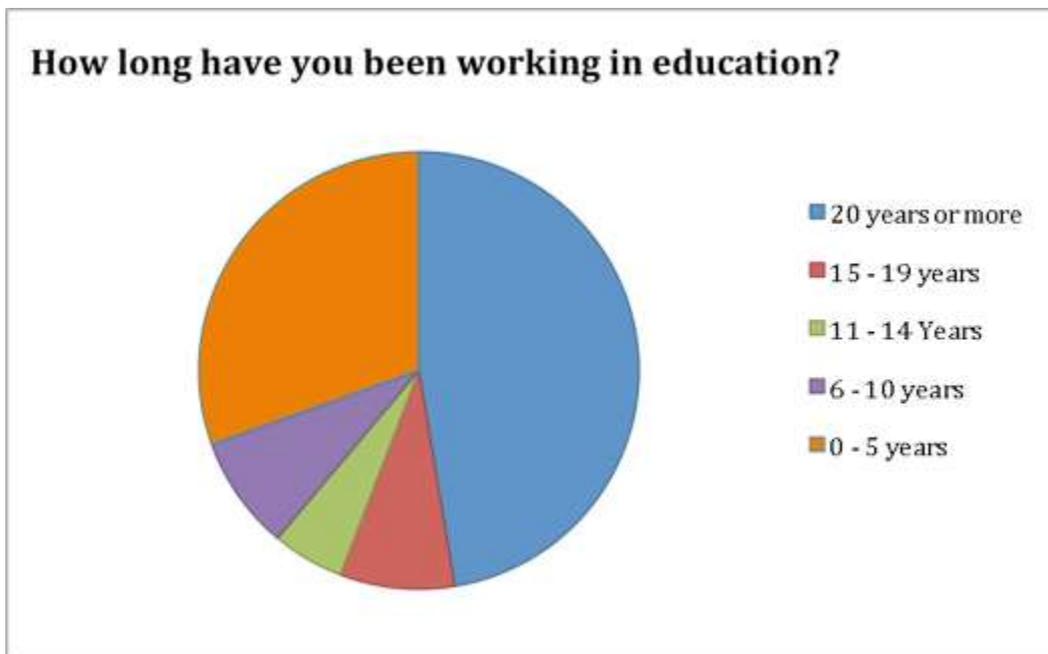


Figure 10-3 : Educational Background of Focus Group

Western Australia is divided into eight educational regions, some of which are in remote locations with diverse contexts and needs. Figure 4 illustrates the regional divisions.



Figure 10-4 : Education Regions and Offices (Source: DoE WA)

The remote locations of some educational regions engender issues for professional learning and lack of accessibility. Metropolitan regions are more densely populated, and hence employ more staff. The focus group consisted of 90% of respondents from metropolitan regions with 10% representing the remote and regional locations (see Figure 5).

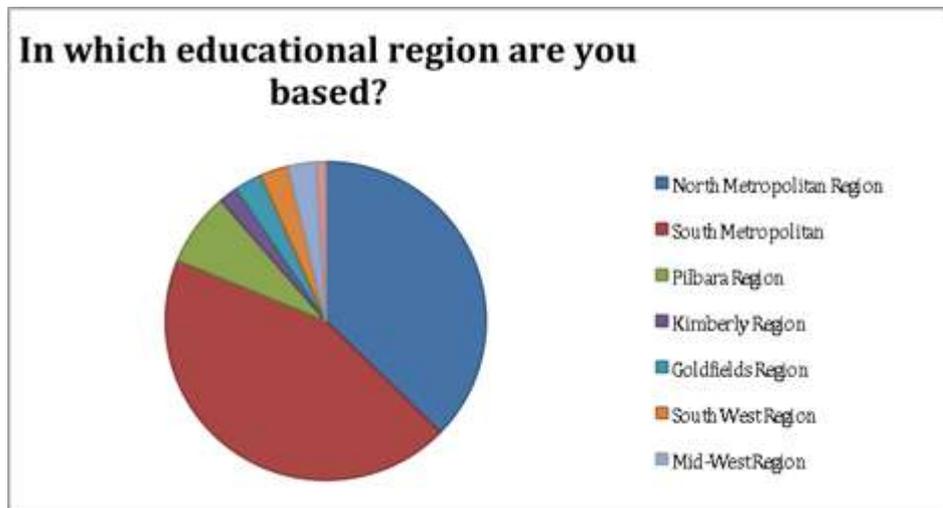


Figure 10-5 : Focus Group Educational Regions

10.4 Results from the Engagement

A mixture of written feedback, self-reflection and evaluative data was obtained from the focus group that included administrators and teachers at a range of Career Stages.

10.4.1 Data Collection and Management

Specific questions were developed and an electronic survey was created online to gather responses. Questions were formulated as follows:

Familiarisations with the Standards.

- *Are you aware of the National Professional Standards for Teachers?*

Professional learning and support required to implement the Standards.

- *Do you believe teachers need professional learning in the Standards?*

The use of the Standards as a basis for teacher self-reflection.

- *Would the development of a Self-Reflection Tool (both hard copy and online version) for teachers against the Standards be useful?*
- *Would it be useful to have a separate Self Reflection Tool for each of the four career stages?*
- *Would it enhance the Self-Reflection Tool to have a rating or Likert scale for self-reflection?*
- *What type of rating scale would you find useful on a self-reflection Tool?*

The use of the Standards as a framework for professional learning developed by the Institute.

- *Will it be useful for teachers to see how the Standards are linked to specific teacher development programs (and leadership development programs as applicable)?*
- *What do you see as the main benefits of teachers being able to see the clear links between professional learning and the Standards?*
- *Would it be useful to complete workshop evaluations that are clearly linked to the Standards?*
- *General comments on the Standards and the work of the Institute for Professional Learning.*

10.4.2 Analysis of the Data

Results from the electronic survey together with anecdotal evidence and feedback from workshops was collected. The extensive information from these sources has been coded in a qualitative research software program and subsequently categorised according to themes, either according to positive, cautionary or suggestive feedback.

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

Participant feedback indicated overwhelmingly positive responses to the notion that the Institute should develop a self-reflection tool for teachers based on the National Professional Standards for Teachers (see Figure 6).

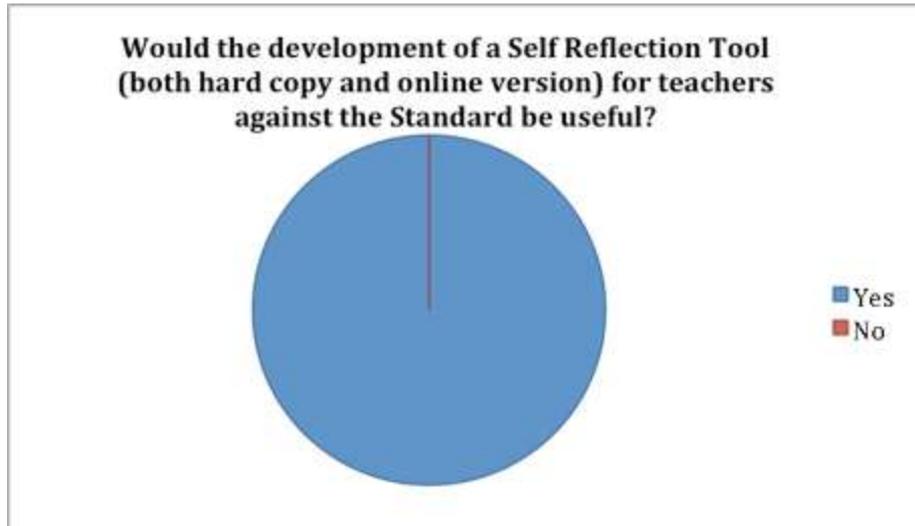


Figure 10-6 : Feedback on Self-reflection Tool

Coded responses were categorised according to positive and cautionary responses, with seven sub-themes respectively (see Figure 7). The participants agreed that self-reflection should be explicitly linked to the Standards, and would result in an efficient form of reflection and allow teachers the opportunity to take personal responsibility for their own development. Cautionary responses were grouped into four themes and consisted of only 25% of written reactions. One theme suggested that an on-line version of the self-reflection could be considered as a ‘big brother’ type endeavour by the Department of Education. The second theme was that an on-line self-reflection would discourage teachers with limited computer skills. Caution was also advised when considering the influence of purpose in self-reflection with the suggestion that teachers might contemplate different responses to self-reflection if sharing with a line manager for the purpose of performance management, as opposed to reflection for personal use.

Most respondents saw the alignment with national direction as a positive step for school leaders in Western Australia and an opportunity to develop consistency and familiarity with the Standards. Comments made by respondents included: “Would be an efficient method of ongoing self-reflection and improvement”; “Self-reflection is a great way of motivating teachers to take responsibility for their own professional learning”, and “Yes, these reflective teachers who wish to monitor their own development have a tool with which to do this”.

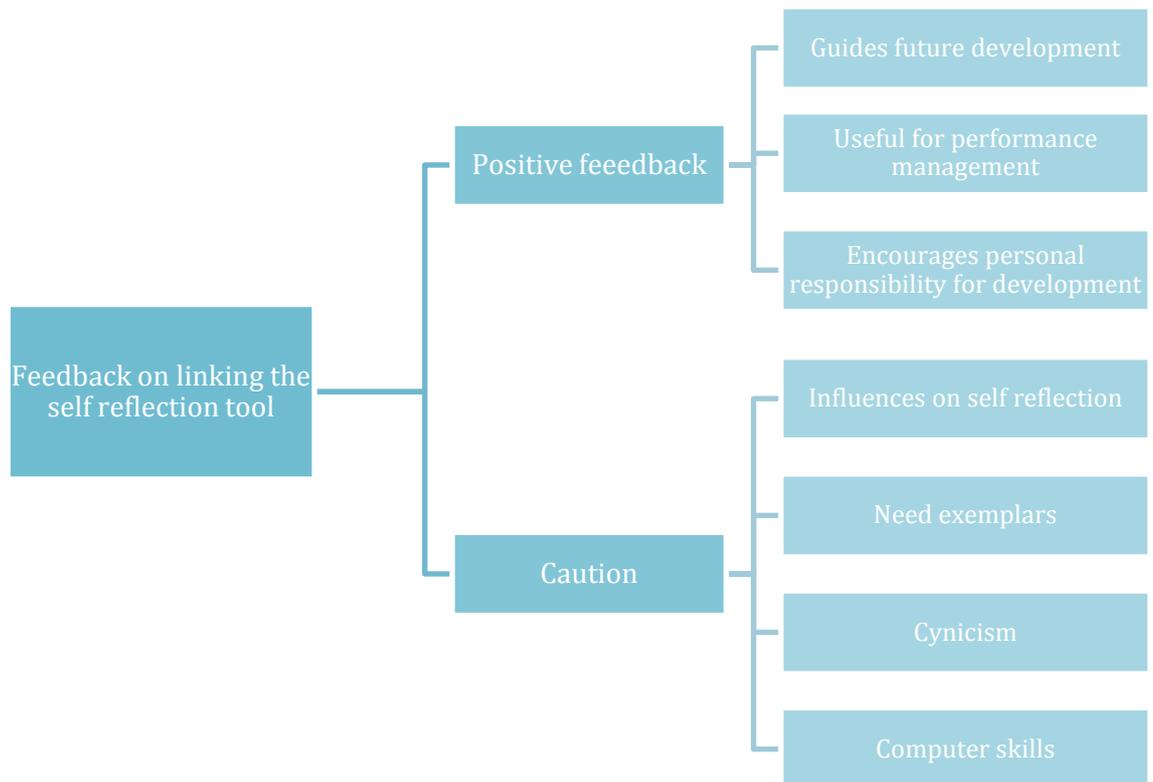


Figure 10-7 : Themes for Self-reflection linked to the Standards

A number of questions were constructed to further investigate the perceived needs of the focus group in terms of the physical construction of the self-reflection tool. 91% of respondents were of the opinion that there should be different tools for each of the four career stages (see Figure 8)

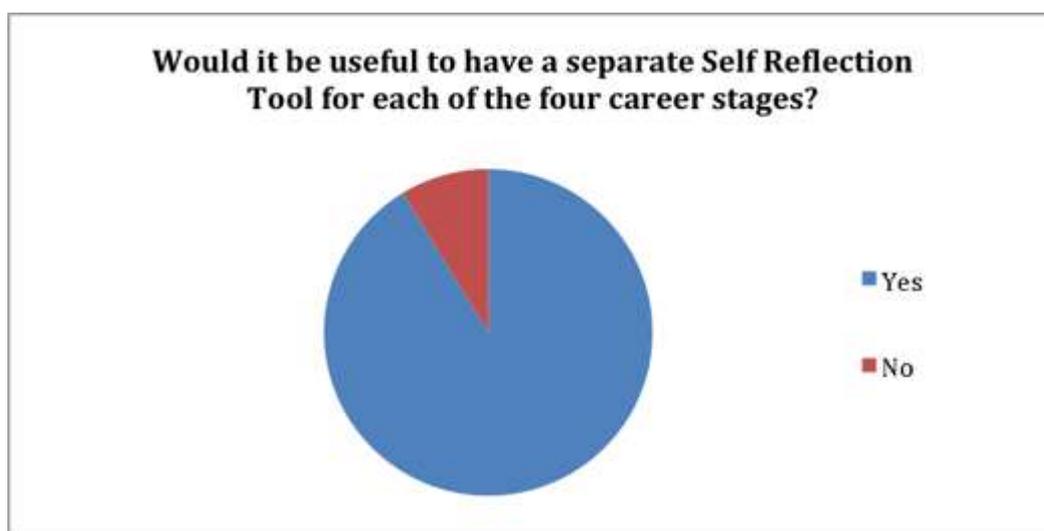


Figure 10-8 : Themes for Separate Career Stage Self-reflection Tools

Coded analysis of written responses indicated four themes in support of separate tools for each career stage (see figure 9). Positive responses expressed the usefulness of four separate tools in terms of allowing for partial achievement and the depth of information. However, despite expressing the need for separate self-reflection tools, 64% of respondents indicated that

teachers should have opportunities to see the progression of the Standards and the links between the stages in order to develop a big picture understanding of teacher development. An additional cautionary theme was a genuine concern that teachers would self-reflect according to their own understanding of the stages and that there needed to be consistency across the state to ensure that all teachers and line managers were aware of the expectations of the Standards at each career stage. Comments made by respondents included: “Make them sit side by side so that progression can easily be seen”; “It would be valuable for it to be separate so that teachers at a particular stage can see in depth”, and “It would be valuable to see the full range so teachers know where they need to move to next and how.”

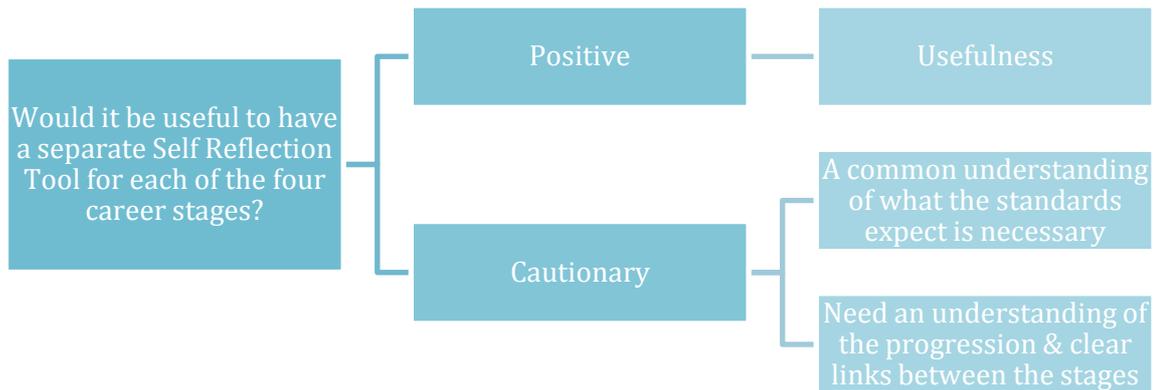


Figure 10-9 : Themes for Four Separate Career Stage Self-reflection Tools

When reflecting on the type of Likert scale that should be included in the self-reflection, 80% of the focus group was in favour of a scale with the headings: ‘working towards the Standard’, ‘meets the Standard’ and ‘exceeds the Standard’ (see Figure 10).

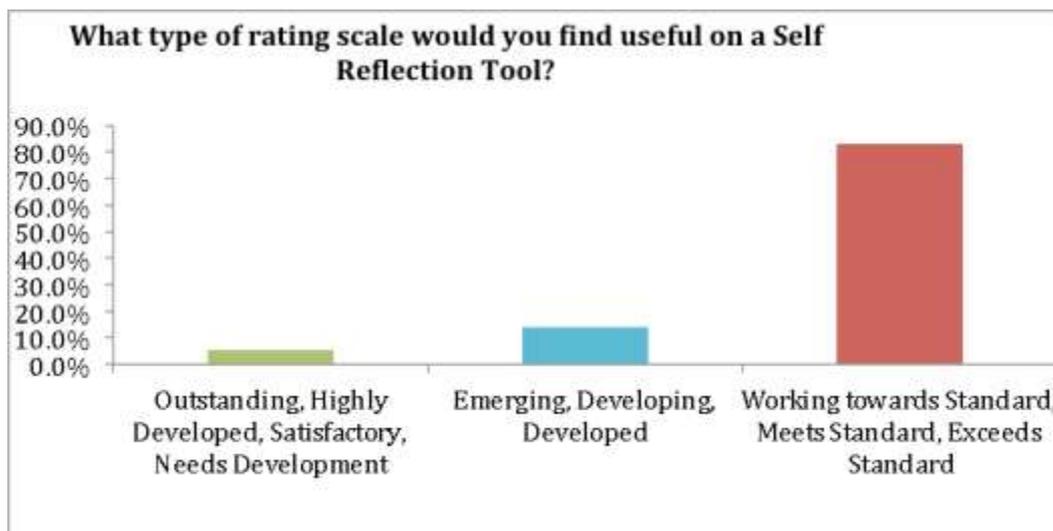


Figure 10-10 : Self-reflection Tool Rating Scale Preference

Coded written responses were categorised into three themes (see Figure 11). The respondents wanted a Likert scale that was simple to understand and clearly referenced to the Standard.

50% of respondents articulated the need for a limited opportunity to demonstrate or unable to comment option, to allow for teachers who had not yet been exposed to the criterion in the Standards.

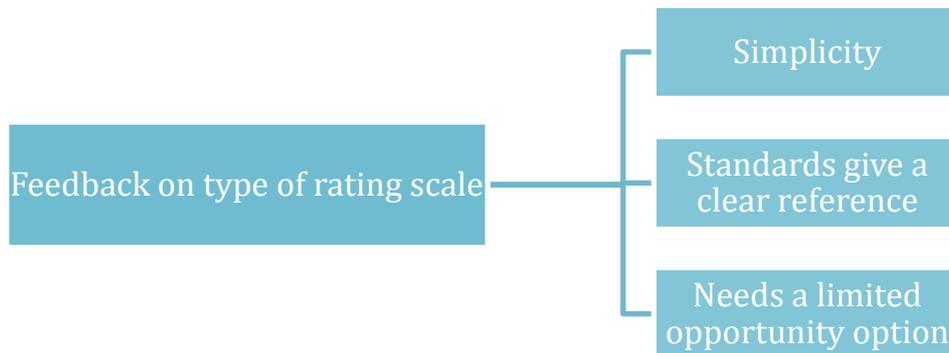


Figure 10-11 : Feedback on Type of Rating Scale for Self-reflection

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

Respondents were asked to rate the benefits of linking professional learning to the Standards (see figure 12). The benefits were rated in descending order as: the ability to identify individual professional learning needs; links to performance management and areas of growth; individual teacher goal setting; self-reflection and identify whole areas of school need.

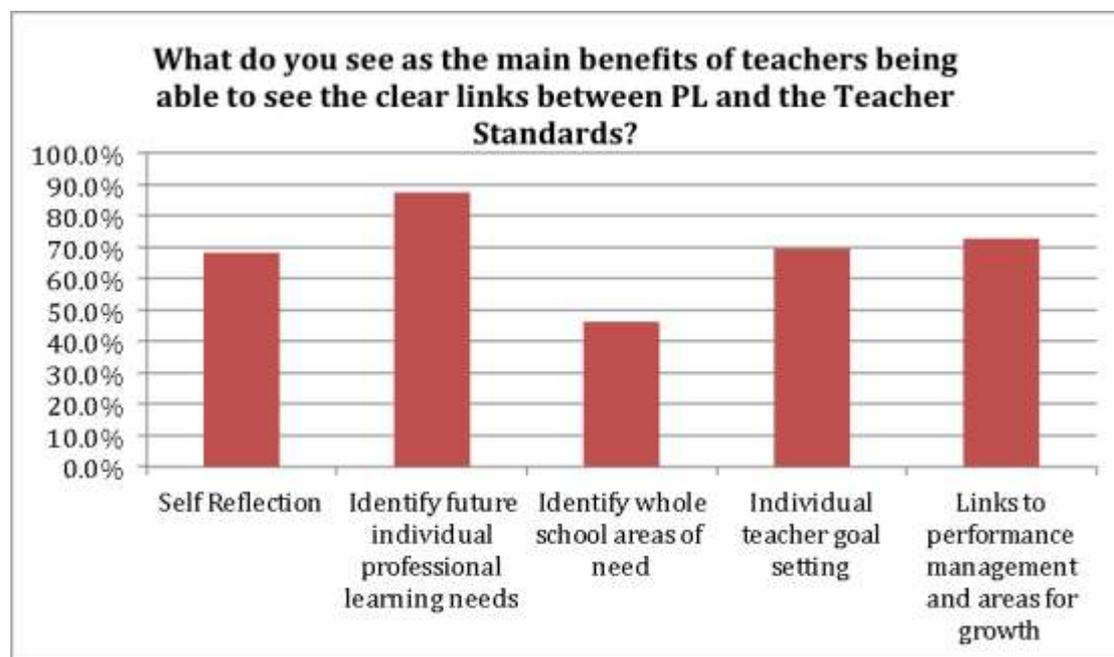


Figure 10-12 : Teacher Perceived Benefits - PL and Standards Link

Respondents were also asked to provide written feedback with regards to the benefits associated with mapping professional learning and the Standards. Written responses were coded and grouped into three themes (Figure 13). The focus group strongly supported the mapping notion with 33% suggesting that the ease of finding professional learning would be extremely beneficial for teachers. Comments included “Knowing where/what resources are available in a single location would be good” and “Identifies relevant PD immediately”. Support for the notion that mapping professional learning and the Standards would help teachers make decisions about priorities for professional learning with 50% of responses coded into this theme. Comments were made such as: “There is so much out there, it would give some direction” and “It would be valuable to see the options available as a 'what now?' also as a tool for the school to see what PD staff need”.

Online links were considered essential by 30% of the focus group who believed that the tool should link directly to enrolment in the professional learning: “Direct links saves searching for relevant courses or going to courses which don’t meet needs” and “Makes it easier to find what is available”

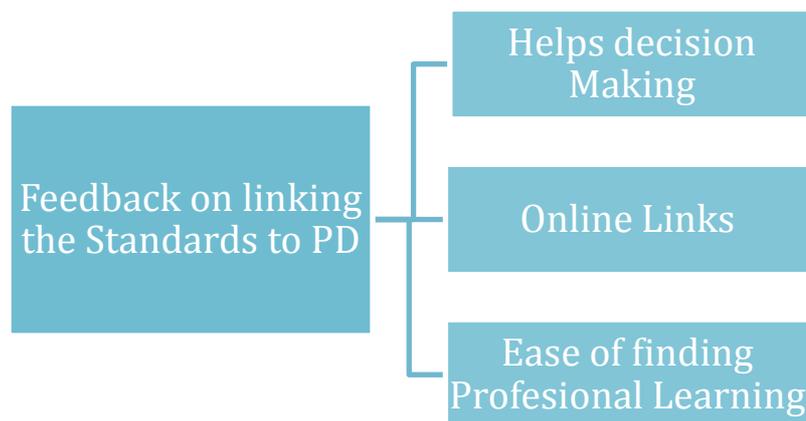


Figure 10-13 : Themes for Professional Learning and Standards Links

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

Additional information gleaned from consultation groups indicates a 97% approval rating for course evaluations of programs offered by the Institute to be linked to the Standards (see Figure 14).

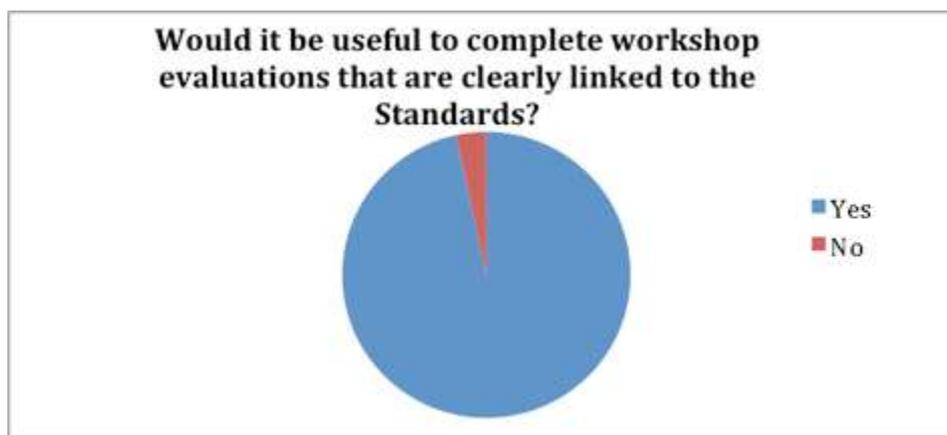


Figure 10-14 : Feedback on Workshop Evaluations

Written responses were coded and categorised according to three themes (see Figure 14). The respondents agreed that linking course objectives (based on the Standards) and course evaluation provided relevance and direct feedback as to whether teachers felt that the course met their needs. Comments supporting this impression included “Relevant specifically focused professional learning evaluation” and “Keeping the links is important, avoids confusion and keeps the Standards in mind”. Responses urged the Institute to be considerate of the need to be concise in course evaluations. Responses from 50% of the group considered that course evaluations still needed to provide feedback on the presenter, course design and methodology “Still need the usual comments re usability etc” and “Workshop presenters also need feedback on their own methodology”.

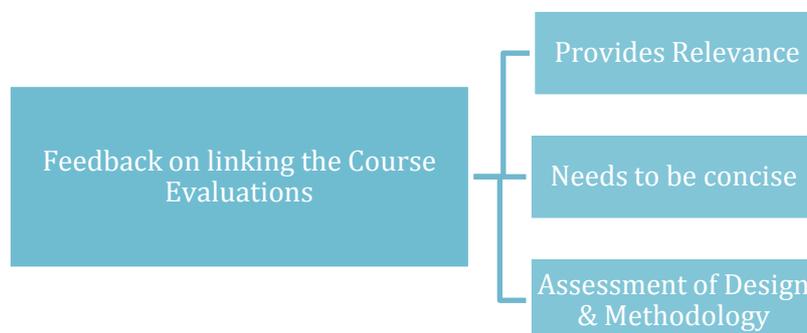


Figure 10-15 : Themes for Workshop Evaluations

10.4.2.4 Results

Analysis of the coded 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 linked directly to the Standards.

Research question 1: To what extent is the Standard useful for teachers to reflect upon their practice?

Data analysis provides evidence that the legitimacy of using the Standards for the purposes of self-reflection is endorsed by this sample of existing teachers and school leaders. The respondents consistently recognised the practicality of explicit links between the Standards and self-reflection as a useful tool for performance management, a means of encouraging teachers to take personal responsibility and encouraging understanding of their own career development. It is essential that any form of online self-reflection can also be printed to complete off-line, or downloaded, completed and saved for personal use. This would encourage teachers to treat the process as a personal development process and allow them to choose to use the tool as a support for performance management processes. Concern that there will be an inconsistent understanding of the Standards has led to a demand for Exemplars to be developed, that clearly demonstrate expectations at each career stage.

Respondents supported a Likert scale for the self-reflection, with the headings: '*working towards the Standard*', '*meets the Standard*' and '*exceeds the Standard*', with a fourth heading allowing for lack of opportunity. It was determined that respondents considered four separate self-reflection tools should be developed, with clear links showing development to the next career stage and allowing for understanding of the big picture.

From this analysis, the Institute embarked upon a project to develop a tool for teachers to use for self-reflection based upon the recommendations of the focus group. Four separate tools were developed with identical formatting and layout. This ensures that teachers are able to select the next career stage and determine links between their current capacity and setting goals for improvement. An example of the graduate career stage self-reflection tool can be found in **Appendix 1**. When opening the self-reflection, teachers are welcomed by a 'home page' (Appendix 1A) through which they are able to choose their pathway through the tool, using hyperlinks. There are three major areas of the tool.

1. **Self-reflection (Appendix B).**

The self-reflection itemises the Standards appropriate to the career stage chosen. Teachers are asked to select their capacity based upon a Likert scale of '*working towards the Standard*', '*meets the Standard*', '*exceeds the Standard*', and *unable to comment* (allowing for the lack of opportunity option requested by the focus group).

2. **Visual Representation (example in Appendix C)**

The results then populate graphs, which visually represent the teacher's development and areas for growth.

3. **Personal Learning Plan (Appendix D)**

There is also a personal learning plan attached which encourages teachers to analyse their self-reflection further; analysing strengths and weaknesses and allocating priorities for professional learning.

The self-reflection tools have been created in Microsoft Excel and allow for teachers to download and save locally on their own computers. It can also be printed and shared with line managers or colleagues.

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

Analysis of data confirms that the focus group was supportive of a tool being developed, linking the professional learning offered by the Institute, to the Standards. This undertaking was perceived as particular support for individuals to identify individual professional learning and as a link to performance management.

It was also ascertained that respondents were positive about the capacity for this undertaking to provide direction and simplify the process of accessing professional learning appropriate to individual needs. An essential element was considered to be direct online links from the tool, to enrolment, in chosen courses or programs.

The Institute reflected these results in the development of a professional learning tool, connecting professional learning and the Standards (examples in **Appendices D-H**). All professional learning offerings currently scheduled for the 2011/12 calendar were collated and categorised. The courses were then categorised according to the career stage(s) they targeted and their alignment to individual Standards. Course descriptions were also added to provide additional information (see **Appendix D**). This mapping process then formed the groundwork for the professional learning tool.

In an attempt at uniformity, the professional learning tool format aligns with that of the self-reflection tool. A home page allows teachers to select hyperlinks through which they are able to choose their pathway through the resource. There are three major areas of the tool.

1. **Home Page (Appendix E).**

The home page provides a list of all Standards within the chosen career stage. Teachers are expected to use their self-reflections to select the Standards for which they wish to find appropriate professional learning

2. **Courses linked to Individual Standards (Appendix F)**

Dependent upon the Standard(s) selected, a list of courses will be provided, with a description and online link for enrolment.

3. **Administration (Appendix G)**

To ensure sustainability of the tool, an administration section has been added in order to allow updates as new courses are introduced.

4. **All Courses (Appendix H)**

A hyperlink from the home page allows access to a list of all scheduled courses.

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

Data analysis confirms support for a comprehensive professional learning program, connecting self-reflection, course objectives and course evaluation through the Standards. However, the respondents recommended that consideration should still be given to presentation, course design and relevance to personal need.

A course evaluation tool was therefore developed linked to the Standards (see **Appendix 3**). Participants are asked to rank the course or program according to explicit objectives drawn from the Standards.

The course administrator is able to choose the applicable career stage from dropdown menus. Dependent upon the choice, all Standards, focus areas and descriptors applicable to that career stage are available in dropdown menus under the objectives. Adhering to feedback obtained from the focus group, generic questions have also been added to accommodate feedback on course design, methodology and venue (**Appendix I**). A visual explanation of the tool can be found in (**Appendix J**).

10.4.3 Summary

The Institute has utilised the Standards to develop a comprehensive approach to linking professional learning, self-reflection, professional learning and course evaluation. Analysis of qualitative and quantitative data collected from focus groups across the state was used to inform the development of the necessary tools that support the strategy.

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 a positive step for school leaders in Western Australia and 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 allows 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; and identify whole areas of school need. Additional information gleaned from consultation groups indicates unanimous support to the notion that course evaluations of programs offered by the Institute are linked to the Standards.

Analysis of the 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 projects which were completed and implemented as a direct 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.

10.4.4 Resources Developed for the Pilot

This research was specifically carried out to develop a cohesive approach to self-reflection, course objectives, professional learning offerings and course evaluation. As a result of this pilot study, the Institute has developed evidence based electronic resources as follows:

1. Teacher self-reflection tool, linked directly to the Standards and career stages. (**Appendices A -B**).
2. Teacher professional learning mapped to the appropriate career stages, Standards, focus areas and descriptors as articulated in the Standards (**Appendix D**).
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 (**Appendices E-H**).
4. A generic course evaluation linked directly to the Standards (**Appendices I-J**).
5. Findings and Outcomes.

10.4.5 Implications and Recommendations from the Pilot

The Standards have been received positively by the participants of this pilot study who demonstrated overwhelming support for their alignment to professional learning and course evaluation. The Standards were also considered a valuable tool for self-reflection.

Cautionary feedback, whilst less frequent than the positive responses, has advocated a general theme for concern. This concern is related to the understanding an individual brings to the self-reflection activity. The self-reflection itself is valuable, only if the teacher is cognisant of the levels of professional practice exemplified by the Standard(s). If a teacher is unclear in self-reflection, then course selection will be incompatible and course evaluation negated.

Therefore Recommendations to AITSL based on the findings of this report are as follows:

- Provide examples of 'best practice' or exemplars to enable a collective understanding of the expectations contained in the Standards.
- Provide a range of support materials to support existing leaders to mentor, coach and support teachers in their understanding of the Standards.

10.4.6 Planning for the Future

The Institute is now in a position to advertise and facilitate professional learning according to the career stages and intended outcomes, linked to the Standards. The self-reflection and professional learning tools will be made available and released through our website and demonstrated at workshops and information sessions. Course administrators will be introduced to the integrated course evaluation procedures derived from this pilot study. All new courses will be linked to the existing mapped curriculum. The Institute will seek extensive feedback on the use of the tools and further enhance and adapt them as necessary.

The ongoing challenge will be to ensure that the 'Teacher Curriculum' is constantly updated to reflect program offerings, particularly as it is hyperlinked directly from the professional learning tool.

A further challenge is to get feedback from a range of teachers across all eight regions. At this stage it is heavily dominated by the metropolitan regions. It is not possible to survey teachers online without showing them the tools developed and working them through their potential use. Therefore, as courses are facilitated within regions, Institute staff will undertake to demonstrate these tools and the Standards.

10.5 References

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) (2011). *Standards*. Canberra: Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership.

Department of Education Western Australia. (2010). *New Education Networks and Regions*. Available:<http://det.wa.edu.au/schoolsandyou/detcms/navigation/shaping-our-schools/new-education-networks-and-regions/?oid=MultiPartArticle-id-10391840>. Last accessed 8/11/11

11 ISQ

11.1 Introduction

11.1.1 Setting the Scene

Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) is an organization 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 and educating over 110,000 students, accounting for some 15 per cent of Queensland school enrolments.

Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) is committed to supporting its member schools through a focus on the following:

- Effective management and administration of government programs
- Quality professional learning opportunities for teachers and school leaders
- Research and innovation
- Creation of strategic relationships with and between schools, and external agencies.

Taking part in the AITSL Pilot was seen as an important mechanism for fulfilling some of these commitments. There was clear alignment between current initiatives and the aims of the Pilot.

Schools were invited through an application process to take part in the Pilot as a 'Project Opportunity'. It was explained that the purpose of the project was to:

1. Support teachers to reflect against the National Professional Standards for Teachers (hereafter referred to as 'the Standards') in the Domains of *Professional Knowledge* and *Professional Practice* in order to determine personal areas of strength and future growth.
2. Use the data collected, to identify the specific areas for growth and then collate this information at a school level.
3. Assist teachers to develop a professional learning growth plan based on their self-reflections.
4. Help school leaders analyse the data to see if the areas for growth are uniform and then use that information to provide directions for Professional Learning for the school.
5. Collate the data across all schools to determine the best ways for ISQ to support schools collectively.

School leaders saw the benefits of participating as:

- An opportunity to engage with the Standards and become familiar with the language and expectations of the standards.

- Support from ISQ for schools to develop strategic plans for future professional learning based on the identified needs of staff.
- Networking opportunities across a range of schools to share ideas and best practice.

Ten schools were selected to participate in the Pilot. These schools represented a range of contexts including metropolitan, well established schools, small and rural schools. All of the schools had staff appraisal processes in place and wanted to explore how the Standards could link with their current processes. Table 11-1 shows the schools participating and the number of teachers involved at each site. In some school sites, participation by teachers was voluntary or specifically targeted. This reflects the smaller number of participants at some school sites.

Table 11-1 - Participating Schools

School Name	Number of Participants
AB Paterson College	101
Bundaberg Christian College	35
Calvary Christian College	56
Cannon Hill Anglican College	52
Canterbury College	13
Grace Lutheran College	28
Moreton Bay College	86
Pacific Lutheran College	9
Rockhampton Girls Grammar School	24
Victory College	24

It is believed that teachers share a significant responsibility in preparing young people to lead successful and productive lives (AITSL, 2011). The Standards reflect and build on national and international evidence that a teacher's effectiveness has a powerful impact on students, with broad consensus that teacher quality is the single most important in-school factor influencing student achievement (Hattie, 2003).

To support the introduction of 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 as a potential model for creating collaborative projects, planning targeted professional learning and to capitalise on the strengths of their teaching staff by setting up mentoring and coaching opportunities at a whole of school level. Once completed, the survey was also used as a basis for individual growth planning.

Extensive research shows teachers as being the most powerful catalyst for student learning (Hattie, 2009). They can both positively and negatively impact a student’s achievement more than any other factor in a student’s school life. Teachers therefore need to ensure they are continuously providing high quality teaching and facilitating learning experiences that maximise student performance. To achieve this, teachers should reflect on their practice to develop a plan that utilises a number of approaches to build on their current levels of expertise. To support schools in this process Independent Schools Queensland developed a Professional Growth Planning template based on the Standards.

Professional Growth Planning is a process of self-directed inquiry focused on what teachers need to learn and do to improve their practice, resulting in improved student learning. In this process, teachers engage in self-reflection against the National Professional Standards for Teachers. First, an area of need is identified. Next, a goal is established to address the need. Then the action is taken to address the need.

Figure 1 illustrates this process (see Appendix A for a Sample Growth Plans).

A valuable professional growth plan is considered to be one that engages teachers in significant new learning of a skill related to one’s responsibilities. Preparing a meaningful professional growth plan requires skills of self-assessment and analysis of practice, knowledge of resources available to contribute to one’s learning, and the discipline to engage in learning activities to improve practice.

The activities of the plan may be undertaken individually or collaboratively with others; in each case the result is the same: improved classroom practice and enhanced student learning (Danielson, 2007).

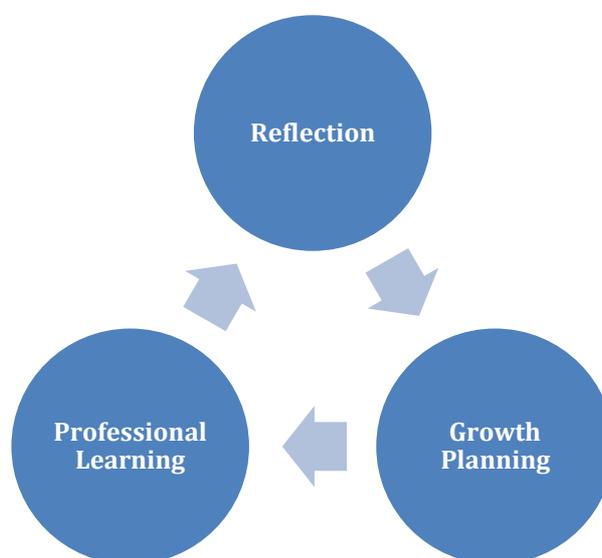


Figure 11-1 : Professional Growth Model

This process may set the scene for further conversations at a school level about teacher performance.

11.1.2 Contextual Issues

This research is very relevant to the context of Independent Schools Queensland which has as one of its strategic focus areas the offering of quality professional learning opportunities. ISQ represents schools from a range of contexts throughout Queensland including: schools from low SES communities; schools with high numbers of indigenous students; boarding schools; distance education schools; schools with students with disabilities and schools with ESL learners. It is essential that ISQ understands the professional learning needs of teachers from a wide range of schools in order to plan and deliver the most effective programs possible.

As an organisation based on a diverse membership it is important that ISQ supports and values this diversity. The participating schools in the Pilot not only represented schools from regional areas but also different systems within the sector, for example the Anglican school system where they have already been working with a set of standards or the Christian schools where they felt it was important for the Self-reflection survey to reflect the Christian values and ethos required of their teachers. Consequently, flexibility and the ability to add and adapt needed to be considered in the development of the survey and data analysis developed by ISQ.

Another contextual issue is the geographical location of the schools within Queensland. Fortunately, five of the schools involved in the Pilot were from the South East corner (see Figure 2). This made it easier to provide face to face support.

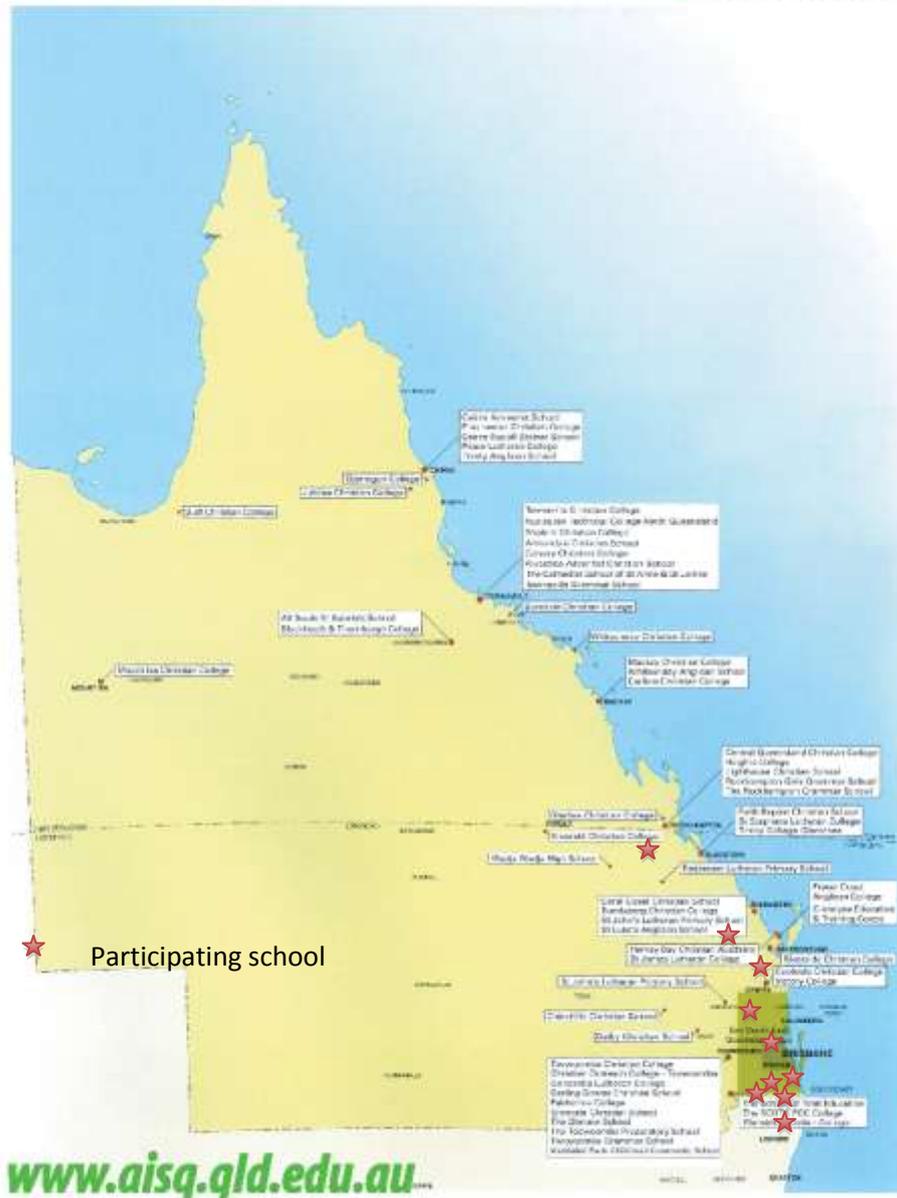


Figure 11-2 : Location of Pilot Schools

11.2 Research Questions

The intended focus area for Pilot was to investigate the use of the Professional Standards to inform professional learning for teachers. This needed to be considered in light of the diverse contexts of the school in which the Pilot would take place.

There were two research aims underpinning the Pilot:

- To examine the use of the Standards in planning directions and establishing priorities for teachers' professional learning across a range of settings and contexts.

- To investigate if self-assessment against the Standards identifies any patterns that can inform future planning at a school and sector level.

The Pilot was set up in two stages (see Figure 3). 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 Professional Learning 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?

STAGE 1

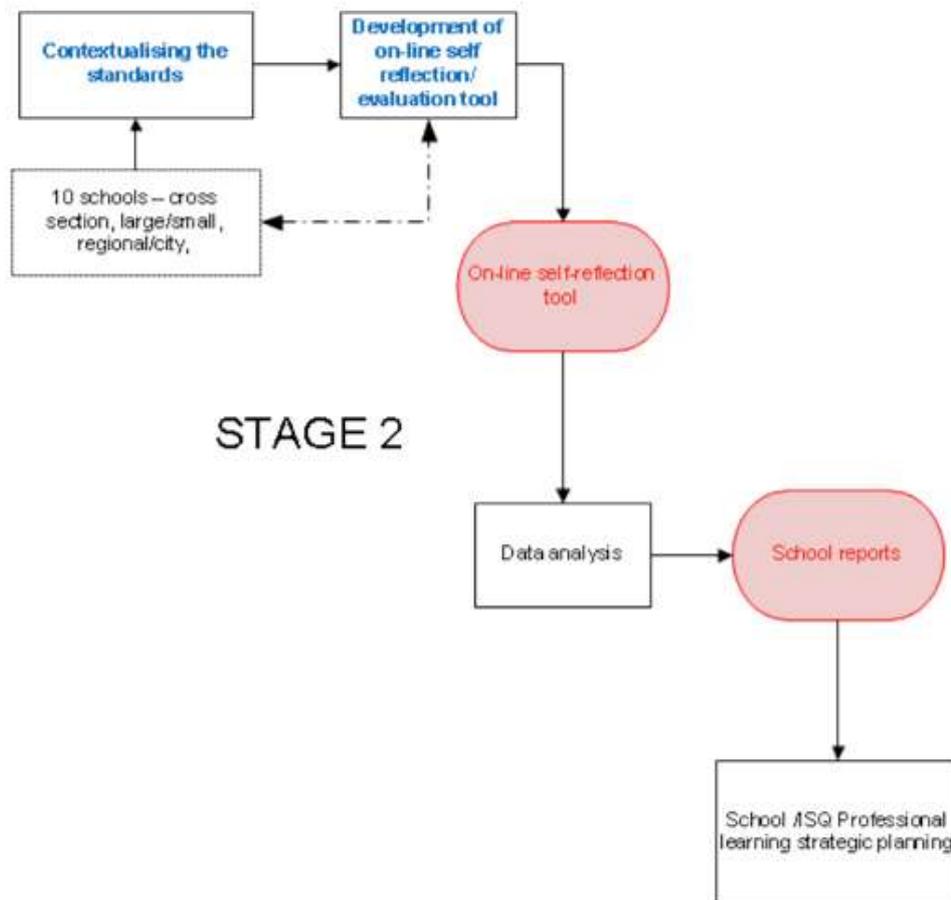


Figure 11-3 : Research Design

11.3 Methodological Considerations

The research involved the collection of both qualitative and quantitative forms of data throughout the two stages of the Pilot. Table 11-2 indicates the key activities and dates for the Pilot. In the following section each of these activities is described with details provided about data collection and data analysis methods.

Table 11-2 - Key activities and dates

Date	Activity
July 11	Applications sent by ISQ to member schools to participate in Pilot
July 22	School applications close
July 25	Successful schools notified by ISQ
July 27/ 28	Training in Melbourne with AITSL
August 1	Pilot commences
August 2	Phase 1 Initial face to face meeting in Brisbane
August 15 - 29	Phase 2 Data collection at school – teachers to use the Standards to reflect on practice and then determine areas of strength and areas for improvement. Teachers develop Growth Plans. Growth Plans submitted by August 29. ISQ to provide lists of name of those people who have completed reflection by August 22.
August 29 – Sept	Phase 3 Data analysis – common issues identified for targeted professional support; analysis to determine the areas of strengths identified by high performing schools. School leaders supported to develop school plans for professional learning based on observed common elements. School plans developed by August 29. Teachers complete survey to reflect on the usefulness of the process.
August 29 – September 16	Phase 4 Site visits and communication with schools via ‘Go-to-Training’. Refinement of tool.
September 16	Site visit by SiMERR and AITSL
September 30	Pilot study progress report (to SiMERR)
October 24 - 30	Phase 5 Data collection – review of Growth Plans.
November 14	Phase 6 Data analysis and evaluation completed

Following the application and school selection process, school leaders from the 10 participating schools were invited to attend a face to face meeting in Brisbane. In most cases two people from each site attended.

The purpose of this meeting was to:

- Discuss the aims of the Pilot and the requirements for participation

- Discuss timelines and deliverables
- Engage with the Standards and determine the nature of evidence that would indicate that a teacher was at a proficient level for each descriptor
- Provide feedback on the draft version of the Self-reflection Tool
- Share information about contextual issues at each site and establish possible networking opportunities between sites.

This meeting led to the refinement of the Self-reflection Tool and the creation of a supporting document which showed the nature of the evidence for each Standard and Descriptor (see Appendix B) which would show that a teacher was demonstrating a Proficient level. On the suggestion of school leaders additional questions were added to the Self-reflection Tool in order to provide richer demographic information. For example, leaders asked to have the question, 'How long have you been teaching at the school?' added to the profile questions.

The following information was collected, via the online survey set up for the Self-reflection Tool, prior to the completion of the portion of the survey that pertained to the standards:

1. Name (this was mandated in some schools and left as optional in other schools)
2. Gender
3. Length of time teaching at the school?
4. Teaching role
5. Years of Teaching Experience
6. Highest educational/teaching qualification
7. Current studies
8. Hours of professional learning undertaken in the last year
9. Future plans – participants were asked to respond to place 1 = likely, 2 = possible, 3 = unlikely beside the following statements:
 - In five years I will be classroom teaching In five years
 - I will be involved in education but not teaching In five years
 - I will have left the teaching profession
10. Familiarity with the standards
11. Grades taught
12. Subjects taught

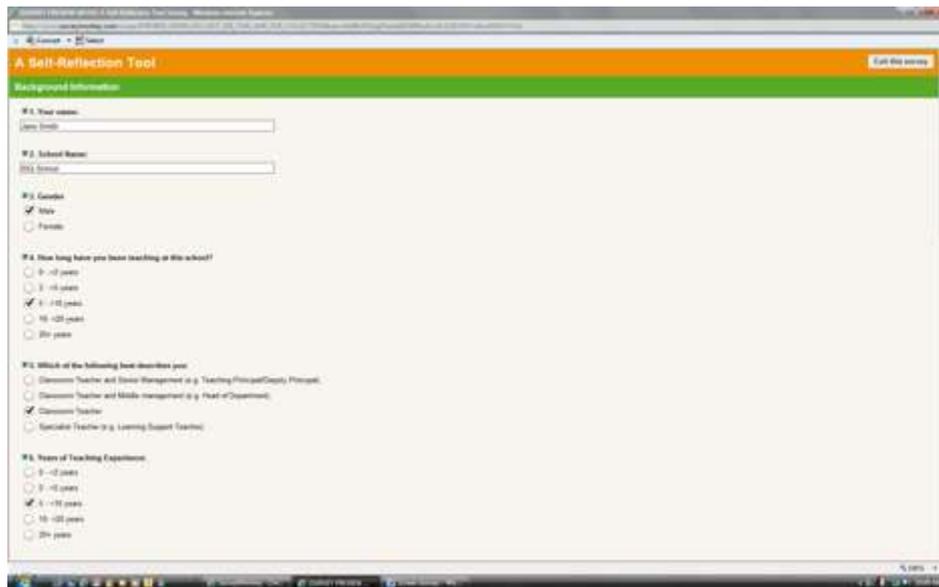


Figure 11-4 : Screen Shot of a Sample

A total of 429 teachers completed the Self-reflection Tool.

On completion of the survey by teachers, data was collected and collated in a series of linked spread sheets so that an array of queries and profile graphs could be generated. The data sets were set up so that schools see the results of their own school but also see the overall results from the rest of the sample (429 participants). It is also possible to see a profile for an individual teacher.

Figure 5 and Figure 6 provide screenshots showing the master file which provides the overall statistics for each school and the also all of the teacher responses. From this sheet it is possible to run various queries by using the filter function of Excel. For example it is possible to filter so that only the results of early career teachers are shown. This sheet also provides the flexibility for schools to add additional fields so that they can run other queries. For example, one school wanted to add in a field to the show the university their graduate teachers had attended. Another school was intending to add additional fields for the Christian Values Standards that their teachers need to reflect upon. At a glance it is possible to see the number of respondents for each question or see how teachers rated themselves in terms of levels of proficiency for each standard. The top, light blue section shows the collective responses of all participants while the darker grey section shows the responses for an individual school.

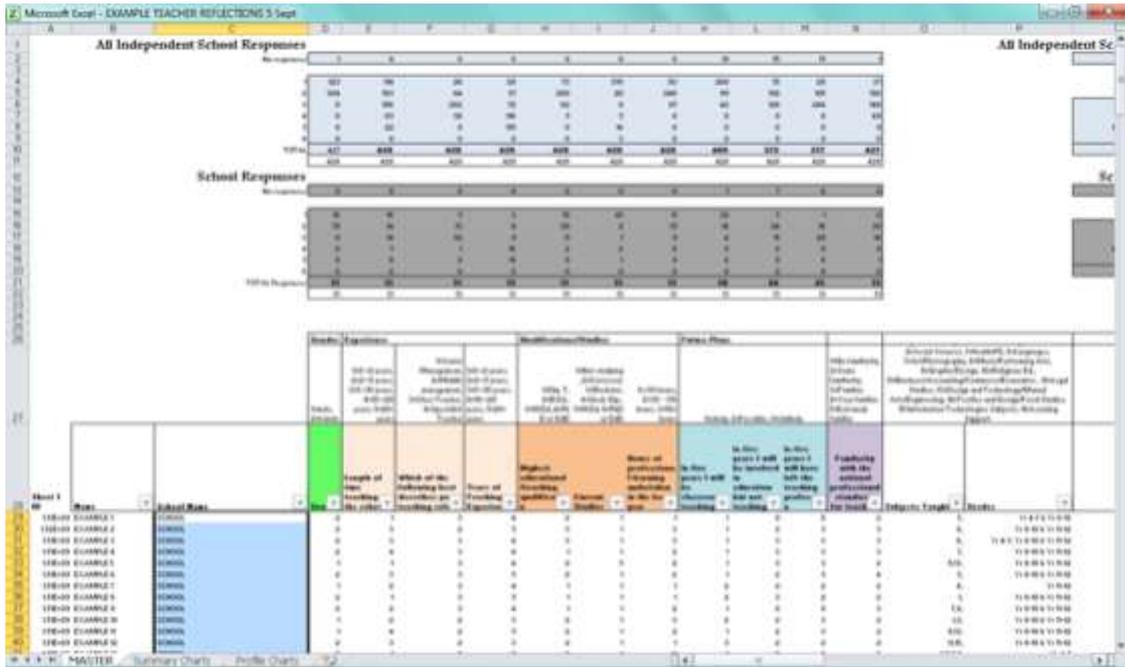


Figure 11-5 : Screenshot of School Data (Demographic Section)

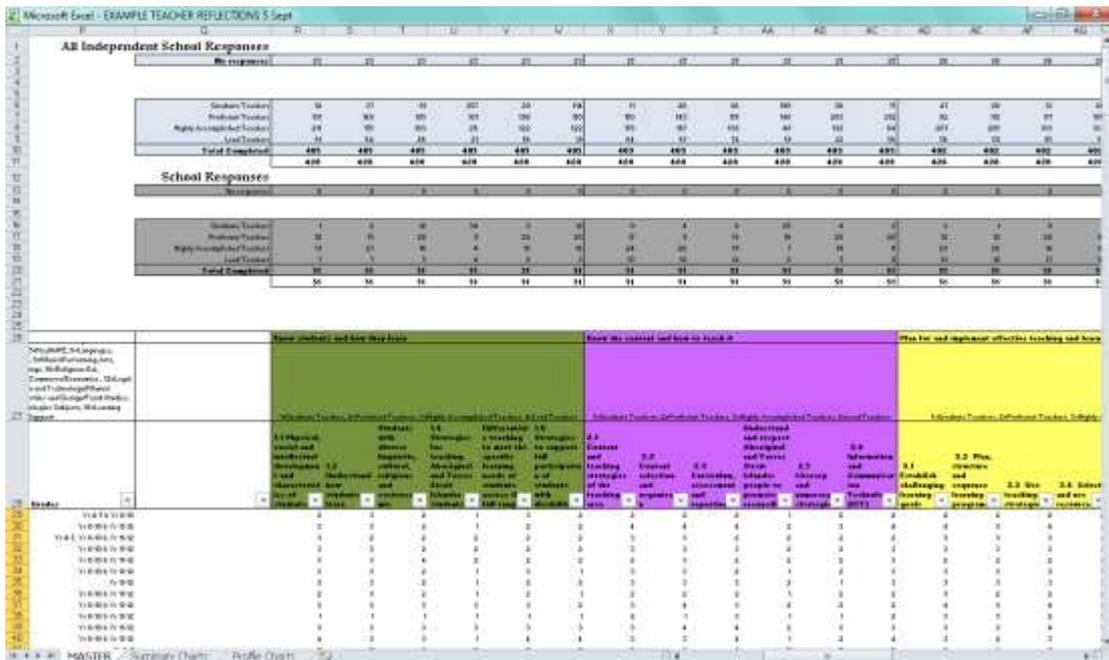


Figure 11-6 : Screenshot of School Data (Standards Section)

When a query (or filter) is on in the Master sheet it links across to the Summary Charts and Profile Charts so that these data sets and graphs are specific to the focus group. For example, if a query is run on early career teachers, the Summary Charts and Profile Charts will show just the results for this group (see Figure 7). Again, it will show the individual school results compared with the full Pilot group.

Microsoft Excel - EXAMPLE TEACHER REFLECTION 5 Sept

All Independent School Responses

School Responses

Teacher	Year Level	Subject	Years of Teaching	Professional Development	Classroom Practice	Student Learning	Professional Learning
Teacher A	Year 10	Mathematics	1	...	...	...	...
Teacher B	Year 10	Mathematics	2	...	...	...	...
Teacher C	Year 10	Mathematics	3	...	...	...	...
Teacher D	Year 10	Mathematics	4	...	...	...	...
Teacher E	Year 10	Mathematics	5	...	...	...	...
Teacher F	Year 10	Mathematics	6	...	...	...	...
Teacher G	Year 10	Mathematics	7	...	...	...	...
Teacher H	Year 10	Mathematics	8	...	...	...	...
Teacher I	Year 10	Mathematics	9	...	...	...	...
Teacher J	Year 10	Mathematics	10	...	...	...	...

Filter on teachers teaching less than 2 years

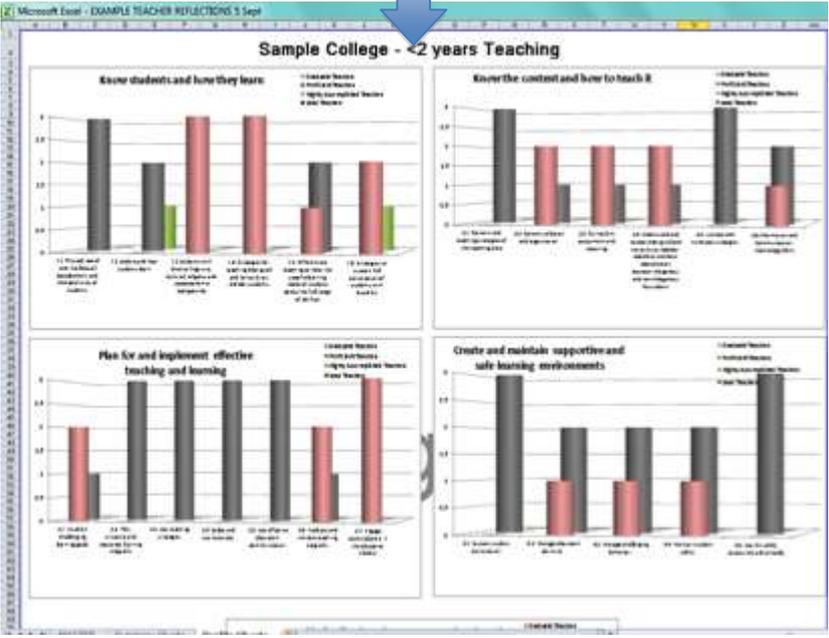
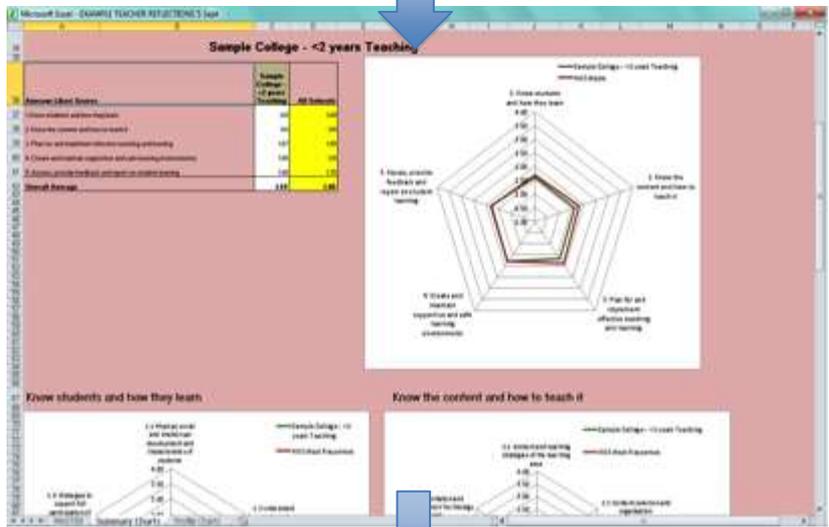


Figure 11-7 : Linked Data and Profile Graphs

It is also possible to run a query on an individual teacher and view the profile of that one teacher (see Figure 8). Figure 9 shows the average scores for this teacher indicating how the teacher rated herself for each Standard.

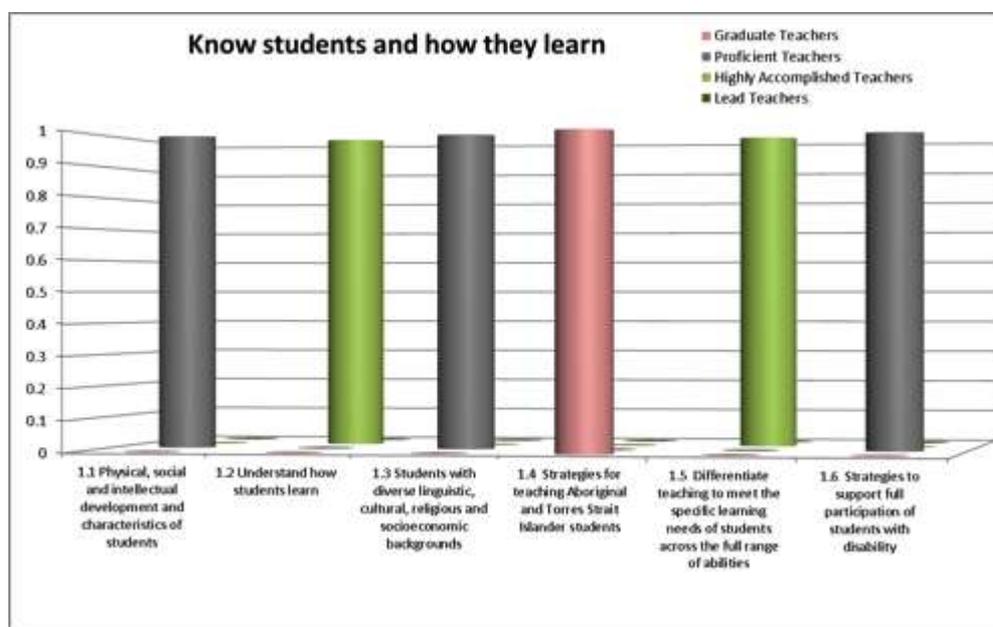


Figure 11-8 : Graph Showing Individual Teacher Profile

Average Likert Scores	Example Teacher	All Schools
1. Know students and how they learn	2.17	2.17
2. Know the content and how to teach it	1.83	1.83
3. Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning	1.71	1.71
4. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments	2.00	2.00
5. Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning	2.00	2.00
Overall Average	1.93	1.93

Figure 11-9 : Summary for Example Teacher

School site visits were conducted to show the school leaders how to use the analysis tool. During this time interviews were conducted to determine how the teachers had engaged with the Self-reflection Tool, how useful school leaders found the process, how they intended to use the data analysis and any issues that they had encountered.

11.4 Results from the Engagement

11.4.1 Data Collection and Management

Data from the Self-reflection Tool was captured via Excel spread sheets and set up for analysis. During site visits records of interviews were kept and broad themes and main points noted.

11.4.2 Results

The following results were gleaned from the interviews and data analysis from the Self-reflection Tool.

11.4.2.1 Research Question 1:

- a. How effectively were project leaders able to work with staff to contextualise the standards?

Note: Contextualising in this instance refers to determining the type of evidence that would demonstrate proficiency (or higher levels) for each standard in their school setting.

The issue of contextualising the Standards was identified as a challenge during site visit interviews. All leaders commented on the need for additional support materials to ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of each standard. At the face to face meeting a full day was spent with school leaders 'unpacking' each Standard, focusing on the Proficient level to identify what the evidence would be appropriate for each Standard. The leaders found this quite challenging and further work was done subsequent to the initial meeting. We found it useful to draw upon the materials produced by the Ontario College of Teachers and the Marzano Institute. These materials provided a good starting point.

Most teachers used the support document (named the Self-Reflection for Professional Growth Planning Guide, see Appendix 2) while completing the Self-Reflection process. Future versions of the tool will have the support materials as part of the process, not as a separate document.

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.

In terms of teachers' familiarity with the Standards, 198 teachers said that they were familiar, very familiar or extremely familiar with the Standards. This represents 46% of the total number of participants. All leaders commented that it would be useful to track the teachers' perceptions over time to determine if there are changes in the teachers' responses as they become more familiar with the Standards or after they are involved in targeted professional learning opportunities.

- b. How well did teachers engage with the tool?

All school leaders identified that it was important to talk about the standards first and how the Self-Reflection Tool would be used. In all school sites emphasis was placed on professional growth planning and how the tool would be used to support the staff in their professional learning based on the Standards.

All leaders commented that in general teachers were very positive about the process. Initially there was concern about whether or not the process would be linked to employment and pay scales. Once teachers trusted that the process was about professional growth planning they had a positive attitude. At one school, teachers sent emails of thanks, commenting that they found the process affirming.

Looking at the data, some leaders have commented that the teachers appear to be under-rating themselves, rather than over-rating. They believe that the teachers have been very frank about their perceptions of their strengths and areas for growth. After looking at the data some leaders identified that they needed to give more positive feedback to teachers about their teaching practices.

The sample group consisted of 429 teachers. Schools requested that the Self-Reflection Tool be set up so that it was possible to complete the process anonymously or with the teacher's name identified. The final data showed that roughly 50% of teachers chose to use their name, while approximately 50% completed the survey anonymously. Now that they have seen how useful the data is, and that teachers trust the process, school leaders have expressed that they would prefer to have the name as a compulsory field.

11.4.2.2 Research Question 2

- a. Did the tool inform future direction for teachers for their own professional learning?

Professional Growth Plans were completed. Teachers identified specific areas in which they would like support and identified strategies for improving these areas. In addition, they identified the support that they might need from the school to achieve their identified goals. All leaders reported that the teachers found the process useful. See Appendix A for Sample Growth Plans.

- b. What patterns emerged within schools and across schools?

The Data Analysis Tool which provides schools profiles has proven to be highly effective for identifying patterns. Through filtering it is possible to create queries across a wide range of combinations. It is also possible to compare the perceptions of groups of teachers. The potential number of combinations for drawing patterns is large and it is not possible to include all them in this report. The following list shows some of the patterns that emerged:

- 60% of teachers of all teachers surveyed rated themselves at Graduate level for Standard 1.4 (Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students); 45% of teachers felt that they were at Graduate level for Standard 2.4. (Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians). Clearly this is an area of concern given that all teachers should be at the Proficient level.
- 28 teachers surveyed had been teaching for less than two years. This group rated themselves at Proficient Level in only four standards only. See Figures 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14. Of note is that there was a general feeling from school leaders that these teachers had tended to underrate themselves.

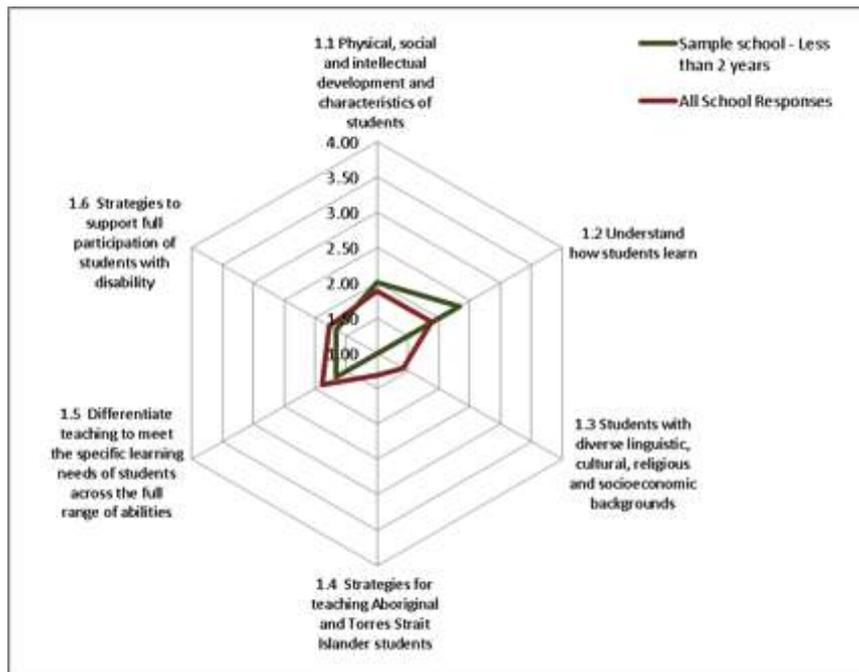


Figure 11-10 : Know students and how they learn

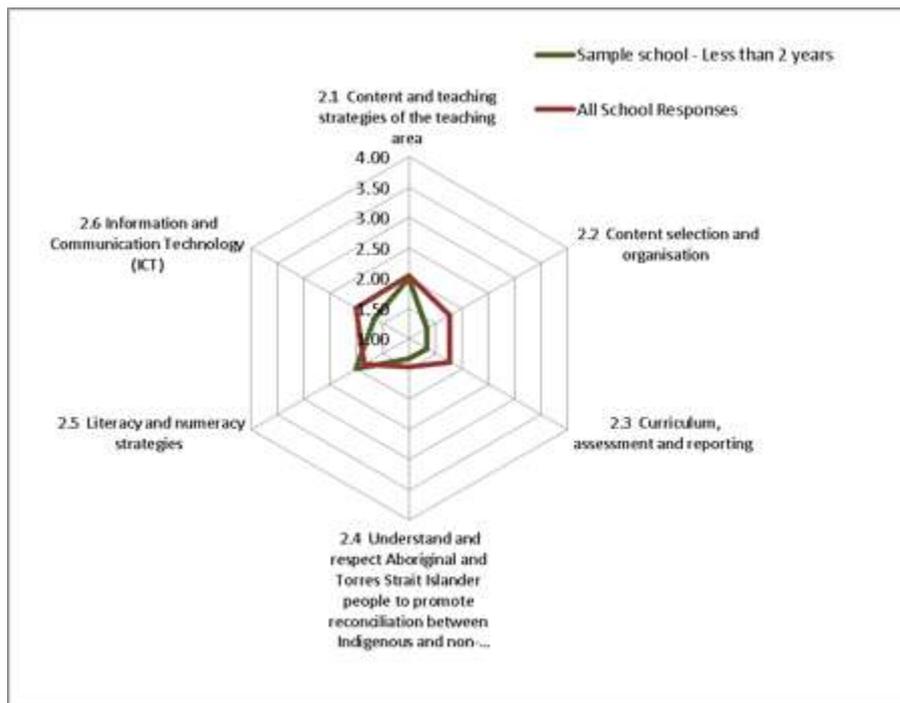


Figure 11-11 : Know the content and how to teach it

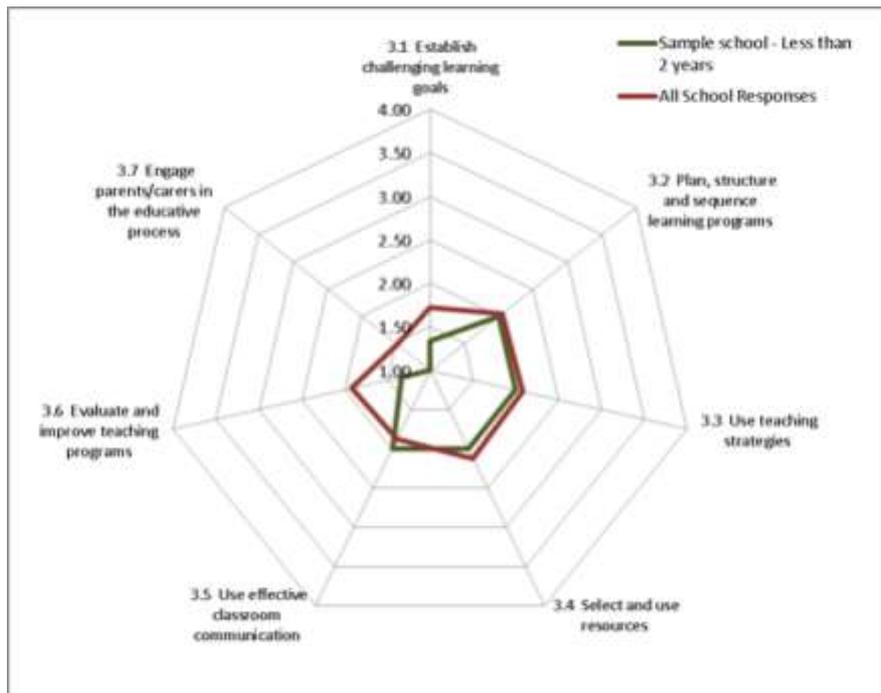


Figure 11-12 : Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning

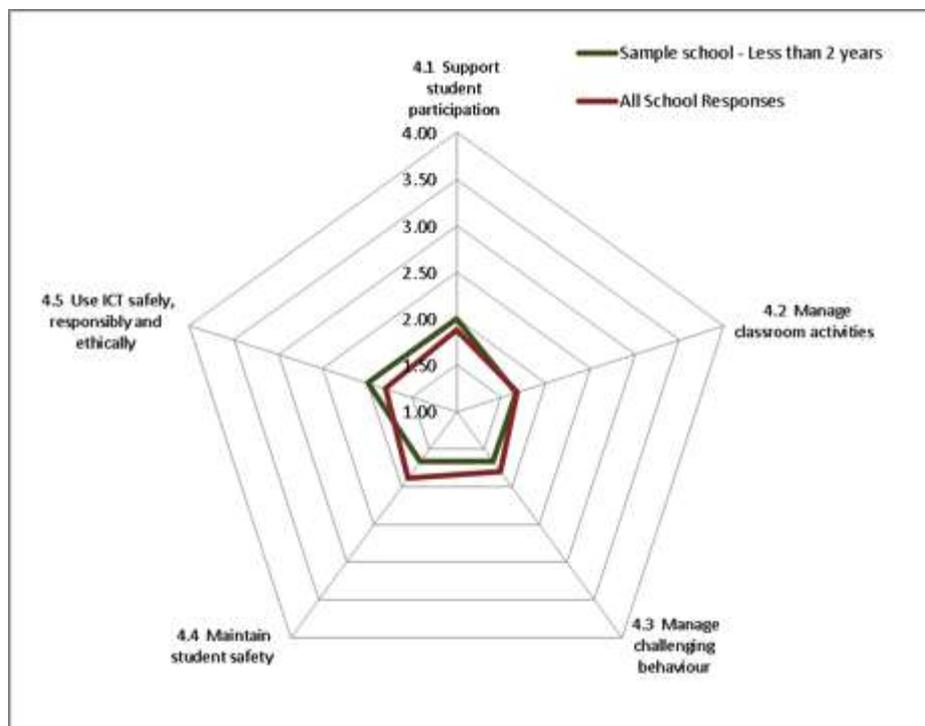


Figure 11-13 : Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments

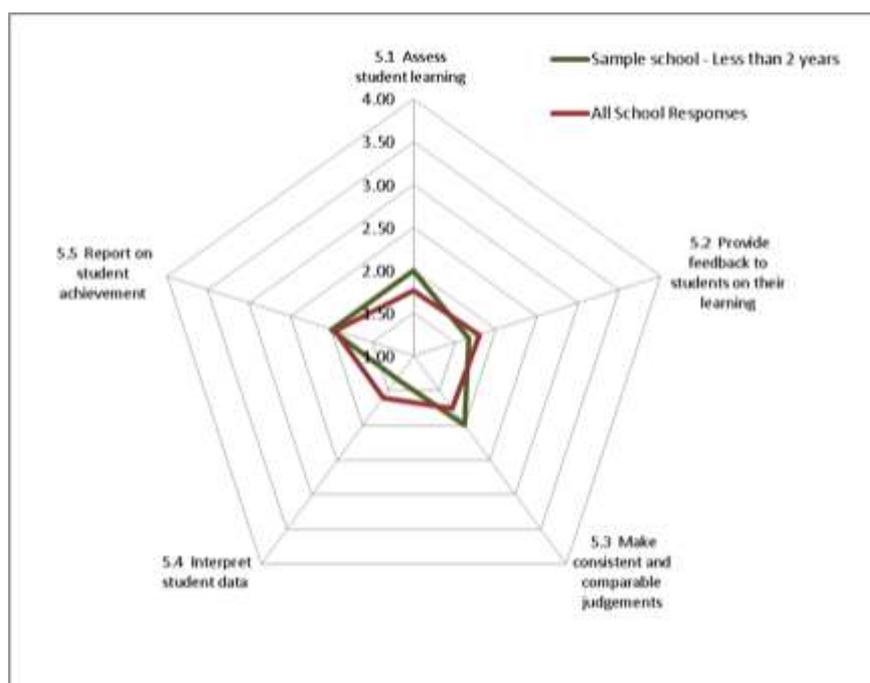


Figure 11-14 : Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning

- 78% of teachers surveyed reported that they have undertaken more than 30 hours of professional learning during 2011. Table 11-3 shows the responses of those teachers who undertook less than 30 hours of professional learning. Significantly many of these teachers rated themselves at Graduate level for several standards. 72.7% of these teachers rated themselves at Graduate level for Standard 1.4.

Table 11-3 - Teachers with less than 30 hours of PD in 2011

Description	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
1.1 Physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students	0.0%	36.4%	54.5%	9.1%
1.2 Understand how students learn	0.0%	36.4%	63.6%	0.0%
1.3 Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds	27.3%	54.5%	18.2%	0.0%
1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students	72.7%	18.2%	0.0%	9.1%
1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students	18.2%	36.4%	36.4%	9.1%

across the full range of abilities

1.6 Strategies to support full participation of students with disability	27.3%	54.5%	9.1%	9.1%
2.1 Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area	0.0%	45.5%	54.5%	0.0%
2.2 Content selection and organisation	9.1%	36.4%	54.5%	0.0%
2.3 Curriculum, assessment and reporting	9.1%	45.5%	36.4%	9.1%
2.4 Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians	63.6%	18.2%	18.2%	0.0%
2.5 Literacy and numeracy strategies	9.1%	63.6%	27.3%	0.0%
2.6 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	0.0%	63.6%	18.2%	18.2%
3.1 Establish challenging learning goals	9.1%	18.2%	72.7%	0.0%
3.2 Plan, structure and sequence learning programs	0.0%	36.4%	54.5%	9.1%
3.3 Use teaching strategies	0.0%	54.5%	45.5%	0.0%
3.4 Select and use resources	0.0%	54.5%	36.4%	9.1%
3.5 Use effective classroom communication	9.1%	45.5%	36.4%	9.1%
3.6 Evaluate and improve teaching programs	9.1%	45.5%	36.4%	9.1%
3.7 Engage parents/carers in the educative process	18.2%	54.5%	18.2%	9.1%

4.1 Support student participation	0.0%	63.6%	27.3%	9.1%
4.2 Manage classroom activities	9.1%	45.5%	45.5%	0.0%
4.3 Manage challenging behaviour	9.1%	54.5%	36.4%	0.0%
4.4 Maintain student safety	18.2%	36.4%	45.5%	0.0%
4.5 Use ICT safely, responsibly and ethically	0.0%	72.7%	18.2%	9.1%
5.1 Assess student learning	0.0%	72.7%	27.3%	0.0%
5.2 Provide feedback to students on their learning	0.0%	72.7%	27.3%	0.0%
5.3 Make consistent and comparable judgements	0.0%	63.6%	27.3%	9.1%
5.4 Interpret student data	9.1%	54.5%	27.3%	9.1%
5.5 Report on student achievement	0.0%	54.5%	36.4%	9.1%

- 67 teachers from the survey group of 429 hold a Masters, PhD or EdD. A further 19 teachers are currently studying for a higher degree. These teachers typically rated themselves as Highly Accomplished or Lead in most standards. Although, several teachers within the sample school shown in Figure 15 indicated that they were at a Graduate level for some standards.

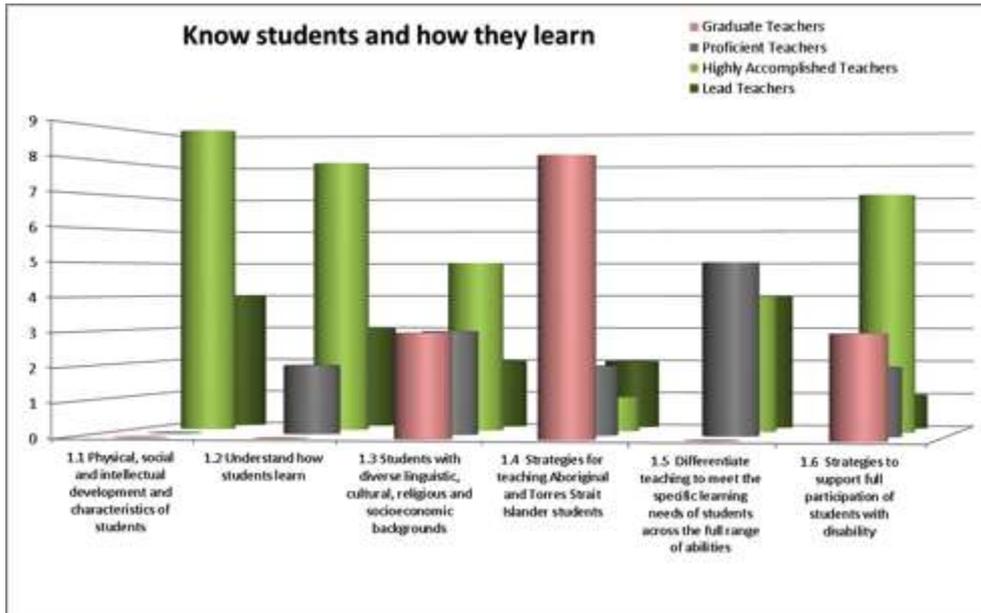


Figure 11-15 : Sample School Response

The Data Analysis tool enables schools to see patterns within departments. For example, Figure 16 shows the responses English teachers gave in relation to planning for and implementing effective teaching and learning. Figure 17 shows the responses from teachers of mathematics. Mathematics teachers at this particular school appear less confident generally and in particular in relation to engaging parents/carers in the education process.

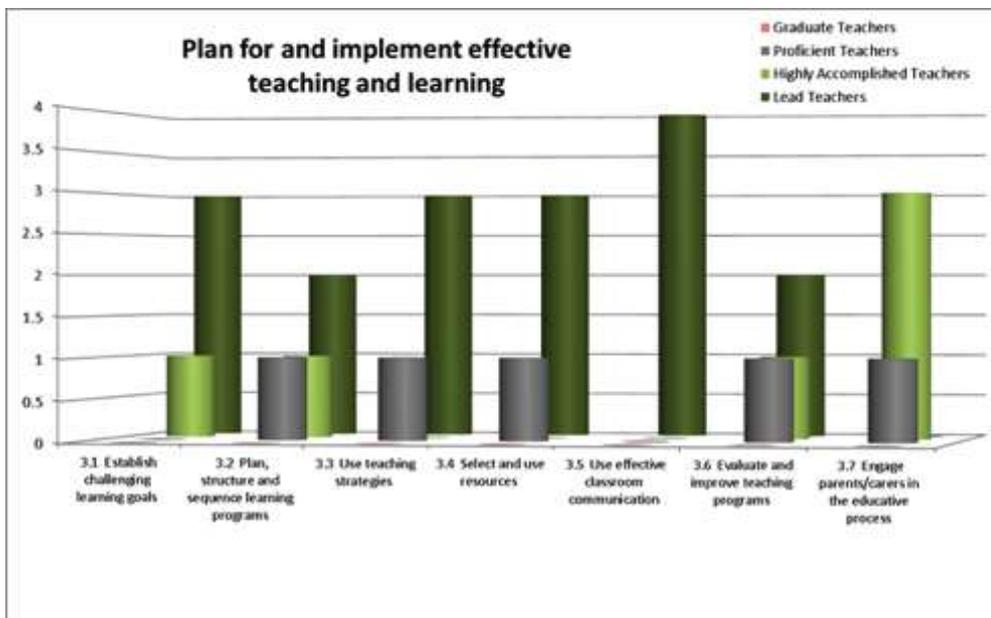


Figure 11-16 : English Teachers' Responses from Sample School

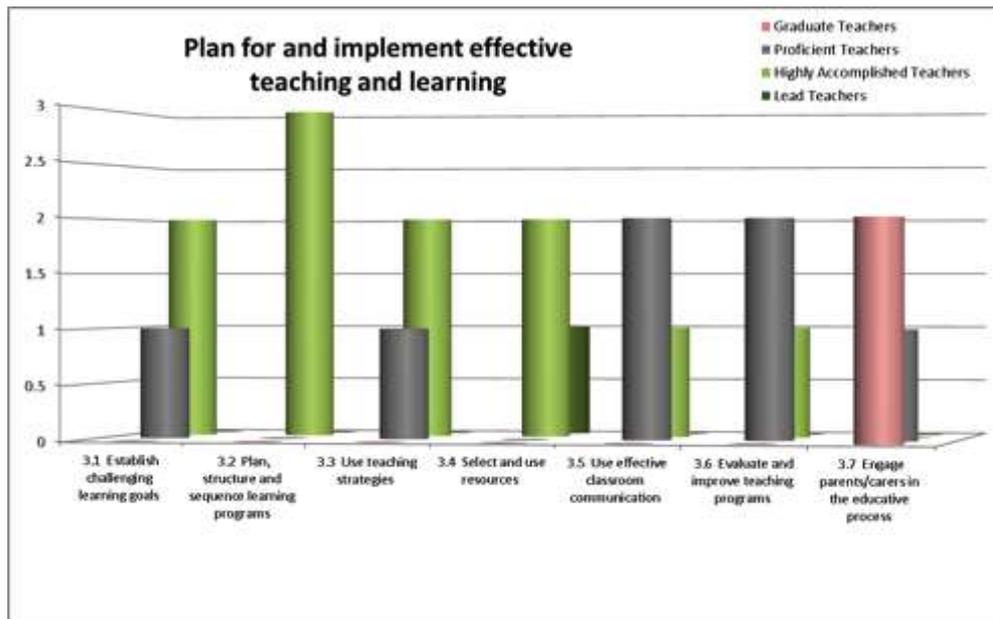


Figure 11-17 : Mathematics Teachers' Responses from Sample School

It is also possible to filter on specific standards. For example, looking at Focus Area 2.6, which describes the use of ICT, it is possible to get information about teachers who feel less confident in this area. Amongst the teachers surveyed a total of 19 teachers rated themselves as being at Graduate level. Table 11-4 shows the teaching experience of these teachers. Interestingly, there is a spread of teachers across the years of teaching experience, although most teachers are in the more than 10 years range.

Table 11-4 - Teachers rated as Graduate level for Focus Area 2.6

Number of teachers	Years of teaching experience
2	Less than 2 years
2	More than 2 years but less than 5 years
2	More than 5 years but less than 10 years
6	More than 10 years but less than 20 years
7	More than 20 years

The demographic section provided some interesting information. For example, 28 teachers from the sample group believe that it is likely that they will leave the profession in the next five years. Seven of these teachers have been teaching less than 10 years.

- c. How useful did schools find the data for strategic planning?

All school leaders commented that the data will be very useful for strategic planning. They have identified the following uses:

- the identification of specific areas for whole school Professional Learning
- an opportunity to target specific areas for individuals and ways to support staff
- a way to link staff members for mentoring
- identifying career pathways and opportunities for staff
- identifying possible reasons why some staff feel reluctant to take on new initiatives
- differentiation of Professional Learning to meet groups of teachers or departments
- a starting point for conversations about performance and a way to offer focused, positive feedback
- alignment with existing processes

d. How did ISQ use the information?

ISQ has been able to use the information to identify specific areas that need to be included in the Professional Learning Program for the sector. A specific example is that ISQ will be offering training in the use of the Indigenous Bandscales which help teachers to identify the language and literacy needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Another focus will be the practical integration of ICT in all learning areas.

11.4.3 Summary

Contextualising the Standards in terms of what evidence, in their school setting, would demonstrate proficiency was identified as a challenge during site visit interviews. 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 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.

11.5 Resources

Several resources were developed for the Pilot. This section gives a brief description of each resource.

11.5.1 Self-reflection Tool

The Self-reflection Tool is an online survey that steps teachers through a series of questions. The questions are set up so that it is possible to gain demographic information about the individual teacher and then gather information about how the teacher rates their competencies against the National Professional Standards for Teachers.

The survey is then used as a basis for individual professional learning growth planning. Alongside this, schools can obtain collective data to better inform professional development needs and capitalise on the strengths of their teaching staff. By providing this tool, individual teachers along with their school, can embark on a journey of professional self-reflection and improvement of practice that will positively affect teachers’ skills and pedagogy and student learning experiences, leading to higher student achievement.

11.5.2 Data Analysis Tool

The Data Analysis tool allows data from the online survey to be collated in a series of linked spread sheets so that an array of queries and profile graphs can be generated. The data sets can be set up so that schools can see the results of their own school but also see the overall results from the rest of the sample (429 participants). It is also possible to see a profile for an individual teacher.

11.5.3 Self-reflection for Professional Growth Planning Guide

In order to assist teachers to understand what evidence might be indicative of Proficiency level at each Standard the Self-reflection for Professional Growth Planning Guide was developed in conjunction with school leaders (see Figure 18).

STANDARDS	DESCRIPTION	TEACHERS	STUDENTS
1.1: Physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students	Use teaching strategies based on knowledge of students’ physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics to improve student learning.	Create a learning environment that supports the characteristics of the learners.	Demonstrate confidence in their capacity to learn and succeed (risk taking, willingness to try new tasks and share learning with others).
		Analyse student data to design, develop and evaluate personalised activities to address students’ diverse learning styles.	Acknowledge that their teacher knows them.
		Make choices based on prior assessment of student learning, interests and/or learning preferences.	Have opportunities to identify preferred learning style and/or environment (individually in a quiet location away from others, in an active area of the room, as part of a group).
		Use knowledge of students collected to support the teaching and learning environment.	
1.2: Understand how students learn	Structure teaching programs using research and collegial advice about how students learn.	Develop a learning environment that is challenging, developmentally appropriate for all students and organised to optimise teaching/learning time and time on task.	Demonstrate metacognitive strategies in thinking processes.
		Share knowledge and effective instructional practices (through co-planning, co-teaching, mentoring and coaching).	Engage with the learning activities/experiences.
		Maximise time on task during class time.	Maximise time on task during class time.
1.3: Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds	Design and implement teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.	Intentionally support students whose first culture/language differs from the language of instruction.	Explore, make connections to the world and apply their learning using resources that reflect diverse backgrounds, languages and cultures.
		Work together with students to build a collaborative and safe learning environment free from discriminatory bias.	Contribute to the building of a classroom and school community that respects the diversity of all learners.
		Strategically use instructional practices to meet the diverse learning needs of students.	See themselves, their culture and interests reflected in their learning environment. Work effectively and respectfully in diverse teams.

Page 1

Figure 11-18 : Section of Guide

11.5.4 Professional Growth Plan template

A template for professional growth planning was developed in conjunction with school leaders. Professional Growth Planning is a process of self-directed inquiry focused on what teachers need to learn and do to improve their practice, resulting in improved student learning. In this process, teachers engage in self-reflection against the Standards. First, an area of need is identified. Next, a goal is established to address the need and strategies are identified to address the need. Finally, teachers are asked to identify the support that they may require and the criteria for indicating success.

11.5.5 Findings and Outcomes

This Pilot had two research aims:

- To examine the use of the Standards in planning directions and establishing priorities for teachers' professional learning across a range of settings and contexts.
- To investigate if self-assessment against the Standards identifies any patterns that can inform future planning at a school and sector level.

From these aims research questions were developed. In this section the findings from the broad aims will be discussed in terms of implications and recommendations at a school level, sector level or national level.

11.5.6 Implications and Recommendations of Aim 1

The first aim was to examine the use of the Standards in planning directions and establishing priorities for teachers' professional learning across a range of settings and contexts.

Two research questions were a focus:

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

Each will be discussed in terms of implications at a school level. From there the discussion will be taken to a sector level and then national level.

11.5.6.1 School level

The school leaders found that aligning the standards to their current practices was not difficult. Indeed, 50% of the schools had already been engaging to some degree with the standards prior to the Pilot. However, all school leaders mentioned that it was important for all teachers to understand what each of the Standards meant and that 'unpacking' the Standards in terms of what evidence would suggest proficiency was challenging.

In some cases, school leaders believed that teachers had rated themselves too low because they had 'expert' knowledge and consequently a higher expectation of what is necessary to be what they considered 'proficient' or 'highly accomplished'. Before entering into the process it is

important therefore that time is spent with teachers discussing each of the Standards so that a common understanding is held.

All school leaders reported that teachers engaged well with the self-reflection process. Many commented that teachers had found it affirming because teachers rarely get clear feedback about their teaching practices. A recommendation for schools is that they build this opportunity for feedback into their systems.

11.5.6.2 Sector level

The implications of the above discussion for the Independent sector highlights the support that school leaders may require in the future. This support could be in providing different models to school leaders of ways to provide feedback to teachers or processes for engaging teachers with the Standards. These could be built into current leadership programs that are currently offered.

11.5.6.3 National level

Teachers need to understand the requirements of each standard. The work that AITSL is planning around 'unpacking' the standards and developing video clips as illustrations is essential. This work will help sectors to support school leaders and teachers.

11.5.7 Implications and Recommendations of Aim 2

The second aim was to investigate if self-assessment against the Standards identifies any patterns that can inform future planning at a school and sector level.

Three research questions were a focus:

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?

Each will be discussed in terms of implications at a school level. From there the discussion will be taken to a sector level and then national level.

11.5.7.1 School level

All school leaders reported that the self-reflection process was really important as the beginning of the discussions that they could have with teachers. They all believed that the Self-reflection Tool was useful in making the process less time consuming for teachers and easy to manage.

All school leaders believed that the data from the tool was very useful and that they would use it for strategic planning in the future.

Compared to some of the current practices at schools where hard copies are kept of reflections, the Self-reflection Tool made it much easier to school leaders to collect and analyse

the data to determine patterns and target specific areas for professional learning. It will be up to schools to align their current practices with the new process if they wish.

11.5.7.2 Sector level

At a sector level the tool needs further refinement so that it can be used more widely across schools and still maintain the flexibility to meet the diverse contexts and settings of the sector.

Schools will need support in how to use the data for strategic planning. This could be included in leadership programs that are currently offered.

The data available to ISQ from the process are very valuable in terms of strategic planning for the best ways to support individual schools or areas that could be a focus for the whole sector in terms of professional learning.

11.5.7.3 National level

Sectors need to be supported so that they can provide tools and models to assist school leaders and teachers in the self-reflection and growth planning process. It is important that systems that are developed are flexible so that they meet the needs of the various contexts and settings.

11.5.8 Forward Planning

ISQ is planning to refine the Self-reflection and Data Analysis tools so that all member schools can access them.

ISQ will continue to look for ways to best support school leaders with the implementation of the Standards and monitor new developments.

11.5.9 References

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12 NSW DEC

12.1 Introduction

12.1.1 Setting the Scene

In this pilot study, NSW DEC set out to create an evidence base that would inform the development of strategies to ensure teacher quality and the professional learning required to engage its teachers in the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*, particularly at the career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead.

Within NSW DEC, more than 49,000 permanent full time teachers are responsible for the education of over 760,000 students in over 2,200 government schools, including pre-schools, primary and infants schools, central and community schools, schools for specific purposes, secondary schools and colleges and education centres.

NSW DEC, as the largest teacher employing agency in NSW, is committed to providing all students in NSW government schools with a first class education.

Contemporary research provides clear evidence that effective teachers are the key to ensuring high performing students: Classroom teachers have the greatest in-school effect on student achievement. (Hattie, 2008).

NSW DEC's commitment to improving outcomes for students is underpinned by high quality school leaders, high quality teachers and high quality teaching in classrooms.

Currently this translates to a strategic, system wide focus on:

- supporting New Scheme Teachers to gain and maintain accreditation at Professional Competence with the NSW Institute of Teachers
- providing high level, quality assured professional learning that ensures teachers are supported and equipped to deliver quality teaching that will really make a difference to improving student achievement across the state
- providing a high quality continuum of professional learning for aspiring, newly appointed and experienced school leaders.

NSW DEC's structures, capabilities and networks provided a robust platform that enabled the effective implementation of this pilot study.

NSW DEC has demonstrated its strong research capacity through a number of studies including one that tested the validity, efficacy and value-add of the *National Professional Standard for Principals*.

12.1.2 Context

NSW DEC is an endorsed provider of registered professional learning with the NSW Institute of Teachers for all elements and stages of the NSW Institute of Teachers *Professional Teaching Standards*.

New Scheme Teachers in NSW (that is, those teachers appointed after October 2004 in all NSW schools) are required to achieve and maintain accreditation at Professional Competence with the NSW Institute of Teachers. This condition of employment is strategically supported by NSW DEC through the provision of equitable state wide access to quality registered professional learning.

Of NSW DEC's approximately 49,000 permanent teachers⁴ and over 40,000 casual or temporary teachers⁵, there are over 27,000 teachers⁶ seeking and/or maintaining accreditation with the NSW Institute of Teachers at the key stage of Professional Competence.

New Scheme Teachers are required to demonstrate Professional Competence across the seven elements described in the NSW Institute of Teachers *Professional Teaching Standards*. This involves demonstrating the ability to integrate and apply the knowledge and skills that underpin the *Professional Teaching Standards* and create, on a consistent basis, an environment where learning opportunities for all students are optimised.

Teachers accredited at Professional Competence are required to complete a minimum of 100 hours of professional development over 5 years to maintain their accreditation. The mandatory requirement to complete 50 hours of registered professional development and 50 hours of teacher identified professional development in each maintenance of accreditation phase is enabled by NSW DEC's provision of quality assured, registered professional learning aligned to the NSW Institute of Teachers *Professional Teaching Standards*.

NSW DEC is committed to raising student achievement through its support for teaching excellence. A key focus of its ongoing work is ensuring state wide equitable access to quality professional learning that is aligned to the NSW Institute of Teachers *Professional Teaching Standards*.

Currently, NSW DEC provides approximately 800 registered courses and programs aligned to the NSW Institute of Teachers *Professional Teaching Standards*. In the last twelve months, NSW DEC has delivered over 7,000 sessions of registered professional learning state wide covering all elements of the NSW Institute of Teachers *Professional Teaching Standards*.

All courses and programs are quality assured through a rigorous process of development, refinement and registration through NSW DEC's Professional Learning Course Registration Committee. The development of registered professional learning is underpinned by robust criteria where there is clear articulation of the standards, the standards are aligned to the course or program content, the delivery strategy is quality assured and the course or program is evaluated against the standards.

⁴ Source: NSW DEC Personnel System March 2011

⁵ Source: NSW DEC Casual. Directorate statistics 2010

⁶ Source: NSW Institute of Teachers November 2011

NSW DEC has also developed a number of initiatives designed to build teacher capacity and leadership, including the creation of Teacher Mentor and Highly Accomplished Teacher positions.

Teacher Mentors

The *Teacher Mentor Program* is a strategic program that utilises evidence based best practice in teaching and leadership to develop the quality of early career teachers. The program is a NSW DEC teacher quality initiative which provides Teacher Mentors to schools showing trends of significant numbers of new permanent teacher appointments. The current program has 50 full time equivalent Teacher Mentors working in 92 schools across all 10 regions in NSW.

Teacher Mentors are outstanding classroom teachers who are also highly skilled in guiding early career teachers to achieve and maintain accreditation at Professional Competence. The position is a two year temporary appointment at the level of head teacher.

Teacher Mentors guide the induction and professional learning of early career teachers and play a pivotal role within the school in ensuring cohesion between the teaching standards, teaching practice, professional learning and school targets. The *Teacher Mentor Program* scaffolds professional learning, reflective practice and collaborative planning that align to current research in effective teaching.

Competent teachers inquire into the effectiveness of their practice every day as they observe which parts of lessons students appear to understand and what continues to cause them difficulty. Competent leaders support and assist teachers to inquire through structured opportunities to reflect by reviewing relevant assessment information and considering the effectiveness of practice. (Timperley, 2011)

Teacher Mentors initiate strategies that include: demonstrating quality teaching practices, team teaching and planning effective classroom practices, observing lessons, learning from assessment, providing feedback and supporting early career teachers to identify and achieve teaching goals. These strategies ensure that the process of accreditation with the NSW Institute of Teachers at the key stage of Professional Competence is a rigorous and valuable experience for New Scheme Teachers.

Teacher Mentor responsibilities include:

- supporting early career teachers to engage with the NSW Institute of Teachers *Professional Teaching Standards* and demonstrate them in their school context
- assisting the principal and school leadership team to develop a school environment which is supportive of all new teachers appointed to the school
- aligning, developing and delivering professional learning for early career teachers that is aligned to the NSW Institute of Teachers *Professional Teaching Standards* and focuses on quality teaching practices
- supporting schools in developing professional learning plans for early career teachers that align to school plans.

The introduction of the *Teacher Mentor Program*, where planned professional learning supports the identified professional learning needs of early career teachers, is provided to schools where there are significant numbers of new permanent teacher appointments. This program, in combination with other NSW DEC initiatives, has attributed to the low separation rate of 3.4% for teachers in their first year of service⁷ from NSW DEC in 2010.

Highly Accomplished Teachers

The Highly Accomplished Teacher position is a new classification in NSW DEC created initially under the *Smarter Schools National Partnership on Improving Teacher Quality*. This position is designed to provide an opportunity for high quality teachers to remain in a classroom based role while working with colleagues to enhance and improve teacher quality. As at October 2011, 108 Highly Accomplished Teachers have been appointed to primary, secondary and central schools across all 10 regions in NSW.

Highly Accomplished Teachers are excellent practitioners who model high quality teaching for colleagues across their school and lead other teachers in the development and refinement of teaching practice to improve student learning outcomes.

To support the development of teacher quality, Highly Accomplished Teachers:

- lead and support the teaching and assessment practices of early career and experienced teachers
- work across the school to improve teaching practice through targeted data analysis
- support other teachers in commencing, achieving and maintaining accreditation at the various key stages of the NSW Institute of Teachers *Professional Teaching Standards*, including the voluntary stages of Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership
- develop and lead school based professional learning in their schools and clusters
- support teachers in other schools by providing advice and support on quality teaching practices to cluster schools.

In school Centres for Excellence, Highly Accomplished Teachers have a strong focus on supporting professional experience placements for pre-service teachers and developing University partnerships. Highly Accomplished Teachers in Reform Extension Initiative Schools and schools participating in the *Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership* have a significant focus in leading literacy and numeracy school based professional learning.

During their two year temporary appointment, Highly Accomplished Teachers are required to commence their personal submission for accreditation at either Professional Accomplishment or Professional Leadership. They are required to have completed a successful submission for accreditation by the end of their temporary appointment.

⁷ Source: NSW DEC Personnel System

12.2 Research Questions

NSW DEC undertook the Recognising, Building and Ensuring Teacher Quality pilot study to:

- utilise the system's considerable knowledge base in relation to large scale, state wide implementation of professional teaching standards
- acknowledge its extensive literature and system data related to effective teacher professional learning
- utilise its state wide networks
- build on the experiences and understandings gleaned from the pilot study *Building Leadership Capacity for Tomorrow* to test the validity and efficacy of the *National Professional Standard for Principals*
- inform the transition from the existing NSW Institute of Teachers *Professional Teaching Standards* framework to the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*.

The pilot study was designed to provide an evidence base that would strategically inform:

- the way in which NSW DEC engages teachers in the achievement of the career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead in the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*
- NSW DEC's understanding of the professional learning needed to support the development of teacher capacity at the career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead and how the Standards can be used to develop evidence of best practice in schools.

Throughout the pilot study, all actions were focussed on three research questions. Although refined and sharpened, particularly during the scoping and consultation phases, these three questions unified and directed NSW DEC's investigations:

- 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?

12.3 Methodology

NSW DEC has extensive experience in developing surveys, conducting research, analysing results and developing professional learning programs, guides, systems and processes to meet teacher needs and accountabilities within a standards framework. This experience and capability was utilised in conducting the pilot study particularly, in the development of the survey and the analysis of its findings.

The pilot study's design utilised mixed-method participatory methodology, gathering both qualitative and quantitative data (refer Appendix 1). These included:

- small group consultations held with key stakeholders in the formative stages of pilot scoping and early survey development

- consultation with key stakeholders including principal groups and the Professional Learning Endorsement Advisory Committee to test survey methodology and design implementation strategies
- focus groups with representatives from key groups of teachers including Teacher Mentors, Highly Accomplished Teachers and identified 'expert' teachers to trial the survey and provide rich, qualitative responses through facilitated group discussions
- an online survey designed to gather qualitative and quantitative data, in relation to the pilot's three research questions.

NSW DEC conducted a review of literature relating to effective teacher professional learning strategies to develop teacher and school leader capacity. This review included consideration of the substantial research regarding effective professional learning that has been conducted within NSW DEC.

Within NSW DEC, the Professional Learning and Leadership Development Directorate has surveyed schools and teachers regarding professional learning annually since 2005. The annual survey analyses school professional learning priorities and the impact of professional learning strategies across over 2,200 NSW government schools. Survey findings have informed aspects of the pilot's focus and development.

12.3.1 Small Group Consultations (Phase 1)

NSW DEC engaged with a range of key stakeholders during the scoping phase of the pilot study. This included the NSW Primary Principals' Association, NSW Secondary Principals' Council, regional and state office directors and school education directors.

12.3.2 Formal Consultation (Phase 2)

A formal consultation was held on 11 October 2011 (Appendix 1) with 20 invited representatives from the:

- NSW Primary Principals' Association
- NSW Secondary Principals' Council
- Professional Learning Endorsement Advisory Committee
- senior regional officers with professional learning portfolio responsibility
- officers from the Professional Learning and Leadership Development and Human Resources Directorates.

The purpose of the consultation was to:

- provide more in depth information to stakeholders about the pilot and seek support for the survey's implementation
- seek feedback about the nature and quality of the survey to assist in refining it
- capture deeper information from stakeholders in relation to attitudes regarding the issues posed by the survey.

The Director, Professional Learning and Leadership Development and Manager, Teacher Learning led the consultation using questions from the draft survey (Appendices 2 and 3).

Primary and secondary principals and regional and state officers engaged in facilitated structured discussion to refine and quality assure the survey tool.

The consultation successfully engaged principals and regional and state officers with the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* and assisted in reframing aspects of the survey.

12.3.3 Focus group consultation (Phase 2)

A focus group consultation was held on 18 October 2011 with 30 primary and secondary teacher representatives including Highly Accomplished Teachers, Teacher Mentors, and 'expert' teachers. The Director, Professional Learning and Leadership Development and Manager, Teacher Learning led the consultation (Appendix 4). These participants were likely to have engaged with the higher accreditation levels either by way of seeking accreditation or supporting/supervising a colleague seeking accreditation (Appendix 5).

The purpose of the consultation was to inform participants about the pilot study, trial the online survey and seek support for the implementation of the survey in their respective school contexts.

12.3.4 Video Conference (Phase 2)

A state wide video conference was held on 19 October 2011 with 24 Teacher Mentors and Highly Accomplished Teachers largely from rural and regional areas of NSW (Appendix 6). The Manager, Teacher Learning led the video conference.

The purpose of the video conference was to provide information about the pilot study and promote understanding about its purpose, facilitate participation in the survey and support participants with a scaffolded process for introducing and encouraging others to engage with the survey.

Participants reported that they valued the opportunity to engage in more detail with the online survey's purpose and design (Appendix 7 and 8).

12.3.5 Electronic Communication Support (Phase 3)

The online survey and school support materials were distributed to all participants engaged in the consultations and regional and school education directors. The information provided detailed advice about survey implementation in their context, including a link to the Professional Learning and Leadership Development Directorate website, as well as a PowerPoint presentation to assist in contextualising the survey for participants. Documents outlined the pilot study's background, purpose and key questions (Appendices 8, 9, 10 and 11).

The NSW Primary Principals' Association and NSW Secondary Principals' Council distributed the information to all schools.

12.3.6 Implementation of the Online Survey (Phase 3)

The online survey was designed to gather valuable information from key groups within NSW DEC, including school leaders, Highly Accomplished Teachers, Teacher Mentors, experienced teachers and early career teachers.

The online survey instrument used a range of questioning techniques including multiple choice, yes/no/unsure, rating scales and text responses.

The survey was organised into three sections:

- Section 1 **General Information**: consisted of 16 questions focussed on collecting demographic and general information
- Section 2 **Identifying professional learning needs**: consisted of 8 questions aimed at informing decision making to support the design of teacher professional learning
- Section 3 **Engaging with the Standards**: consisted of 5 questions seeking information to support the implementation of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* in the context of NSW DEC schools.

On 20 October 2011 the online survey was made available on the Teacher Learning section of the Professional Learning and Leadership Development Directorate website.

Between 20 October and 31 October 2011, teachers, school executive and staff from regional and state office accessed the online survey with 710 respondents completing it.

12.4 Results from the Engagement

12.4.1 Data collection and management

Qualitative data was collected from participants during the structured discussions in the formal and focus group consultations. Quantitative and qualitative responses to survey questions were recorded through the online facility.

Confidentiality was maintained at all times with copies of results in electronic and paper form stored confidentially.

12.4.2 Analysis of the data

Initial analysis of the qualitative data began after the formal consultation on 11 October 2011. The results of the formal consultation informed both the development of the questions for the focus group consultation and the online survey. Analysis of the data from the focus group consultation and video conference began on 20 October 2011.

The online survey was designed to gather state wide data from a cross section of teachers and school leaders in a consistent way to provide insights into the research questions posed. The survey was finalised on 16 October 2011 and made available on 20 October 2011.

The analysis of the survey data from 710 respondents began on 1 November 2011 and was completed on 10 November 2011.

12.4.2.1 Analytical procedures

The survey had three sections and was designed to take 20 to 30 minutes to complete online.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse and interpret each variable. Descriptive statistics 'are those which summarise patterns in the responses of people in a sample'. De Vaus (1995)

suggests that descriptive statistics require the most imagination and skill and are most productive in terms of understanding any phenomenon.

In this pilot study, where the level of measurement involved nominal variables such as position, location and school classification, the data analysis commonly appears in the form of percentage distributions and central tendencies.

For some variables where it was possible to quantify precisely the differences between categories (De Vaus, 1995), the mean was employed as a method to highlight tendencies. In cases where it was deemed necessary to show the responses for each variable, the dataset is depicted as a bar graph or table.

For a number of key questions in the survey, further comments were sought from respondents. A selection of comments is included in the report where they highlighted key issues relating to those questions and provided further insight into the views of participants.

12.4.3 Results

12.4.3.1 Formal consultation

Qualitative data gathered from this structured consultation with principals revealed a number of overall themes regarding the implementation of, engagement with, and system implications in relation to the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*.

From group discussion as to the most effective ways to support teachers in the certification process, principals identified a need for:

- infrastructure, support and advice from system leaders
- a system wide approach to meeting professional learning needs in relation to both gaining and maintaining certification
- consistency and equity in the certification process across states
- the need for strong engagement from the school leadership team.

Principals identified that teachers would engage with the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* to:

- raise the profile of the teaching profession
- focus on the core business of teaching and learning that would result in improved student learning outcomes
- participate in professional learning linked to a standards framework
- embed the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* into professional learning plans at school and individual level
- gain permanency of employment
- enhance career progression.

Principals identified that the rigor of the certification process is a potential negative factor in influencing teachers' decisions to undertake voluntary certification if they were not adequately supported at a school level.

12.4.3.2 Focus group consultation

Qualitative data collected from the focus group consultation has been linked to the three research questions posed in the pilot:

1. 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?

Focus group discussions revealed that a teacher's decision to undertake certification at the voluntary career stages would be impacted largely by perceived benefits and the school culture in which the teacher worked.

Certification and opportunity for promotion were identified as contributing factors to teachers' decisions. The following themes emerged from the focus groups:

- would certification at Highly Accomplished and Lead be linked to promotion at the senior executive level
- many teachers would consider the cost of certification against anticipated financial remuneration
- experienced Existing Teachers will seek certification largely to increase their likelihood of success in pursuing promotional positions.

School and system culture were seen to have a significant impact on a teacher's decision to seek certification. The following themes were evident:

- *New Scheme Teachers will be more likely to continue this process because for them, a culture has been created of being accredited for standards (Teacher Mentor)*
- there has been a 'cultural shift' taking place in schools whereby Existing Teachers will find the process of certification new, while for New Scheme Teachers familiar with the process, it will be an advantage
- working with New Scheme Teachers may be an impetus for Existing Teachers to undertake certification. The support of colleagues who are comfortable with a standards based framework will be of significant value.

Teachers, currently involved in the accreditation process, identified strategies that would result in increased engagement with the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*:

- encouraging individual teachers to be more self regulating
- ensuring that relevant information is easily accessible
- maintaining consistent system wide support
- providing strong school executive support
- creating a school culture of mapping current practice against standards.

We need to ensure a culture of planning and development underpinned by the Professional Teaching Standards. (Highly Accomplished Teacher)

The need for all teachers to embed the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* into all aspects of practice was a commonly explored theme.

It is essential to implement standards across all schools in Australia to ensure teachers are reflective in practice and are able to communicate using common language. (Teacher Mentor)

There was a consensus that teachers would be more likely to engage voluntary certification once more clarification about the process and transition requirements became available.

2. 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?

The key teacher groups agreed that the National Professional Standards for Teachers would be 'a good opportunity for the teaching profession to bring about change' (Teacher Mentor) through professional learning.

We can use Standards to develop and maintain our professional learning plans and professional learning for all colleagues. Standards provide common language, identification of skills set, raises awareness of quality teaching practices, provides basis for school based professional learning. (Highly Accomplished Teacher)

Professional learning for school executive to facilitate the promotion and implementation of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* was seen as imperative.

The importance of a whole school focus on enhancing teacher quality was a theme with participants exploring the important role of school culture in an effective certification process.

Teachers felt that success would be enhanced by the following approaches to professional learning:

- teachers using the Standards to shape their own professional learning pathways based on their own needs and contexts
- the provision of professional learning aligned to the Standards
- more teacher input into whole school planning of professional learning
- embedding Standards into performance management procedures and creating a culture where quality is valued.

3. 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?

Generally, the role of *National Professional Standards for Teachers* in improving teacher quality was seen to be positive.

I believe that the National Professional Standards for Teachers will continue to build on the framework developed by NSWIT Professional Teaching Standards in improving the quality of teaching in classrooms. (Teacher Mentor)

Discussion focussed on the authenticity of the evidence that teachers provide. Themes emerging included:

- requirements regarding evidence will be extremely important in influencing the uptake of voluntary certification

- the importance of evidence being viewed from a holistic perspective in relation to a teacher’s practice.

Assessment of effectiveness needs to come from supervisors/principals - student engagement and growth, planning, teaching and learning rather than a one off observation or collection of documentation. (Deputy principal)

12.4.3.3 Online survey

The results of the survey are organised into the following sections that mirror the pilot study’s research questions:

- demographic information about online survey respondents
- identifying the professional learning needs of teachers in order to develop teacher quality and teacher leadership at the career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead
- investigating how high quality teaching practice can be best evidenced in relation to the implementation of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* within the context of NSW DEC settings
- understanding what will be involved in engaging NSW DEC teachers with the *National Professional Standards Teachers* at the career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead.

12.4.3.3.1 General information about online survey respondents

There were 710 survey respondents representing a range of key groups within NSW DEC. The largest group of respondents identified as classroom teachers (54%), however it needs to be noted that head teachers, assistant principals, specialist teachers, Teacher Mentors and Highly Accomplished Teachers are also classroom teachers.

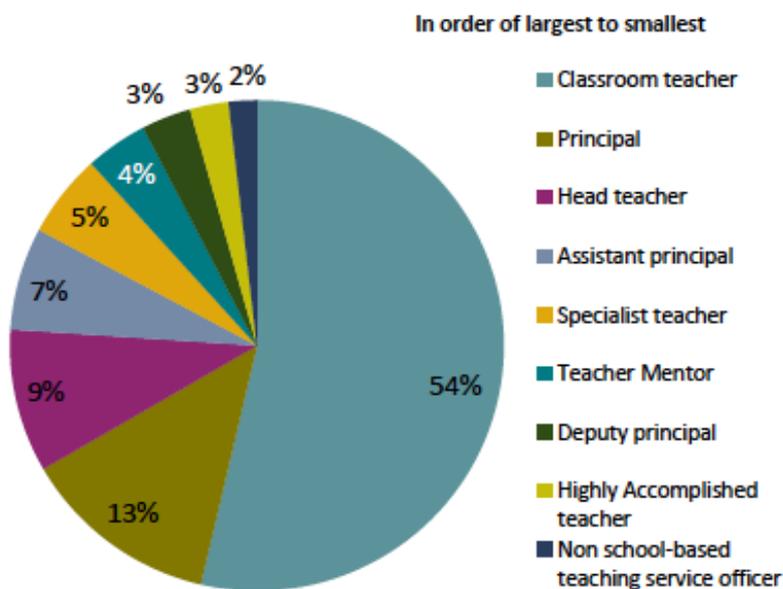


Figure 12-1 : Current Position

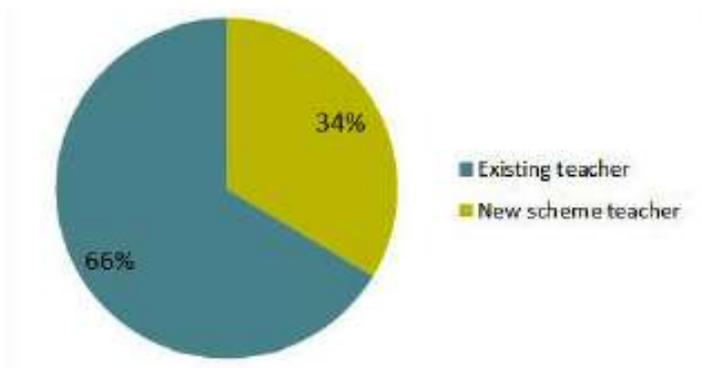


Figure 12-2 : Existing and New Scheme Teachers

New Scheme Teachers made up 34% of the survey sample. New Scheme Teachers were a significant target group for this survey, as they are a group of teachers currently familiar with the process of meeting standards to gain accreditation with the NSW Institute of Teachers.

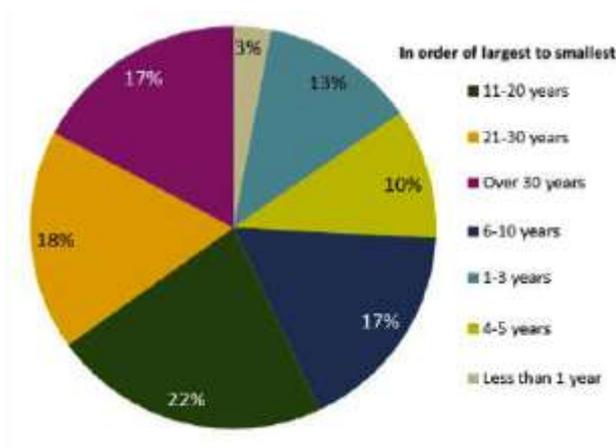


Figure 12-3 : Number of years teaching/working in schools

Survey respondents reported varying years of teaching experience ranging from less than one year to over 30 years experience.

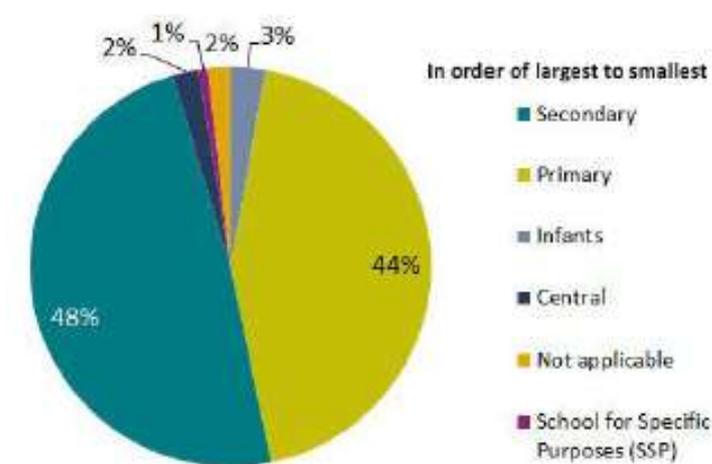


Figure 12-4 : Type of school

The responses from teachers and leaders from primary and secondary schools were almost equally represented.

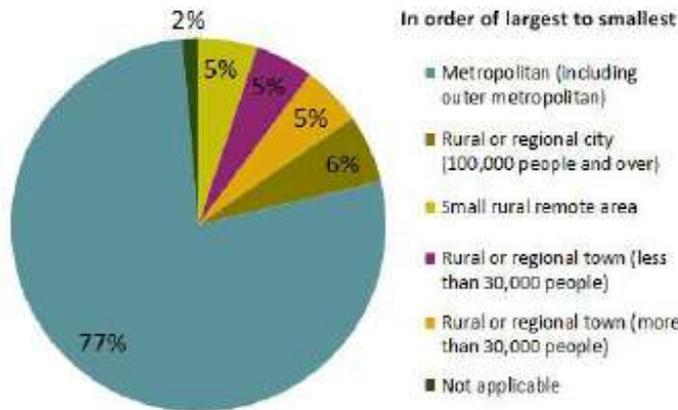


Figure 12-5 : School location

The survey included teachers and leaders in schools located across NSW. The majority of survey respondents (77%) indicated that their schools were metropolitan (including outer metropolitan). The remaining respondents (21%) indicated that their schools were in regional rural towns or small rural remote areas of NSW.

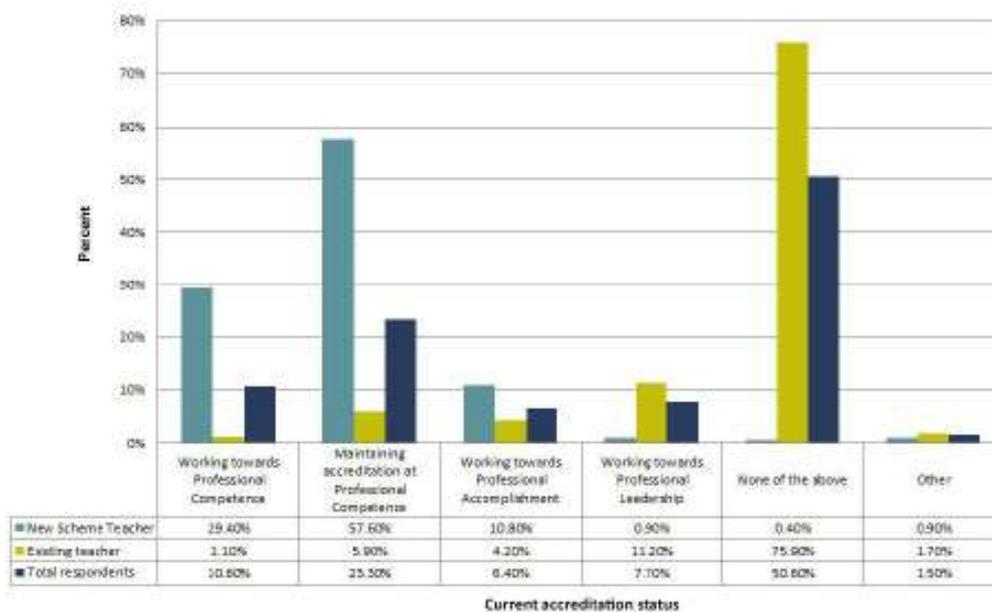


Figure 12-6 : Status that best describes your current accreditation with the NSW Institute of Teachers

Since October 2004, NSW Government legislation has made it mandatory for New Scheme Teachers to gain and maintain accreditation at Professional Competence with the NSW Institute of Teachers. 48.00% of the respondents are currently involved in the accreditation process with the NSW Institute of Teachers. Of these respondents, 33.90% are achieving or maintaining accreditation at Professional Competence and 14.10% are working towards accreditation at the further career stages of Professional Accomplishment or Professional Leadership.

50.60% of the survey sample indicated that they were not currently involved in an accreditation process with the NSW Institute of Teachers.

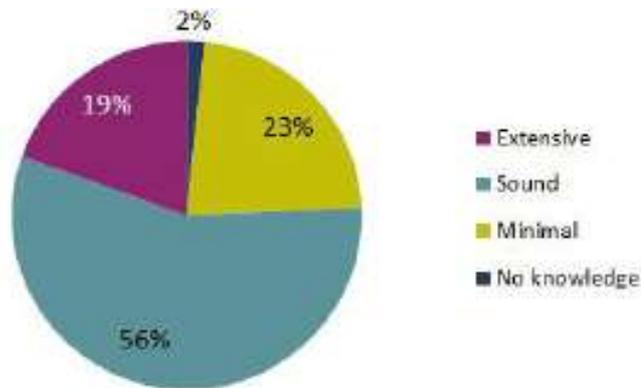


Figure 12-7 : Knowledge of the NSW Professional Teaching Standards

Most respondents answered this question very positively with 75% of them indicating that they have either ‘sound’ or ‘extensive knowledge’ of the NSW Professional Teaching Standards. Two percent of respondents reported that they have ‘no knowledge’ of the NSW Professional Teaching Standards.

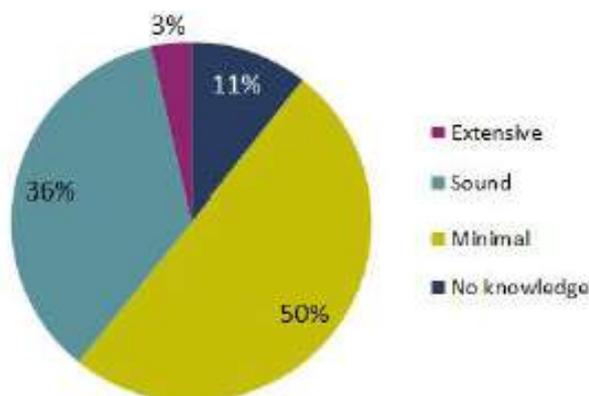


Figure 12-8 : Knowledge of the National Professional Standards for Teachers

With regard to knowledge of the National Professional Standards for Teachers, a different picture emerges to the one revealed in Figure 7 for the NSW Professional Teaching Standards.

Thirty nine percent of respondents indicated that they had either an ‘extensive’ or ‘sound’ understanding of these Standards with 3% of that figure rating their knowledge as extensive. Previously with regard to the NSW Professional Teaching Standards, 75% of respondents had indicated they had either an ‘extensive’ or ‘sound’ knowledge. In this instance, the majority of respondents rated their knowledge of the National Professional Standards for Teachers as minimal.

12.4.3.3.2 Identifying the professional learning needs of teachers in order to develop teacher quality and teacher leadership at the career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead

Particular questions in the survey were focused on the identification of the professional learning needs of teachers in relation to the seven Standards in the National Professional

Standards for Teachers. These seven Standards are organised under three teaching domains: Professional Knowledge (Standards 1 and 2), Professional Practice (Standards 3, 4 and 5) and Professional Engagement (Standards 6 and 7).

In relation to each of the seven Standards, respondents were required to identify the level of professional learning that was needed for each Standard in order for teachers to meet the voluntary stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead. The scale ranged from ‘no need’, ‘low level need’, ‘moderate level need’ to ‘high level need’.

Figure 9 and **Table 1** are two views of the same respondent data.

Figure 9 is an overview of how respondents rated the level of professional learning needed in relation to each Standard. **Table 1** represents the mean value of responses in relation to each of the seven Standards.

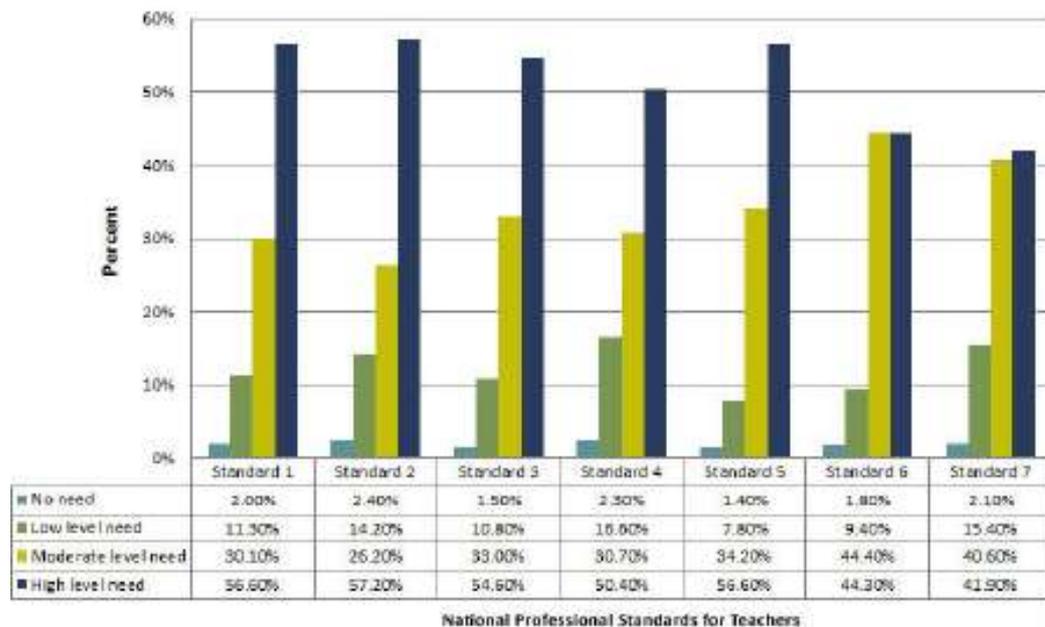


Figure 12-9 : Level of professional learning need to support teachers to meet the further voluntary career stages (for Standards 1 - 7)

Table 12-1 - Mean value of responses for level of professional learning needed to support teachers to meet the further voluntary career stages (for Standards 1 – 7)

Professional learning needs based on National Standards (1= No need 2= Low level need 3= Moderate level need 4= High level need)	Average rank (max 4)
Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning (Standard 5)	3.46
Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning (Standard 3)	3.41
Know students and how they learn (Standard 1)	3.41
Know the content and how to teach it (Standard 2)	3.38
Engage in professional learning (Standard 6)	3.31
Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments (Standard 4)	3.29
Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community (Standard 7)	3.22

Both **Figure 9** and **Table 1** show that a significant level of need has been identified by respondents in relation to every Standard. The Standards where professional learning needs had higher mean scores appear to be those with a more direct focus on teaching and learning in the classroom, that is Standards 1, 2, 3 and 5.

While respondents identified the level of need for Standard 4 as slightly less, it was still acknowledged as relatively high.

These results seem to affirm that respondents see an ongoing need for professional learning in relation to all aspects of teachers' practice. As well, it would appear that teachers and school leaders see the Standards as interconnected, interdependent, overlapping and not existing in isolation.

Interestingly, these results could also be interpreted as highlighting the inherent value the profession puts upon professional learning as a high leverage strategy in improving teacher quality on a range of fronts.

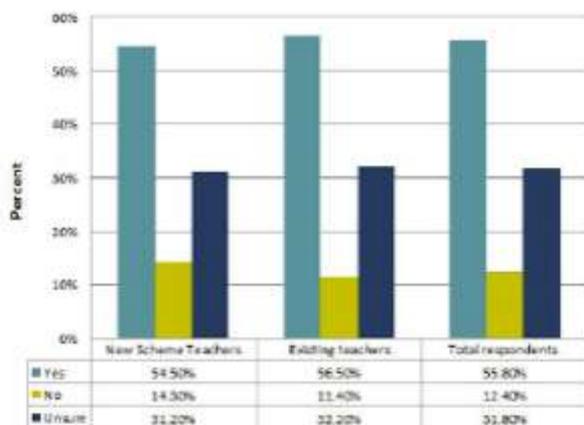


Figure 12-10 : The *National Professional Standards for Teachers* as a consistent framework for improving the quality of teaching in classrooms

Figure 10 illustrates participant responses when asked whether they believed that the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* would provide a consistent framework for improving the quality of teaching. The graph represents trends for the total number of survey respondents and a breakdown of response trends for New Scheme and Existing Teachers. Trends for all respondents and then New Scheme and Existing Teachers were extremely consistent.

Of the total responses, 55.80% indicated ‘yes’, 31.80% indicated ‘unsure’ and 12.40% indicated ‘no’.

With regard to the breakdown of New Scheme and Existing Teachers, the data showed that 54.50% of New Scheme Teachers agreed that the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* will provide a consistent framework for improving the quality of teaching in classrooms and 56.50% of Existing Teachers agreed with this statement.

A high percentage of both New Scheme Teachers and Existing Teachers considered the Standards framework as a means to improve the quality of teaching in classrooms.

In NSW, Existing Teachers are not currently required to provide evidence of their achievement of standards. Nevertheless, they had a similar rating with regard to this question as that of New Scheme Teachers who already had experience with the NSW *Professional Teaching Standards*. It would appear that a teachers’ status, as a New Scheme or Existing Teacher, and the associated requirements linked to their employment, had no significant impact on their responses to this question.

Comments for this question allowed respondents to clarify or further explain their response.

It is of particular note that in the absence of detailed information related to the policy and procedures that will inform the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* many respondents appeared to base their comments around their knowledge of and experience with the NSW *Professional Teaching Standards*. Depending on their particular circumstances, these comments carried both positive and negative assumptions in relation to the implementation and effectiveness of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*.

Specific themes that emerged in comments from those respondents who answered ‘yes’ to this question include:

- the strength of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* framework will be its powerful, common language about teaching across the nation. Quality implementation will ensure the success of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*. This will include the need for professional learning time and resources to examine, explain and engage with the Standards in local contexts
- the role of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* in providing a road map or blueprint for teacher development and for system planning in relation to professional learning
- the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* would provide a common language and continuity across states and territories.

It is about providing a uniform and consistent set of standards to guide schools, individuals and leaders in development and in ensuring reflection and direction for all. (Assistant principal)

It has the potential to do this. But the implementation will be the critical point. (Principal)

..Can be used as a framework for school based professional learning around the school’s targets related to improving student outcomes. (Non school based teaching service officer)

Provides common language; identification of skill set; raises awareness of quality teaching practices; provide(s) basis for school-based professional learning. (Highly Accomplished Teacher)

Specific themes that emerged in the comments from those respondents who answered ‘no’ to this question include:

- time and effort needed to engage in certification was seen as a possible implementation barrier
- the view that implementation could result in increased administrative processes and increased workload
- possible transition issues until all teachers are engaged in using the national framework
- the risk of inauthentic processes being instigated if certification is not grounded in daily practice.

I believe new teachers should spend their time and energy on planning lessons, preparing programs and developing their behaviour management skills. Too much time and effort is spent on completing accreditation documents. (Classroom teacher)

I think the framework could be quite a valuable tool but the supervisors who are usually teaching their own class load do not have the time to consistently monitor this process. (Assistant principal)

Unless all teachers are required to undertake this practice you will not have unified consistency. (Classroom teacher)

Specific themes that emerged in the comments from those respondents who answered 'unsure' to this question generally allude to uncertainty in relation to:

- the notion that a framework alone will not improve the quality of teaching unless accompanied by quality professional learning
- the implementation model that will be developed to implement the Standards
- a desire for more information about the policy and procedures that support the implementation of the Standards before forming a view on their potential benefit or impact on classroom teaching.

Consistent support is required to ensure all teachers are aware of the Standards as well as understanding how to implement them. This means appropriate time for staff professional learning and implementation is needed as well as constant follow up and refinement. (Classroom teacher)

A framework is merely a document/guide. Although it will/can be useful in providing a benchmark of 'quality', I believe it is the support, mentoring of and PD opportunities given to teachers that will have the most considerable impact upon quality teaching. (Classroom teacher)

12.4.3.3 Investigating how high quality teaching practice can be best evidenced in relation to the implementation of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* within the context of NSW DEC settings

The following graphs address the use of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* to develop and evidence high quality teaching practice. Respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of individual strategies on a scale from 'highly effective', 'effective', 'slightly effective' to 'not effective'. In this section, a comment afforded respondents the opportunity to elaborate on their rating.

Respondents were given twelve professional learning strategies to rate in terms of effectiveness in developing high quality teaching practice. **Figure 11** and **Figure 12** are different views of the responses.

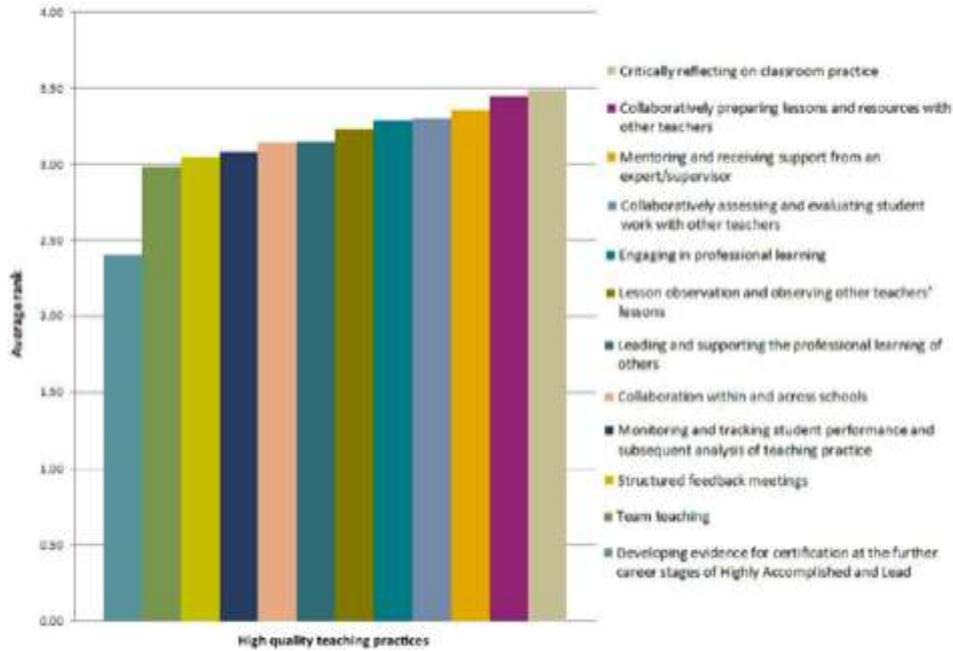
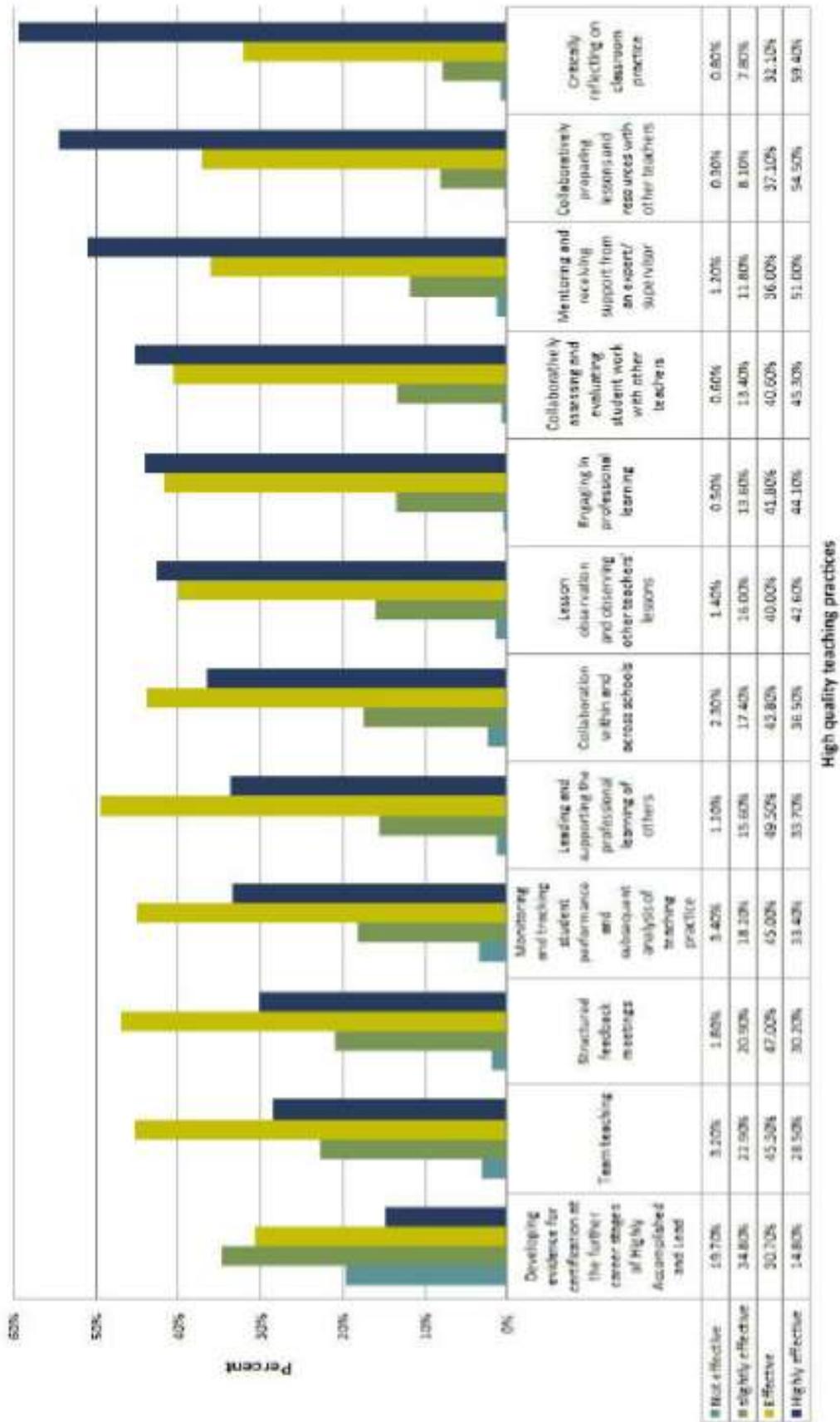


Figure 12-11 : Most effective ways to develop high quality teaching practice

Figure 11 represents the average of responses to the effectiveness of each professional learning strategy. Overall, respondents viewed all the listed strategies as very effective ways to develop high quality teaching practice. However respondents clearly identified the strategy *Developing evidence for certification at the further career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead* as significantly less effective.



High quality teaching practices

Figure 12-12 : Most effective ways to develop high quality teaching practice

Figure 12 presents the spread of responses from ‘highly effective’ to ‘not effective’ for the twelve professional learning strategies. Of the twelve strategies, those that are rated as the most highly effective ways to develop high quality teaching practice are:

- *Critically reflecting on classroom practice (59.40%)*
- *Collaboratively preparing lessons and resources with other teachers (54.50%)*

NSW DEC’s Professional Learning and Leadership Development Directorate conducts annual survey research focusing on the implementation of professional learning programs in all NSW DEC schools. An aspect of this research focuses on the professional learning found to be most useful in supporting early career teachers. The strategy, *Collaboratively preparing lessons and resources with other teachers* also rates highly in this annual research.

When respondents took the opportunity to make comments, a number of themes emerged with comments frequently highlighting the value of collaboration and reflection:

Working in collaboration with colleagues gives a sound basis for professional development. Working collaboratively with colleagues provides professional discussion. (Principal)

Further analysis of comments in relation to this question emphasises the need for and value of the involvement of an ‘expert’ in professional learning processes. This expert role was sometimes seen to be a facilitator, school leader or learning colleague with deep knowledge of teaching, learning, assessing and content:

My experience of Professional Learning is that it happens when it is led by someone who has a deep understanding of the thing they are leading and they are strategic in the way they lead an activity. (Teacher Mentor)

Many respondents also stressed that the defining features of any professional learning strategies and the factors that raised the effectiveness of any of the strategies were authenticity, relevance and quality:

Although I've indicated many of the things are highly effective, it is the quality and authenticity of each strategy that will matter. (Deputy principal)

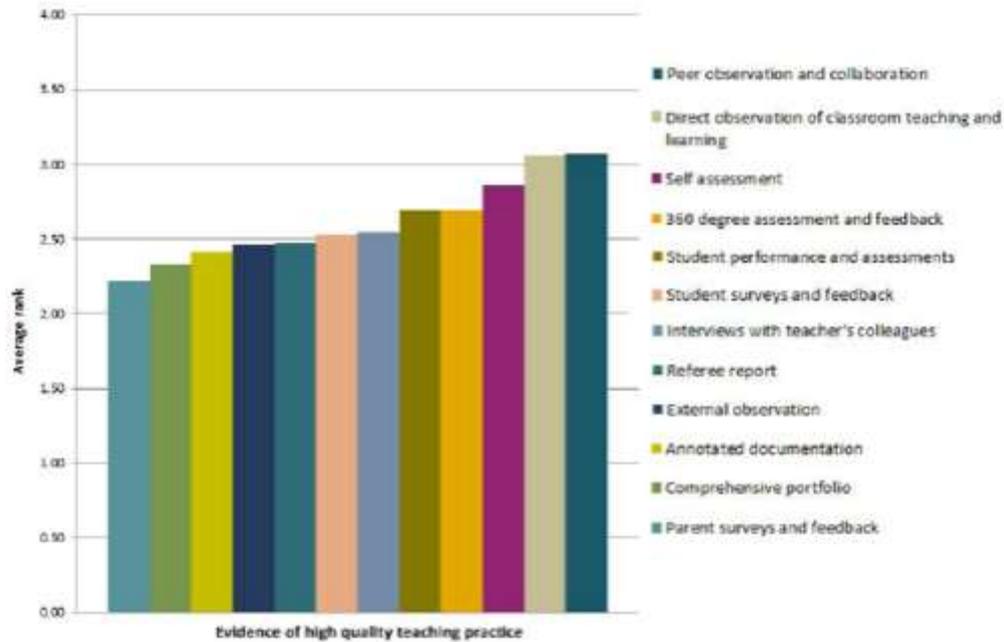


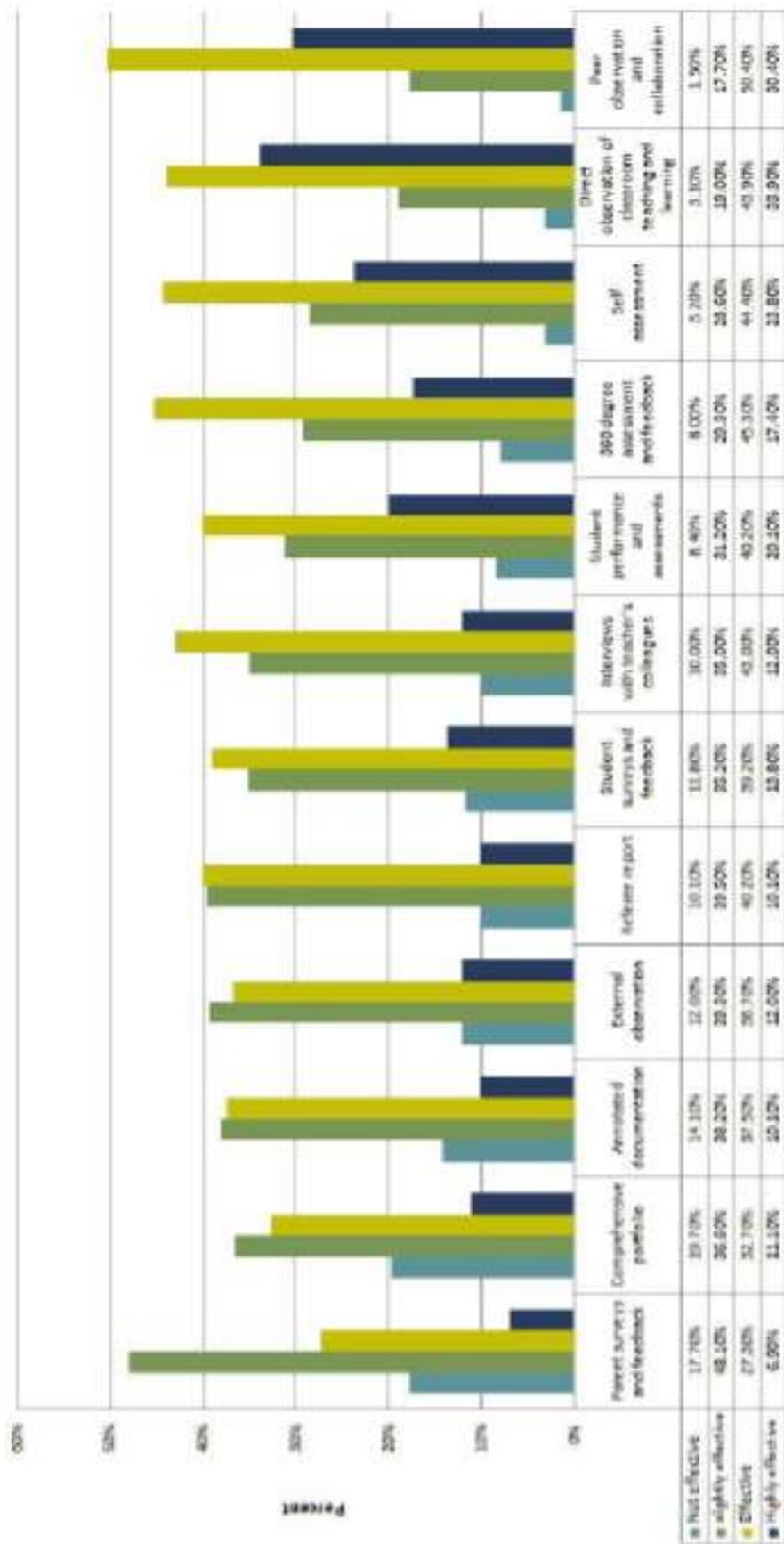
Figure 12-13 : Most effective ways to demonstrate evidence of high quality teaching practice

In this question respondents were given twelve sources that could be seen as ways to evidence high quality teaching practice. They were asked to rate these as either ‘highly effective’, ‘effective’, ‘slightly effective’ or ‘not effective’. **Figure 13** and **Figure 14** are different views of their responses.

Figure 13 represents the average of responses to the effectiveness of each source of evidence.

While *Peer observation and collaboration* and *Direct observation of classroom teaching and learning* rated slightly higher than others on average, the comments provided by respondents indicated that there is not one best way to demonstrate evidence and that there was a strong trend towards the need to use a combination of sources of evidence to demonstrate high quality teaching practice.

To demonstrate high quality teaching practice a combination of the items mentioned above is needed. (Teacher Mentor, secondary)



Effective ways to demonstrate high quality teaching practice

Figure 12-14 : Most effective ways to demonstrate evidence of high quality teaching practice?

Figure 14 presents the spread of responses in relation to the effectiveness of a range of different forms of evidence. Respondents could rate each of the twelve sources of evidence from 'highly effective' to 'not effective'.

Peer observation and collaboration and *Direct observation of classroom teaching and learning* emerge as sources of evidence that are regarded as most highly effective. These two ways to evidence quality teaching practice are followed closely by *Self assessment*.

Respondents' comments for this question align with the responses selected as most effective, again highlighting the value of collaboration and classroom observation.

Another consistent trend in the comments for this question reflects the importance of using everyday practice to demonstrate high quality teaching. This was in contrast to compiling annotated evidence, which was deemed far less reliable by respondents:

Evidence of teacher quality should come from everyday teaching practices. It should be part of a self-reflective practice and evaluation of teaching and leadership. Most effective if it can be shared. (Highly Accomplished Teacher)

Another identifiable trend in the comments highlights the value of student assessment as 'evidence' of quality teaching practice but cautions about the need for it to be contextual and to deliver rich, authentic information:

Student performance & assessment should include pre and post assessment data & be focused on rich assessment tasks. (Assistant principal)

The sources of evidence rated as the least effective by 12% or more of respondents are:

- *Parent surveys and feedback*
- *Comprehensive portfolio*
- *Annotated documentation*
- *External observation.*

These four sources of evidence appear to be less collaborative and involve little or no active professional learning, unlike the sources of evidence that emerged as the most effective:

Collaborative, practical assessment and feedback tends to give a more accurate view of teaching practice than paper documentation. (Classroom teacher)

12.4.3.3.4 Understanding what will be involved in engaging NSW DEC teachers with the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* at the career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead

This section of the survey focussed on what it would take to engage teachers in the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* and asked respondents to consider the:

- best ways to introduce the Standards to teachers
- important factors in relation to engaging teachers with the Standards
- personnel and structures needed to support teachers

- inhibitors and enablers for teachers in engaging with the Standards.

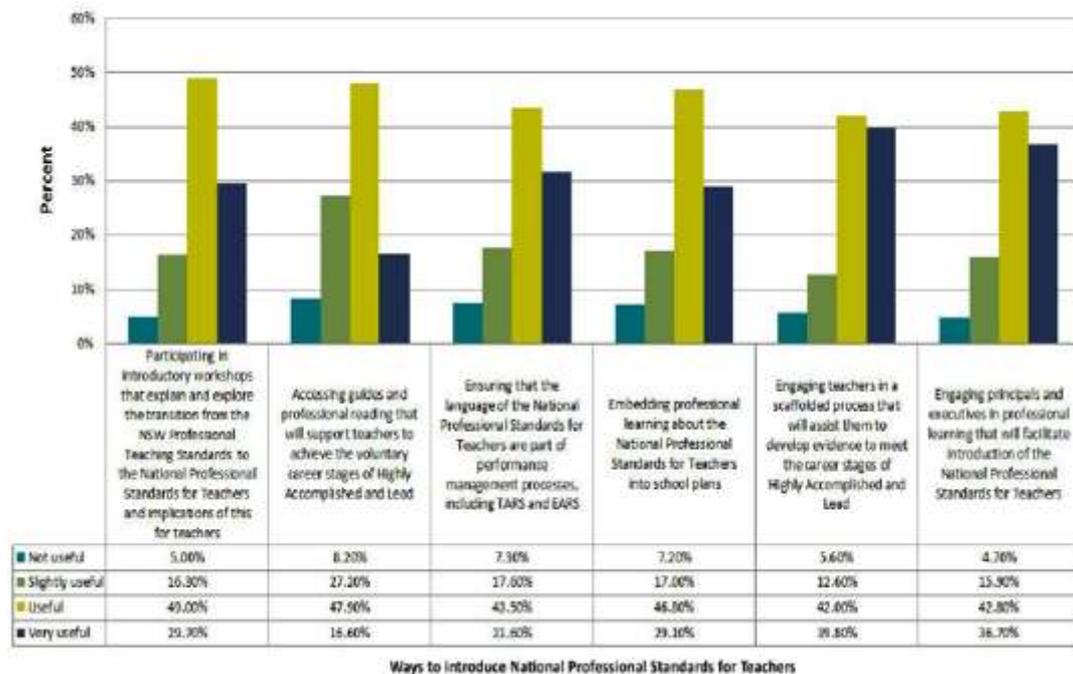


Figure 12-15 : Ways to introduce the voluntary career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead in the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*

Respondents rated the usefulness from ‘not useful’ to ‘very useful’ of six different ways to introduce the voluntary career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead in the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*. Positive trends were evident for all six ways of introducing the Standards.

Overall, the strategy seen as most useful was *Engaging teachers in a scaffolded process that will assist them to develop evidence to meet the career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead*, with 39.80% of all respondents placing it in the highest category, ‘very useful’.

Comments from teachers reinforced the need for a scaffolded process:

As a HT I would feel more comfortable with professional learning that would scaffold me into the National Standards first and then I could use that to scaffold the process for other staff members. (Head teacher, secondary)

Of the six ways to introduce the Standards, *Accessing guides and professional reading that will support teachers to achieve the voluntary career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead*, was considered the least useful, with more respondents rating it either ‘not useful’ or ‘slightly useful’.

Figures 16 - 20 Importance of factors influencing a teacher's decision to undertake certification at the voluntary career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead

Respondents rated the relative importance of a list of factors in influencing a teacher’s decision to undertake certification at the voluntary career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead. The factors were organised into five groups:

- Personal
- Professional learning
- School culture and leadership
- Professional recognition
- School and system support.

Of all the listed factors, the personal factor *Consideration of personal circumstances and commitments* emerged as the most important for respondents across all of the five groups.

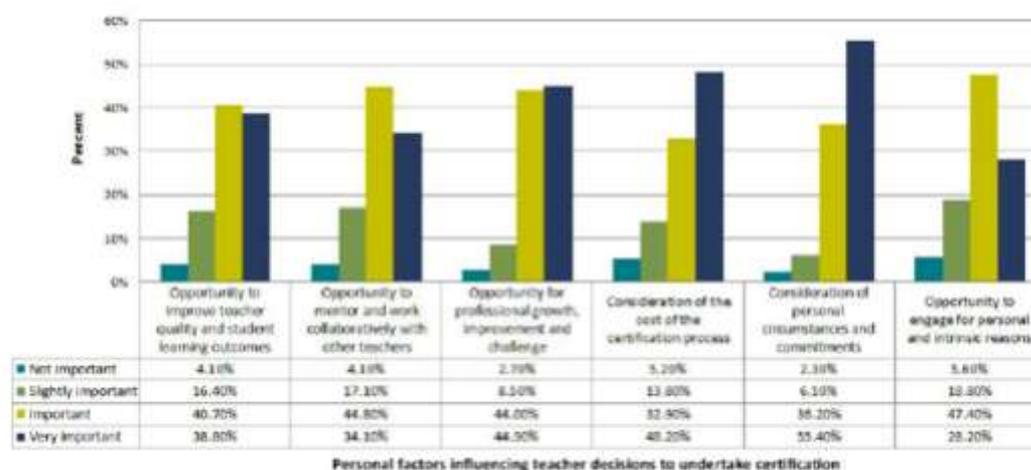


Figure 12-16 : Personal Factors

All of the six personal factors rated highly with respondents in terms of importance.

The most important factor identified was *Consideration of personal circumstances and commitments* with 55.40% of respondents rating it as very important. When the ‘important’ and ‘very important’ categories were combined, this factor still received the highest rating in terms of importance.

Opportunity for professional growth, improvement and challenge and *Consideration of the cost of the certification process* also featured as very important factors in influencing teachers’ decisions to undertake certification at the voluntary career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead.

These factors were echoed in respondents’ comments:

Teachers’ personal circumstances will play a large part in their decision making. If certification provides a base for further professional development teachers will be more likely to engage with the National Professional Standards for Teachers. (Highly Accomplished Teacher)

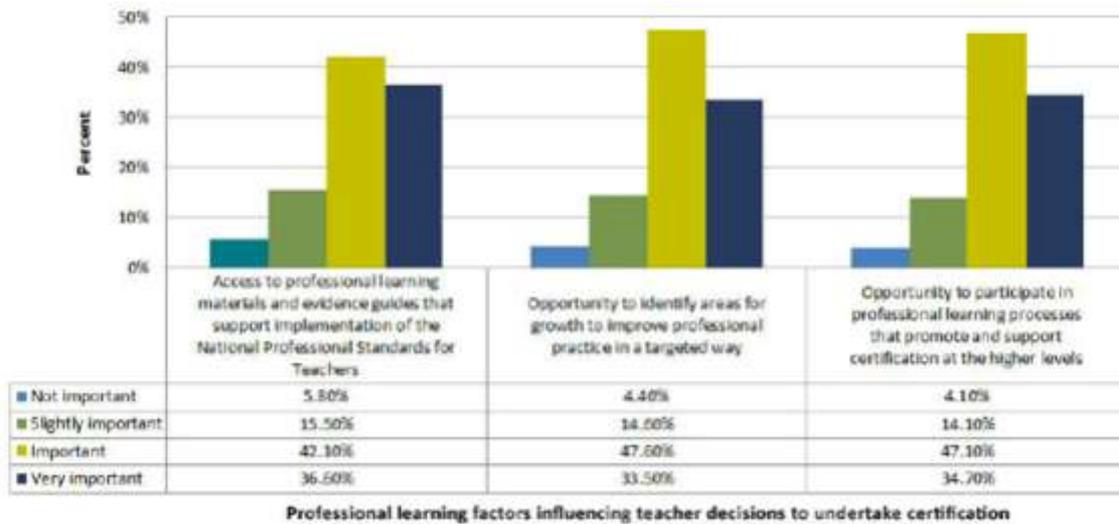


Figure 12-17 : Professional learning factors

Figure 17 indicates that respondents felt that the three factors related to professional learning are of almost equal high importance in influencing a teacher's decision to undertake certification at the voluntary career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead.

Timperley (2008) comments on how teachers engage with professional learning and new ideas: *Teachers are likely to reject new ideas that conflict with their current ideas unless, as part of the professional learning, their existing understandings are engaged.*

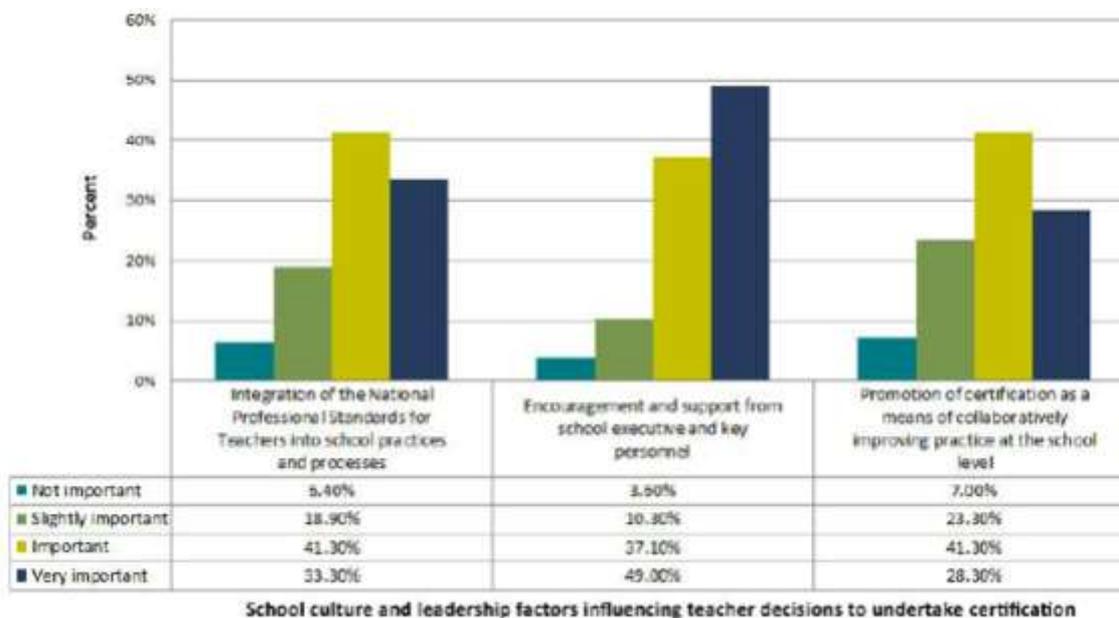


Figure 12-18 : School culture and leadership factors

All of the three factors rated highly with respondents, with the most important factor identified as *Encouragement and support from school executive and key personnel.*

Every school is different. It is therefore important that teachers and principals discuss what the National Standards mean for teaching in their school. (Jensen and Reich, 2011)

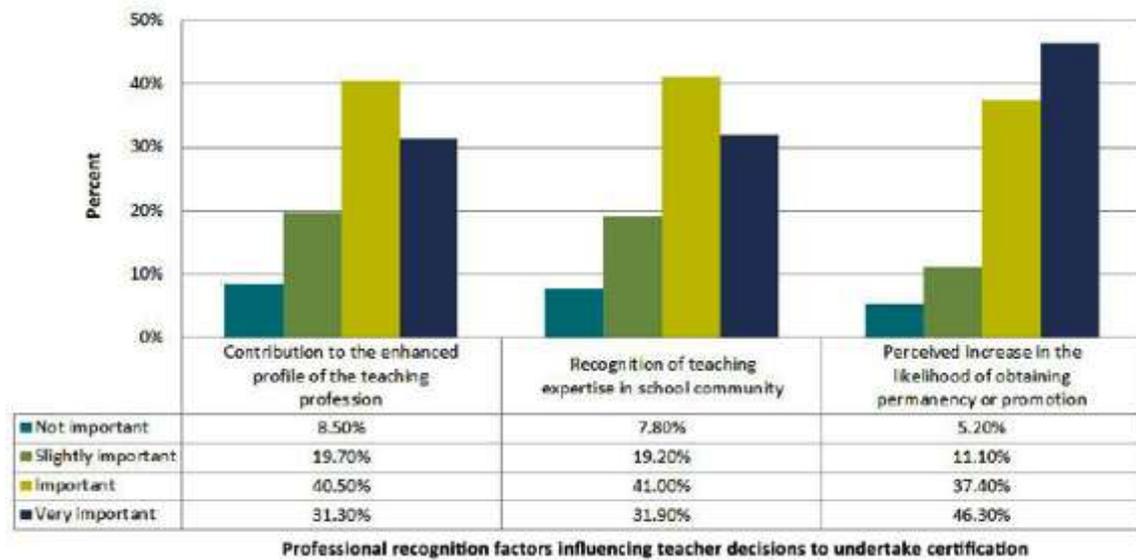


Figure 12-19 : Professional recognition factors

Again, while all the professional recognition factors ranked well with respondents, there was a strong indication from all participants that *Perceived increase in the likelihood of obtaining permanency or promotion* was a very important factor.

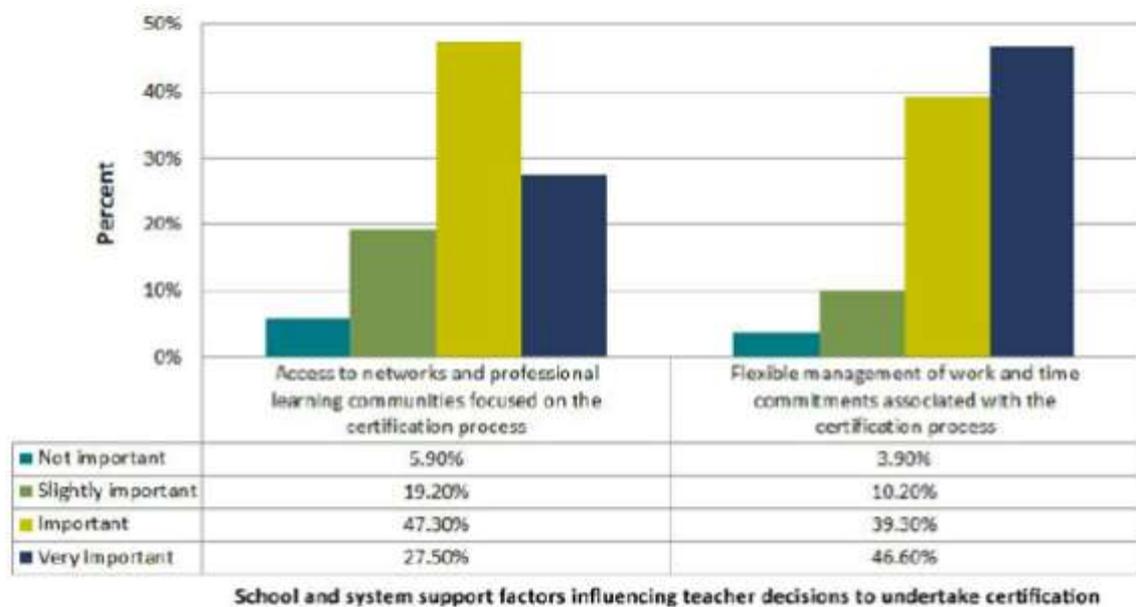


Figure 12-20 : School and system support factors

Of the two factors listed in school and system support, there was strong agreement that *Flexible management of work and time commitments associated with the certification process* was the more important factor. *Access to networks and professional learning communities focused on the certification process* also rated as important.

Trends in comments provided from respondents reinforce the need for flexible management of the certification process:

Processes should be something that teachers are aware of so they can choose to pursue certification in their own time. (Classroom teacher)

If support structures are put in place, more teachers will be interested in completing this process. This will lead to greater acceptance of the process. (Teacher Mentor)

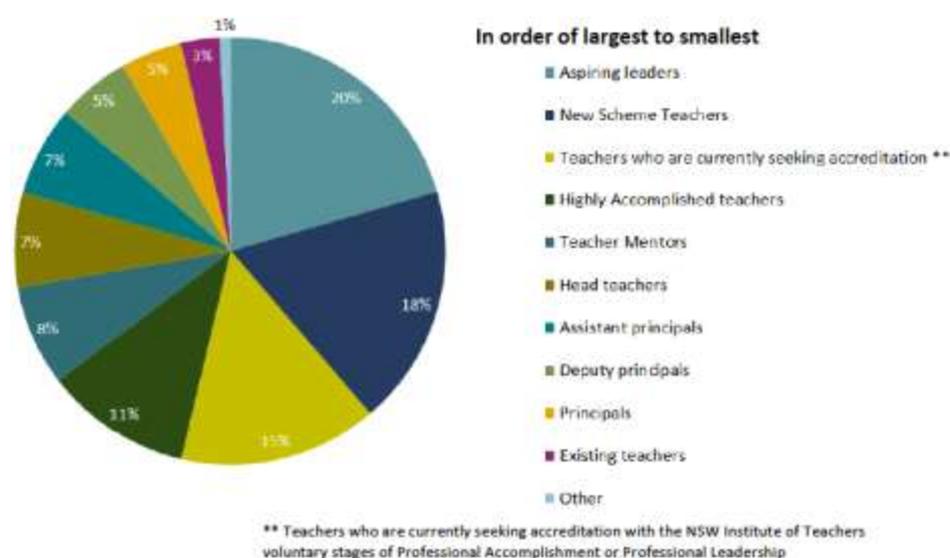


Figure 12-21 : Groups most likely to engage with the voluntary career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead in the initial implementation of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*

Respondents indicated that the most likely groups to engage with the voluntary career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead in the initial implementation of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* would be:

- Aspiring leaders (20%)
- New Scheme Teachers (18%)
- Teachers who are currently seeking accreditation with NSWIT stages of Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership (15%)
- Highly Accomplished Teachers (11%).

This trend would suggest that there are obvious implications for professional learning. Hochberg and Desimone (2010) provide instructive insights about the need to consider differentiating professional learning for different groups:....*a body of literature on stages of teacher development suggests that novice teachers have different concerns and engage in different cognitive processes relative to more experienced teachers.*

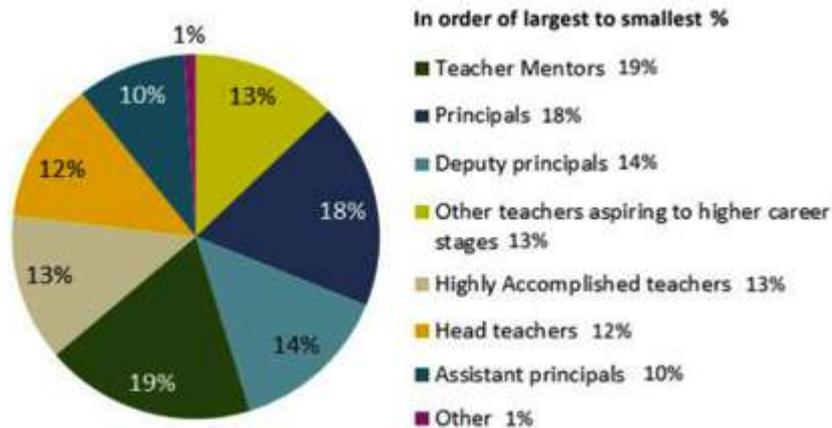


Figure 12-22 : Groups that will be the most crucial in supporting teachers to achieve certification at the voluntary career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead

This question asked respondents to identify the most crucial group in supporting teachers to achieve certification at the voluntary career stages. Responses to this question were relatively even in distribution.

Figure 22 indicates that all identified groups would be relatively important in supporting teachers to achieve certification at the voluntary career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead, with Teacher Mentors (19%) and principals (18%) considered to be the most crucial groups.

Hochberg and Desimone (2010) highlight the important role of leaders in providing *...opportunities for teachers to build learning communities and necessary supports for teachers to participate in professional development and to apply learning from professional development experience in the classroom.*

Respondents' comments concur with this research:

Of vital importance is the professional learning community/culture within the school and that there is shared leadership which enables teachers the opportunities to engage positively in their professional learning. (Non school based teaching service officer)

Standards need to be embedded in school policy and plan to help develop a culture of acceptance and raise awareness of their key role in professional development. Executive need to play a key role. (Highly Accomplished Teacher)

A set of classroom observation tools to assist teachers critically reflect on teaching practice is needed. Professional development focusing on strong supervisory processes and tools is urgently needed. (Principal)

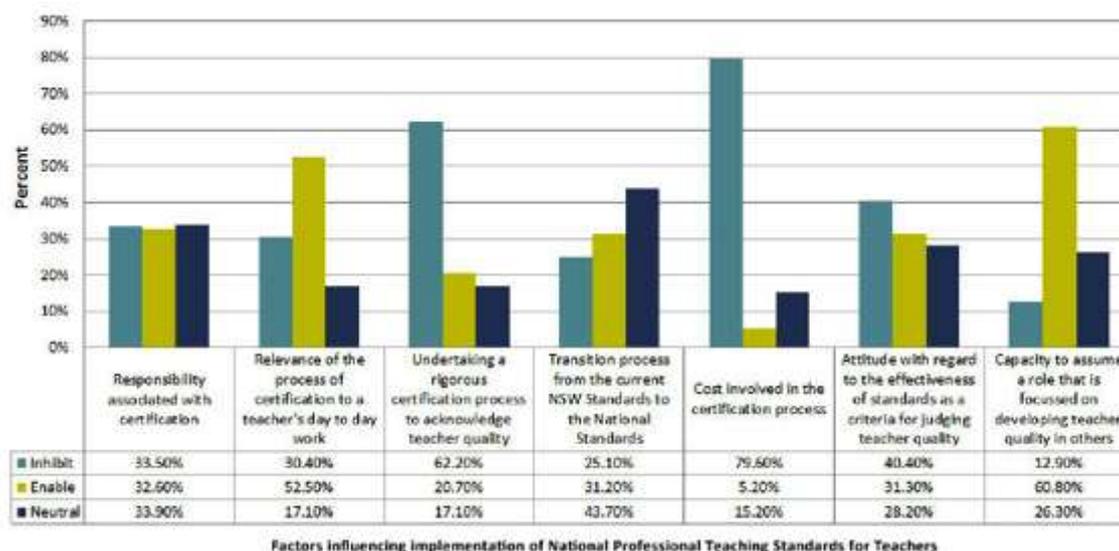


Figure 12-23 : What will inhibit or enable the implementation of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* at the voluntary career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead

Figure 23 charts respondents' views on what they rated as inhibitors and enablers to the implementation of the career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead.

The two highest rated inhibitors were identified as *Cost involved in the certification process* (79.60%) and *Undertaking a rigorous certification process to acknowledge teacher quality* (62.20%).

The two highest rated enablers were *Capacity to assume a role that is focussed on developing teacher quality in others* (60.80%) and *Relevance of the process of certification to a teacher's day to day work* (52.50%).

With regard to the neutral rating, the factor that most respondents appeared to be 'unsure' about was the *Transition process from the current NSW Standards to the National Standards* (43.70%).

Many comments by respondents referred to the fact that enablers could be inhibitors depending on school context and in particular, school culture:

Whether these inhibit or enable will often depend on the individual teacher and the school environment in which they are working. (Classroom teacher)

Hochberg's and Desimone's research (2010) points to *..efforts to impact teacher practice may yield different results depending on contextual factors or the school environment.*

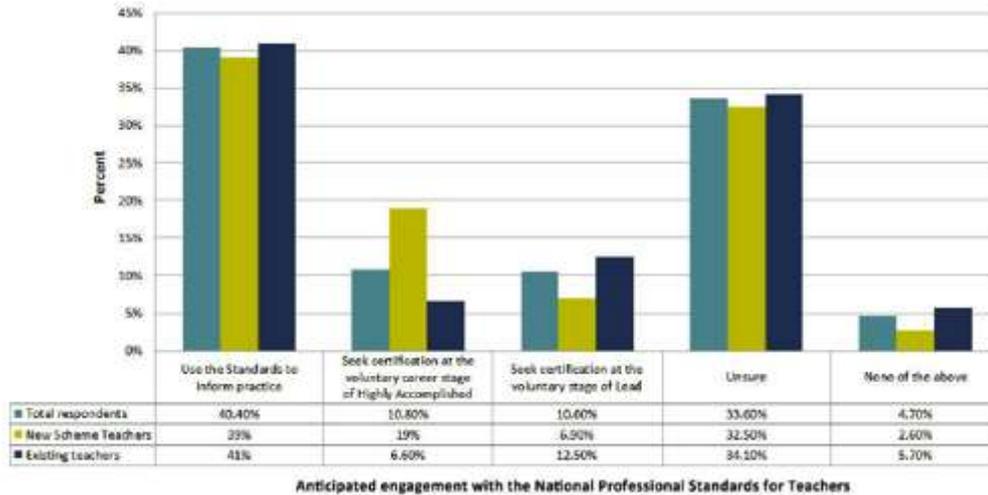


Figure 12-24 : Possible ways to engage with the National Professional Standards for Teachers

The majority of respondents (40.40%) anticipated that their main engagement with the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* will be to use the Standards to inform their practice. This was a strong trend for both New Scheme and Existing Teachers.

...standards bodies that focus on providing rigorous certification will have greater impact on the quality of professional learning. They are also more likely to engage most teachers in effective professional learning. (Ingvarson and Kleinhenz, 2006)

Also of significance was the relatively high percentage of respondents who indicated that they were unsure at this point about how they might engage with the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*. This response was also consistent across New Scheme and Existing Teachers.

The high percentage of those who are 'unsure' most likely reflects a lack of familiarity with the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* or lack of knowledge or information about the transition from state to national Standards in NSW.

Typical comments from respondents about how teachers anticipate they may engage with the Standards included:

My personal accreditation process must be completed by the end of 2012. During that time I will be developing professional learning opportunities for staff regarding the National Standards. This will be followed by how they can be used to inform practice and as the basis for personal professional learning plans. (Highly Accomplished Teacher)

Use the standards to inform practice and support early career teachers in a similar way to how I engage presently with the NSW Professional Teaching Standards. (Highly Accomplished Teacher)

In my role as a Teacher Mentor, standards are essential in day-to-day conversations with early career teachers to inform their practice and continue to refine my own. I am considering collecting evidence for Lead certification. (Teacher Mentor)

I am not sure about the transition process from NSW Standards to National Standards. (Head teacher)

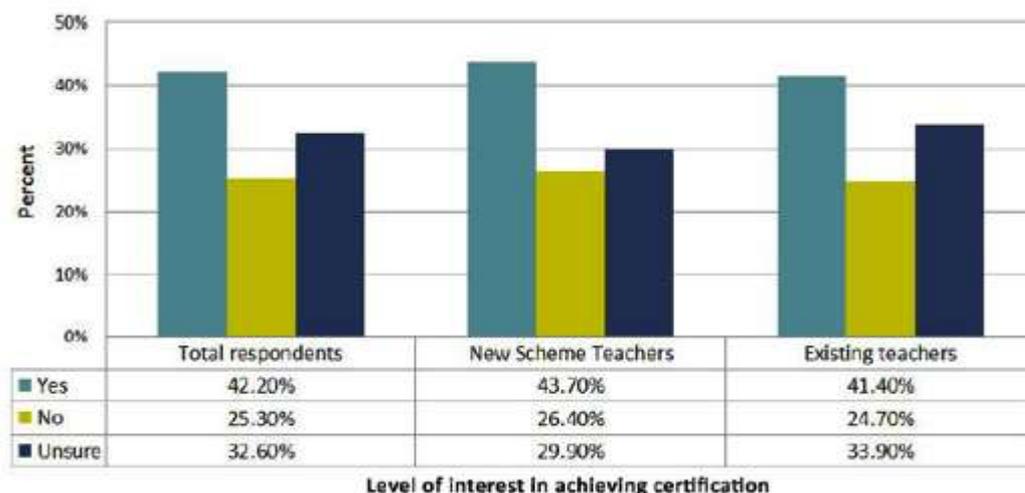


Figure 12-25 : Teacher interest in achieving certification at the voluntary career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead as a way of recognising them as exemplary classroom practitioners

Responses to this question were generally optimistic. Approximately 42.20% of respondents believed that teachers will be interested in achieving accreditation at Highly Accomplished and Lead. This positive trend was consistent across the groups of both New Scheme and Existing Teachers.

The following comment reflects why teachers may be interested in engaging with achieving certification at the voluntary career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead:

Teachers will be interested if it will influence career paths and if it goes into the mix for performance pay. Teachers will also be interested as a form of professional development. (Principal)

Timperley’s research (2008) on effective professional development is a pertinent summary of teachers’ responses to this question: *If they cannot be persuaded that a new approach is valuable and be certain of support if they implement it, teachers are unlikely to adopt it.*

There was a relatively high level of ‘unsure’ responses (32.60%). This may be a reflection of teachers’ concerns about what the perceived benefits will be or the perceived increased responsibilities involved in achieving certification at the voluntary career stages. It could also reflect uncertainty that emerged throughout the pilot’s actions in qualitative data about the transition from the NSW *Professional Teaching Standards* to the new *National Professional Standards for Teachers*.

There was a consistent trend in the comments reflecting the concerns that some teachers have about engaging in the certification process at the voluntary key stages:

I don't think that Existing Teachers who don't require certification will voluntarily take this up as there is no incentive at this stage. (Teacher Mentor)

Those who are in the latter stages of their careers may not be keen to invest the time and energy. (Principal)

Teachers need to see that the Standards are relevant to their day to day teaching... (Classroom teacher)

Your love for teaching and making a difference to students' lives motivates me to learn new ways and try different ideas to help my students. (Classroom teacher)

12.5 Resources

12.5.1 Resources developed for the pilot

The online survey was an artefact developed as an integral part of the NSW DEC pilot study. (Appendix 11)

The survey questions were central to all aspects of the pilot study. The survey was designed to gather valuable information from a cross section of key groups at both the leadership and classroom level.

The survey was organised into three sections.

Section 1 (General information) collected demographic information about respondents regarding:

- the nature and extent of their teaching experience
- training
- current roles
- current school context
- career aspirations
- current accreditation status
- current engagement with the NSW Institute of Teachers *Professional Teaching Standards*
- anticipated engagement with the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*

This information provided a valuable profile of survey respondents and informed the analysis of data within sections of the survey that probed the professional learning needs of teachers, ways to engage teachers in the Standards and ways to develop and evidence best practice.

Section 2 (Identifying professional learning needs) aimed to inform decision making in support of teacher professional learning and teacher quality. Respondents were asked to indicate their beliefs about the level of professional learning needed to meet the voluntary career stages for each Standard, rating the level from 'No need', 'Low level need', 'Moderate level need' to 'High level need'.

Teachers were asked about the most effective ways to develop high quality teaching practice, which involved rating a number of professional learning strategies as either 'Not effective', 'Moderately effective', 'Effective' or 'Highly Effective'.

This section also sought information about the most effective ways to demonstrate evidence of high quality teaching practice. Respondents were asked to rate various sources of evidence as either 'Not effective', 'Moderately effective', 'Effective' or 'Highly Effective'.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the most useful types of feedback in developing teaching practice, as well as types of feedback that they would like to receive more often.

Opinions were also sought in this section about the most valuable ways to acknowledge excellence in teaching.

Section 3 (Engaging with the Standards) sought information to support the implementation of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* in the context of NSW DEC schools. Questions in relation to the voluntary career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead were focused on:

- the best way to introduce the voluntary career stages
- the factors influencing a teacher's decision to undertake certification at the voluntary career stages
- the groups predicted to be most likely to engage with the voluntary career stages
- the most crucial personnel in supporting teachers to achieve voluntary certification
- factors that would inhibit or enable the implementation of the national Standards.

Future use of the NSW DEC survey

It is intended that the survey developed for the pilot study will be posted online for an extended window of time to allow a wider cross section of schools and teachers to engage with the survey. Subsequent engagement of schools and teachers in the survey will be supported with discussion starters and professional learning processes designed to support schools to use the survey's structure to initiate and facilitate broader discussion about Standards at the local level.

As well this wider engagement of schools in the survey will expand the sample size of NSW DEC's survey respondents. This larger sample will provide NSW DEC with a rich data set that will inform future decision making with regard to professional learning needs to further develop teacher quality and teacher capacity.

12.6 Findings and outcomes

The findings from investigations undertaken within this pilot study draw largely on an analysis of trends evident in responses from the 710 teachers and school leaders who completed the online survey. As well, the themes identified in the rich discussion and commentary that took place at the formal consultation with principals and the focus group consultations with teacher groups have been considered in light of these trends. Findings are organised in relation to the pilot study's three key research questions.

Question 1. To develop teacher quality and teacher leadership at the career stages of highly Accomplished and Lead (within the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*) what will be the professional learning needs of teachers?

Professional learning was a pervasive theme and high stakes issue evident across survey trends, responses and discussions in all pilot actions. The pervasiveness of the inclusion of professional

learning in verbal and written responses suggests that NSW DEC school leaders and teachers see professional learning as integral to the development of quality teaching practice and an essential aspect in continuing to improve and ensure teacher quality.

A number of survey questions in the pilot study were structured to investigate professional learning needs in relation to the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*, particularly through the lens of the career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead. Respondents were asked to rate the professional learning needs of teachers on a four point scale (from no need, to low level need, to moderate level need, to high level need) in relation to each of the seven teaching Standards.

The need for professional learning was rated consistently across all seven Standards. For each of the seven Standards, most respondents signalled high or moderate level need for professional learning in order to assist teachers to meet the requirements at the career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead.

While all seven Standards were rated as having high professional learning implications, some rated slightly higher than others. The group of standards that rated most highly in order of mean scores: (Standard 5) *Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning*, (Standard 3) *Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning*, (Standard 1) *Know students and how they learn* and (Standard 2) *Know the content and how to teach it* would appear to be the four Standards that most closely focus directly on classroom teaching and learning.

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

Also related to professional learning, the pilot study sought to find out whether respondents viewed the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* as a framework for improving the quality of teaching. Trends across all groups of respondents were positive. Far more respondents (55.80%) indicated that the Standards would be a framework for improving the quality of teaching than those responding in the negative (12.40%).

This finding would suggest that across the profession, within NSW DEC, there is the relatively positive view that Standards are seen as a framework for improving teaching practice. What was of particular significance, however, was the fact that the trend was consistent for both New Scheme and Existing Teachers (rated at 54.50% and 56.50% respectively).

Regardless of whether responses were positive or negative, comments indicated that for the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* to have a genuinely positive influence on the quality of teaching, there is a need for: support throughout the implementation process, authentic evidence gathering processes that are grounded in teachers' daily practice and consistency in the use of the Standards framework across the profession.

Question 2. How can high quality teaching practice be evidenced in relation to the implementation of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* within the context of NSW DEC settings?

The pilot study also sought to understand the views of teachers and school leaders about the best ways to develop and evidence high quality teaching practice.

Firstly, twelve professional learning strategies were listed for respondents to rate in terms of their effectiveness for developing high quality teaching practice. On a scale from not effective to highly effective, on average, respondents positively rated all twelve listed strategies. The two strategies that rated as the most highly effective were those that involved critical reflection on classroom practice and collaborative engagement with other teachers in developing lessons and resources.

This finding in relation to working collaboratively with other teachers on planning and developing lessons is particularly instructive for the NSW DEC as it this same strategy that has consistently been identified in the system's annual survey research into the implementation of professional learning programs.

Secondly, when asked about the most effective ways to demonstrate evidence of best practice, the two ways that were identified as the most highly effective were through *Peer observation and collaboration* and *Direct observation of classroom teaching and learning with Self assessment* being rated close to these two.

When the twelve strategies are listed in order of effectiveness (as selected by survey respondents) the strategies fall into two distinct groups. The six that were identified as the most effective form a group where respondents appear to be sending a consistent message. Once again they are indicating a clear preference for strategies where the teachers themselves are central to the process, where the strategies involve collaboration with others, feature feedback from colleagues or students, involve self assessment (and by implication reflection) and are very much classroom centred strategies.

The strategies identified in the bottom group of six are seen by respondents to be less effective ways to demonstrate evidence. These tend to be more external in nature, involve more formal feedback via referee reports and external observation, or feedback from surveys interviews and are those that feature comprehensive collection and compilation of evidence and annotated documentation.

If teachers are encouraged to move beyond the boundary of their own practice, to observe and reflect on the practice of a trusted colleague, they can move beyond self to a place where new learning can take place. This vicarious learning, through the observation of others in similar role positions, can provide opportunities not only for the affirmation of current practice, but also challenges to current practice, and access to new ways of knowing and being. (Robertson, 2011).

Question 3. What will be involved in engaging NSW DEC teachers in the National Professional Standards for Teachers particularly at the early career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead?

A major area of the NSW DEC's pilot study focussed on the future engagement of teachers in the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*, particularly at Highly Accomplished and Lead career stages. When presented with six different ways to introduce the Standards respondents identified the most useful way as *Engaging teachers in a scaffolded process that will assist them to develop evidence to meet the career stages of Highly Accomplished and Lead.*

Closely following this as a useful way to introduce the voluntary career stages was *Engaging principals and executives in professional learning that will facilitate introduction of the National Professional Standards for Teachers*.

Accessing guides and professional reading was rated by respondents as the least useful way to introduce the voluntary career stages.

The factors influencing teachers' decisions to undertake certification at Highly Accomplished and Lead were comprehensively probed. Of 17 listed factors, *Consideration of personal circumstances and commitments* (55.40%) was rated as the most important factor.

Also considered very important was a group of other factors including: *Encouragement and support from school executives and personnel* (49.00%), *Cost of the certification process* (48.20%), *Perceived increase in the likelihood of obtaining permanency or promotion* (46.30%) and *Flexible management of work and time associated with the certification process* (46.60%).

This group of high rating factors suggests that, at this point in the process of moving to the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*, teachers' preoccupations about engaging in the process of certification are very much at an immediate, practical and personal level.

Alongside these largely personal considerations is the significance that teachers place on encouragement and support from school executives and key personnel. This is a particularly useful finding for NSW DEC and other jurisdictions for consideration in relation to the transition to the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*.

If teachers are to be challenged to examine their professional practice, they will need to be working with leaders who lead through mutual influence (Robertson, 2011).

The trends were clear and predictable about the groups that respondents perceived would be most likely to engage in the voluntary career stages. Aspiring leaders were the standout group, with New Scheme Teachers and teachers currently seeking accreditation at the voluntary stages with the NSW Institute of Teachers, the next most significant. These were followed by Highly Accomplished Teachers and Teacher Mentors.

When asked to identify the groups considered most crucial in supporting teachers to achieve certification, selections were more evenly spread, with the most crucial groups considered to be Teacher Mentors (19%) and Principals (18%). Again leaders were identified as key to providing support for teachers. It would appear that respondents who have knowledge of how the Teacher Mentor role currently operates in NSW DEC schools, see this role as critical to supporting teachers in the transition to *National Professional Standards for Teachers*.

Deeper interrogation into the factors that would enable or inhibit the implementation of the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* revealed some trends consistent with previous findings as well as some new trends.

The *Cost involved in certification* process was considered the most significant inhibitor (79.60%) with the requirement of *Undertaking a rigorous process* (62.20%) also considered a factor that could inhibit implementation. As neither the cost or the process for the implementation of *National Professional Standards for Teachers* has yet to be articulated, it is likely that

respondents to this survey responded on the basis of their current experience of accreditation within the context of the NSW Institute of Teachers *Professional Teaching Standards*.

Obvious trends emerge as factors enabling implementation with respondents identifying two factors as more enabling than others. These were the *Capacity to assume a role that is focussed on developing teacher quality in others* (60.80%) and the *Relevance of the process of certification to a teacher's day to day work* (52.50%).

On one hand, the voice of respondents about the relevance of process sends a clear message about the design of future certification processes. On the other, the high rating for the *Capacity to assume roles focussed on developing others* suggests that many NSW DEC teachers have a level of awareness about what they will need to be demonstrating at these career stages.

Also of significance is the instance of a high neutral ranking in response to perceptions about whether the transition from NSW Institute of Teachers *Professional Teaching Standards* to *National Professional Standards for Teachers* would be an inhibitor or enabler. Predictably 43.70% of respondents indicated they were unsure, which is consistent with strong themes in the qualitative data gathered at the formal and focus group consultations and in the survey comments where many were preoccupied with the need for guidance, clarity, articulation and communication about the transition procession from the current NSW Institute of Teachers *Professional Teaching Standards* to *National Professional Standards for Teachers*.

On the subject of actual individual engagement with the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*, respondents were asked a very direct question about how they anticipated they would engage. Two very strong trends were consistently obvious across groups of respondents particularly when New Scheme and Existing Teacher groups were disaggregated. The first was the optimistic fact that respondents believed that they would primarily *Use the standards to inform their practice*. The second was the almost contradictory fact that almost as many respondents were unsure about how they would engage with the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*.

Finally, there were similar trends when New Scheme and Existing Teachers were asked if they believed teachers would be interested in seeking certification as a means of recognising them as exemplary classroom practitioners. Trends for both groups were consistent, with the 'yes' trend the strongest, followed by a very high proportion of respondents who were 'unsure', and then a significant 'no' trend.

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13 NSWIT

13.1 Introduction

13.1.1 Setting the Scene

13.1.1.1 Accreditation in NSW

The NSW Institute of Teachers is a statutory body within the portfolio of the Minister for Education and Communities. The Institute was established under the *Institute of Teachers Act 2004* and related regulations, *Institute of Teachers Regulation 2010*. The Institute operates with a Board of Governance, a Quality Teaching Council and Institute staff.

The Institute of Teachers supports quality teaching in all NSW schools. Its charter is to advance the status and standing of the teaching profession. The Institute oversees a system of accreditation and recognition of a teacher's professional capacity against professional standards. It also provides a process for the profession to influence the quality of teacher training and continuing professional development.

The Institute's responsibilities in supporting the quality of teachers in NSW schools include:

- i. review and approval of teacher education courses that qualify teachers
- ii. development and monitoring of policies ensuring appropriate and comparable accreditation practices by employers of teachers at each level of the NSW Professional Teaching Standards (Graduate, Professional Competence, Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership)
- iii. approval of providers of professional development, registered with the Institute for the purpose of supporting teachers with maintaining their accreditation at Professional Competence
- iv. provision of training and information to support stakeholders' understanding of accreditation processes.

The Institute works extensively with a wide variety of stakeholders including employers and employer representatives, the unions, principal groups, parent groups, the NSW Board of Studies, professional associations, the Deans of Education, members of the Australasian Teacher Regulatory Bodies, the Australian Institute of Teaching and Learning, representatives from DEEWR and other Australian Government agencies.

In NSW, teachers who have achieved the mandatory accreditation level of Professional Competence (equivalent to Proficient) 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. Half of the Professional Development undertaken must be courses or programs that are registered with the Institute following an approval process. The focus of this professional learning is to assist teachers with maintaining their practice at the standard of Competence/Proficient, so that they can continue to be registered (or accredited) to teach in NSW schools.

13.1.1.2 The pilot study

This pilot study has investigated the use of the National Professional Teaching Standards (NPST) for the accreditation processes that support teachers' professional learning. This has included

using the NPST in the process for registering providers of professional development (PD) and their use by teachers for planning and undertaking professional development that they identify that they need.

The pilot has involved participants from some of the major stakeholders of the process in NSW – teachers, teacher employers, universities, and training organisations.

13.1.2 Contextual Issues

13.1.2.1 Accreditation and NSW Standards

The NSW standards describe in detail what is expected of teachers at four levels, from graduate teacher to achieving Professional Leadership as a teacher. Accreditation is essential for teachers who begin teaching in NSW on or after 1 October 2004. Fully qualified teachers are given provisional accreditation when first employed and must gain full accreditation (Professional Competence) within a set timeframe.

Accreditation processes in NSW utilise the NSW teaching standards which is the level of detail that describes the work of teachers at each of the career stages. The equivalent detail for the national standards is the descriptor level. For example, teachers who need to demonstrate that they meet requirements for full registration must demonstrate that they meet the standards at the descriptor level. To maintain their accreditation, teachers must undertake PD that addresses at least one descriptor in each standard and all descriptors in Standard 6. PD providers must also demonstrate that their PD courses and programs address the standards at the descriptor level.

13.1.2.2 Implementing National Teaching Standards into processes for maintaining accreditation – mapping NSW and national standards

The National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) were agreed in December 2010 and launched in February 2011. The national standards have a similar structure to the NSW standards: four levels representing career stages, three domains and seven broad areas defining a teacher's work. Each career stage is differentiated by a set of descriptors.

A closer examination revealed that attempts to find direct matches for each describing statement would not always be successful. Because accreditation processes required by NSW legislation are already in operation, a detailed analysis of the new standards at the descriptor level with the current NSW standards was a necessary starting point. Stakeholders of the Institute were asking for advice on the standards and the implications of transferring to the new set. To provide a firm basis for advice, a full mapping exercise was undertaken. This work was undertaken during the first half of 2011. The analysis provided starting points for the preparation needed for implementation in 2013.

The process began with an examination of the structure and an analysis of the domain descriptions. Each of the national standard descriptors across the four levels was examined for closeness or direct equivalence to particular NSW standards. This exercise revealed that a 'scale of equivalence' would assist in documenting the findings. This scale was defined as:

- close/direct equivalence
- close/partial equivalence
- loose equivalence
- No equivalence

General comments on the comparisons made completed the exercise. To verify the usefulness, the NSW guides regarding evidence that meets particular standards were then also mapped to the national standards. An example of the mapping is shown in Appendix 1 and a set of slides summarising key points is at Appendix 2.

The mapping exercise was able to indicate some significant areas of difference that would need to be addressed by different areas of accreditation work. It was also able to show that the similarities in the approach taken should mean that teachers using NSW standards should not have difficulties working with the new set.

The anticipated implementation of National Standards within teachers' accreditation timeframes will need to occur at a time when accreditation cycles in NSW are at a critical juncture. The first teachers achieved full accreditation/registration in 2005, and this has steadily increased each year until the numbers of teachers undertaking PD for accreditation purposes currently stands at 18026 teachers (15 November 2011). From December 2010, some teachers have ended their first five year Professional Competence maintenance period and commenced their second.

In addition, providers of PD will also need assurance that the process of transferring PD approval from NSW standards to the NPST will not disrupt the availability of PD. The Institute also has invested considerable resources in a database where a range of users engage with the professional development records. PD providers upload courses and participation data and teachers also record and evaluate the PD they have participated in.

13.1.2.3 2011 Review of PD Providers

The period of approval of a large group of PD providers, including some large stakeholders, is due for renewal in May 2012. During 2011, the Institute has undertaken a review of a sample of Institute Registered PD providers to ascertain whether they have maintained compliance with the criteria on which they were originally endorsed. The process of the review and its findings has contributed an awareness of specific potential issues providers may have in providing PD that addresses teaching standards. This information is also relevant to the NPST project.

13.1.2.4 The current approval process for providers of Institute Registered professional development

The process of provider approval involves a number of stages.

1. Provider submission of provider application form by closing date after advice from the Institute regarding endorsement category and the representative sample of courses and programs
2. Analysis of submitted programs
3. Professional Learning Endorsement and Advisory Committee (PLEAC) considers application and the representative sample of courses
4. Quality Teaching Council (QTC) considers PLEAC's endorsement recommendations
5. Chief Executive approves the QTC recommended provider or program on behalf of the Minister for Education and Training

A full description of the process is in Appendix 3.

13.1.2.5 Voluntary accreditation at Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership

A further contextual issue relates to the voluntary accreditation of teachers at the levels of Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership. At the point at which the project utilising NPST for Proficient career stage commenced, 38 teachers had attained accreditation at Professional Accomplishment and 20 or more teachers were in the final stages of completing accreditation at this level or Professional Leadership.

When teachers are accredited at these levels, they are also required to maintain their accreditation and complete 100 hours of PD during their maintenance period, so during 2011, an Institute working group was engaged in developing a pilot process for approving PD as registered for this purpose against Professional Accomplishment or Professional Leadership standards.

The working group considered the process of approval for PD addressing Professional Competence standards as a basis for this development and consequently made some observations that could also contribute to the national teaching standards project. At this point, the working group has approved some courses and recommended a process for continuing approval of providers of PD that address standards at the levels of Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership.

13.1.2.6 Summary of contextual issues

The accreditation career stages in NSW have meant that policy and processes have been developed and implemented engaging teachers in various phases of accreditation. Endorsed PD providers are also engaged in the accreditation process and are the subject of a pilot review.

The implementation of NPST is therefore coming at a time that could create anxieties for teachers regarding the changes, and they will need access to confidence-building materials. In particular, as each fully accredited teacher maintains an individual PD record recording PD against specific NSW teaching standards, the PD area requires special attention.

13.2 Research Questions

This pilot study will investigate the use of the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) for teachers' professional development. The focus of the professional development is to assist NSW teachers with maintaining their practice at the standard of Proficient, so that they can continue to be registered (or accredited) to teach.

The pilot was designed to:

1. trial an approval process to endorse professional development providers of Institute registered professional development using the NPST.
2. collate a report on teacher identified professional development logged in Institute records
3. map existing Institute registered PD against new NPST

4. scope IT specifications in preparation for a new system for teachers to log their PD (replacing current system using NSW Standards)
5. develop and trial advice to support teachers, schools and professional development providers

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

Research Question 1: What process will be used to endorse professional development against the teaching standards?

The endorsement of professional development is a critical process to teacher quality. It is important that a strong coherent quality assurance model operates to support teacher quality. All schools and school systems have a financial investment in any system of professional development.

A clear process of evaluation of professional development needs to be articulated and implemented when moving to the NPST to encourage confidence in the quality of the professional development provision for teachers.

Since 2006, the NSW Institute of Teachers has been endorsing providers to provide professional development that supports teachers to maintain their accreditation at Professional Competence. The endorsement process relies on quality criteria incorporating course design that addresses the NSW Professional Teaching Standards. PD Providers, schools and school systems and teachers have an expectation that a quality assurance process will be used to endorse professional development.

A table describing the current endorsement process for professional development endorsement indicates the main features of the process used to trial endorsement under the National Professional Teaching Standards. See Appendix 3.

In relation to the context of a review of PD Providers and the working group to establish a new approval process for PD against Accomplishment and Leadership standards in 2011, and the finding that improvements to endorsement processes for professional development would be beneficial, two subsidiary questions provided a further framework for Research Question 1.

- Should the improvements be trialled in tandem with piloting use of the National Professional Teaching Standards in the endorsement process?
- Should the existing Institute process to endorse professional development be the basis of the process for trialling endorsement against the National Professional Teaching Standards?

It was agreed that the implementation of the National Professional Teaching Standards presented an opportunity to develop the foreshadowed improvements to the endorsement processes.

Research Question 2: What current NSW Institute Registered professional development already exists to address NPST?

The NSW Institute of Teachers has extensive records of courses registered against the NSW Professional Teaching Standards. This allows for reporting of the provision available to NSW teachers in relation to the standards being addressed by professional development (descriptor level NPST), types of professional development, geographical access, specific curriculum areas and learning stages and longitudinal data relating to the courses and participation in these courses.

To ensure that the Institute's policies can be implemented and that stakeholder confidence in the implementation of the NPST is fostered it was critical to determine the capacity of the existing Institute Registered professional development provision to address the NPST at the Proficient descriptor level. This data identified key messages for existing endorsed professional development providers, systems, schools and teachers.

Research Question 3: What IT system is needed to assist teachers to electronically record, evaluate and reflect on their professional development?

Teachers are required to undertake 100 hours of PD to maintain their Professional Competence accreditation over any five year period of teaching (seven years if their work is casual or part-time). The PD undertaken therefore has to be recorded in a way that enables the teacher to add new PD and see how they are progressing towards the requirement. Employers (principals and teacher accreditation authorities) may also need to monitor their progress. Providers of PD endorsed with the Institute must also upload courses and teacher participation data to the system. The NSW Institute implemented an online system for this in 2007. It records PD against specific NSW standards.

To have at least the same functions, with PD recorded potentially against either NSW standards or NPST, will require changing the software. As other changes are also required to accommodate teachers' PD records against higher voluntary levels of accreditation, and to improve or add functions, a new application is considered to be the best option.

Research Question 4: What teacher-identified professional development are teachers currently undertaking that will address NPST?

Teacher-identified professional development comprises one of the professional development requirements for the maintenance of accreditation period at the level of Professional Competence. Defining teacher-identified professional development has been an on-going issue for teachers seeking advice on what types of activities could be considered professional development and how to appropriately identify Standards. This has indicated that we need to provide more specific advice to teachers on teacher-identified professional development.

NSW Institute of Teachers is now able to obtain data from a critical mass of teachers uploading teacher-identified professional development, to examine how these activities map to the NSW Professional Teaching Standards. This will assist in understanding how existing teacher-identified professional development activities map to the NPST and how to best support the transition for teachers to the NPST.

Research Question 5: What advice will support school personnel and professional development providers with implementation of the national teaching standards in NSW?

Teachers accredited at Professional Competence undertake a five/seven year cycle of maintenance by demonstrating on-going competent teaching practice and undertaking structured continuing professional development. The first group of teachers accredited with the Institute has reached the end of their first cycle of maintenance, along with a critical mass of teachers progressing through the maintenance cycle, providing the Institute of Teachers with an opportunity to review and seek feedback from teachers and their supervisors around their experience. This is important for the Institute in light of the implementation of NPST, as it presents a chance to review existing support material and evaluate teachers' needs with regards to meeting the requirements.

Supporting advice for providers is a key aspect in the endorsement of professional development for the maintenance of Professional Competence. In the current context the following advice is given or sought at the various stages within the endorsement process:

1. Application advice and documents in the public domain from the Institute's website including:
 - a. *Becoming an Institute of Teachers' endorsed provider - Supporting the Maintenance of Accreditation at Professional Competence*
 - b. *Application Form To Become An Institute Of Teachers Endorsed Provider Of Professional Development - Supporting The Maintenance Of Accreditation At Professional Competence*
2. Advice from Institute Professional Development Officers regarding the application process, courses and programs which address the NSW Professional Teaching Standards and evidence requirements to show how the endorsement criteria are met
3. Feedback and advice on draft applications from Institute Professional Development Officers
4. Recommendations and feedback from the PLEAC regarding endorsement or why endorsement was not recommended
5. Further recommendations and feedback may be forthcoming from the Quality Teaching Council (QTC) as part of the final decision for endorsement

13.3 Methodological Considerations

13.3.1 Planning

The starting point for the pilot was to investigate an area of accreditation that affected large numbers of accredited teachers and other stakeholders in NSW. This was the case with professional development, because the numbers of teachers maintaining their accreditation with the requirement of PD grows substantially each year (by approximately 7000) and because validation and monitoring processes require the online participation of principals, PD delegates and PD providers.

The development of PD for accreditation over the past six years has resulted in a large amount of data on PD undertaken in that period and logged against specific teaching standards. The value of this data will be greater if the records can be simultaneously attached to NSW and national standards, and teachers are able to see their ongoing log during the period of maintaining accreditation as a complete record.

Five broad areas were identified as requiring work over the following twelve-month period, if the transition to national standards were to be implemented without difficulty. Five research questions were developed to provide an investigative focus for the five areas.

The initial planning also considered what other work was underway that might be drawn on to leverage more value for a project that had to operate simultaneously with a larger implementation strategy for the state of NSW. This identified 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 national standards and descriptors which were all in progress when the pilot was being planned.

- Critical to the transition in NSW was an analysis of the two sets of standards for differences that would need to be accommodated. The basis of this work had been undertaken earlier in 2011. Aspects of the pilot that could utilise this work were determined.
- A review of PD providers commenced in 2011 to help formulate the process for ongoing monitoring of the quality of PD undertaken by providers registered with the Institute. A sample of providers had been selected to participate in the review process.
- A Quality Teaching Council (QTC) working group devised an approval process for PD providers of PD that addressed Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership standards to assist teachers maintain their accreditation. The working group completed the approval process with a trial group of providers.

This work identified opportunities already scheduled where discussion on aspects of using the national standards, could be undertaken with stakeholders. It also identified useful sources of data. An analysis of these against the research questions identified the need for additional activities which were planned.

13.3.2 Timeline of project events

A timeline of events was drawn up to conclude by mid-November (see Appendix 4). The timing was adjusted during the project when needed. The project helps to inform the Institute's NPST implementation strategy.

13.3.3 Data sources

A number of existing and new sources of data needed for the project were identified.

- The mapping of current NSW standards to national standards
- The Institute's database of registered and teacher-identified PD
- Issues raised by PD providers during meetings regarding the application for endorsement process and meetings reporting existing Institute Registered professional development
- Professional Learning Endorsement and Advisory Committee (PLEAC) minutes summarising discussion regarding the approval of providers and consideration of applications
- Meeting notes, teacher and providers surveys, review panel notes, provider review reports, teachers' online evaluations of Institute Registered professional development, External Review of Pilot Review of Endorsed provider Report and Pilot Review of Endorsed Providers
- Issues raised by stakeholders at regular/scheduled meetings

- The log of IT issues/needs raised by teachers contacting the Institute about PD requirements
- Issues raised by teachers and their supervisors about the impact of national standards on NSW accreditation (from forums and focus group).

13.3.3.1 Development of new instruments

The focus group session required the development of focus questions to collect a rich collection of data efficiently. The information was required as a basis for developing new advice on professional development. The two key areas were the features of good professional development and the professional development and information needs of key school personnel involved in accreditation processes requiring professional development.

The focus group questions are shown in Appendix 5.

13.3.3.2 Data sources for Research Question 1

The 2011 Pilot Review of endorsed providers is a rich source of feedback and information from a variety of key Institute stakeholders particularly endorsed providers, members of the Institute's Professional Learning Endorsement and Advisory Committee (PLEAC) and accredited teachers.

The Pilot Review included a Panel Day with the panel made up of members of the PLEAC and teachers accredited at Professional Competence. The Panel reviewed evidence submitted to demonstrate the providers continued compliance to the endorsement criteria, reviewed the evaluations of specified courses from the Institute's online evaluation facility and interviewed the provider using questions developed specifically for that provider's situation. The provider also had the opportunity to present any information and ask any questions that they wished as well as put forward any improvements that they thought would be in the interests of better professional development provision for the teachers accredited at Professional Competence in NSW.

For each provider review session, a summary of the online evaluations for the nominated courses/programs included in the review was prepared for the panel and the provider. The evaluations were provided by teachers who participated in the course/program. Teachers are required to complete the online evaluation form in order for the accredited hours and standards attached to the Institute Registered course to be included for the purposes of maintaining their accreditation. The evaluation form is provided. At interview, the provider was supplied a copy of the evaluation summary. The sample size of responses for the providers varied significantly, with a range of 1 – 336 responses across all providers. This variation was due to the varying nature of the providers who participated in the review and, in part, to the proportion of teachers maintaining their accreditation.

13.3.3.3 Data sources for Research Questions 2 and 4

The sources of data available for research questions 2 and 4 had to be considered within the timeframe for the project. The PD records in the Institute's database of both Institute Registered and Teacher Identified PD are considerable and the analysis needed could not be undertaken on all records. For Research Question 2, Institute Registered PD that had been delivered between 15 November 2010 and 15 November 2011 was considered to provide a sufficient number of the most up to date PD provided. 2850 courses were registered during this period.

For Research Question 4, the same period of time was selected to trial the type of analysis that would provide useful findings. However, the most useful information required text analysis, so a change to the sample size was recommended for further analysis. This was determined to be Teacher Identified PD completed between the dates 1 October 2011 and 15 November 2011. 3687 Teacher Identified activities were recorded from 1120 teachers during this period.

13.3.3.4 Data sources for Research Question 3

Data sources for this research area comprised records of logging issues and forums (e.g. provider review training); Institute user issues; identification of needs in responding to teacher queries for assistance; new policy requirements

13.3.3.5 Data sources for Research Question 5

Research Question 5 had several sources of data: ongoing logging of PD issues with the Institute's PD team; issues emerging from the PD provider review and the working group developing an approval process for PD providers for Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership. In addition, given the need to develop specific advice for teachers and other school personnel, further data was sought through focus group sessions with teachers and supervisors of teachers.

Mapping was undertaken to map NSW Standards to the NPST and then confirmed by mapping national to NSW; a 4 point scale was used to determine match proximity and particular comments or issues were recorded.

13.4 Results from the Engagement

13.4.1 Data Collection and Management

13.4.1.1 Data collected on process for approval of endorsed providers of Institute Registered professional development

13.4.1.1.1 Data from the 2011 review of endorsed providers

The pilot review of endorsed providers commenced in 2010. The data collected from this pilot review included minutes of Professional Learning Endorsement and Advisory Committee (PLEAC) and Quality Teaching Council (QTC) discussions, review panel working notes, provider survey, and provider review reports.

The Institute used the above data to evaluate and improve processes and current support.

13.4.1.1.2 Working group on pilot approval process for endorsed providers of Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership professional development

Notes from observations and discussion with potential providers while using the application template were collated, as they provided data about provider's interpretation of the process documentation and the level of the Standards.

Notes from the working party discussions where recommendations for approval process and endorsement of providers were documented.

Minutes of discussion of progress reports to QTC regarding approval process of endorsed providers at Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership were also reviewed for information.

13.4.1.1.3 Trial of revised process using NPST with a small sample of providers

Notes from observations and discussion with potential providers while using the application template were collated, as they provided data about provider's interpretation of the process documentation and the level of the Standards.

PLEAC minutes of discussion considering provider applications and the process for endorsement of providers were reviewed for advice.

13.4.1.2 Data collected on registered PD from Institute's database

The Institute's database has the capacity to report against a range of fields, which includes teaching standards, curriculum, geographical access and type of activities. The data sample for this pilot project needed to be focused on the standards.

The data sample selected for the project comprised registered courses that were delivered during the period 15 November 2010 to 15 November 2011. The sample did not include sessions that were repeated. There were 2850 courses during this period.

Data was downloaded from the database that provided a list of Institute Registered courses that addressed individual Professional Competence standards. This data was then mapped to the NPST descriptors at the Proficient level. The frequency that individual descriptors were addressed in the sample of Institute Registered professional development was captured in the data.

NPST descriptors 2.4 and 5.3 did not have a match to the NSW Professional Teaching Standards in the mapping exercise. To determine whether any professional development was registered that addressed the two descriptors, a scan across titles and course descriptions for registered courses during this period was conducted.

The Institute also worked with a small sample of existing providers who used existing Institute Registered courses and identified the descriptors at the Proficient level of the NPST that they felt were addressed by these courses. Observations and discussions were recorded of their perceptions of this task.

13.4.1.3 Data collected on IT issues or needs

IT issues/needs have been raised through continuing responses to the issues of teachers and other school personnel and PD providers through approval and review processes.

An analysis of additional requirements relating to emerging needs has also been made. These needs relate to using national standards, adding functions for PD endorsed against higher levels (Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership), greater use of reports for monitoring by employers. In addition, information has also been compiled from internal users' reports and needs regarding the current PD system and improvement.

13.4.1.4 Data on teacher-identified PD from Institute’s database

A sample of teacher-identified professional development was generated from the Institute’s database of PD, for the period from 1 October 2011 to 15 November 2011. This six-week period encompassed the two week school vacation period in NSW, and the beginning of Term 4 for schools.

The sample of teacher-identified professional development entries for the above period totalled 3687 separate activities from 1120 teachers. The sample data generated included the course title, a description provided by the teacher, and the NSW Professional Teaching Standards addressed by the activity.

Teacher Identified Professional Development Participation Details	
Title of activity*:	Supporting Students with Special Needs
Type of activity*:	Course
Commenced Date*:	18/03/2011
End Date*:	18/03/2011
Duration* (Hours):	3
Standards*:	2.2.2, 2.2.5
Short Explanation*:	This course demonstrated how classroom teachers can meet the needs of students with learning difficulties in the mainstream classroom. The course presenters showed how students with various disabilities have varying rates of development than the general pattern of students, particularly in the areas of fine motor and gross motor skills. This has supported me to write effective Individualised Learning Plans (IEPs) to meet students' needs (2.2.2). The need to support social interactions and development with these students was also emphasised, therefore social skills activities have been implemented into my daily routines (2.2.2). The course presented different teaching and learning strategies to support students with special needs, some of which I have adopted in my classroom program (2.2.5).

Figure 13-1 : Example of teacher log of Teacher-Identified PD

An overall count of the Standards addressed by the sample PD activities was conducted, in order to assist with mapping to NPST. A text analysis of the descriptions provided by teachers was undertaken, to determine patterns and commonalities of activities that teachers undertake for their professional development. The professional development undertaken by teachers varied in type across the teaching domains and in delivery, including conferences, workshops, action research projects, professional reading, network meetings, school-based professional development, and one-day training.

13.4.1.5 Data collected on advice to support school personnel and PD Providers

The pilot project was able to draw from the following data sources to examine the advice that would be required to support school personnel and professional development providers:

1. Meeting notes recorded against focus group session. Focus group comprised of teachers maintaining their accreditation and their supervisors (either principal or mentor). Participants were drawn from each school sector across metropolitan and rural NSW.

2. Ongoing notes from teachers, support personnel and principals regarding enquiries and feedback
3. Notes and feedback from presentations to school personnel, including focus sessions for principals, supporting personnel such as mentors, and teachers
4. Teacher survey of teachers involved in the pilot provider review panels
5. Regular scheduled meetings with providers.
6. Notes from presentations to providers
7. Notes from enquiries, questions and feedback from potential providers and current providers
8. Data sources used for Research Question 1 were also used in this section to improve the support offered to providers. These sources were as follows:
 - i. PLEAC and QTC minutes and discussion
 - ii. Review panel working notes
 - iii. Provider survey
 - iv. Provider review reports
 - v. Online teacher evaluation reports
 - vi. Working group notes and observations for the approval process for endorsed providers of Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership
 - vii. Notes from observations and discussion with potential providers using the NPST in the application process

13.4.2 Analysis of the Data

13.4.2.1 Analytical Procedures

13.4.2.1.1 Research Question 1: What process will be used to endorse professional development against the teaching standards?

In relation to the approval of endorsed providers, the analysis focussed on the quality assurance criteria, the endorsement process, application documentation, Institute support and Information Technology resources.

For the online evaluations of Institute Registered courses that were provided as part of the pilot review of endorsed providers, the online evaluation considers four domains:

- Participant's Reaction – 5 questions, rating scale 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much)
- Participant's Learning – 1 question, short answer
- Participant's use of knowledge and skills – 2 questions, one yes/no response, one short answer
- Benefits for student learning – 1 question, short answer

The template for teacher evaluation of Institute Registered courses is in Appendix 6.

Teacher's individual evaluations were collated for the nominated courses (up to 5) offered by the provider and used to produce the summary report for the panels and the providers. The summary report reflected general themes/issues of responses for each short answer question in the evaluation and average scores across the each of the rated responses.

13.4.2.1.2 Research Question 2: What existing NSW Institute Registered professional development already exists to address NPST?

Regarding Institute Registered professional development, reports of registered courses and programs for a one-year period were considered. The NSW Standards were mapped to the NPST descriptors at the Proficient level. In a number of cases where multiple NSW Standards map to NPST descriptors, a consideration of potential data error through the repetition of courses generating higher frequencies was needed. In two cases, NPST descriptors could not match NSW Standards and this required further additional analysis of course titles and descriptions registered for that period.

13.4.2.1.3 Research Question 3: What IT system is needed to assist teachers to electronically record, evaluate and reflect on their professional development?

In relation to IT specifications, data sourced from all user groups since 2006 was collated and the data was scanned for patterns, gaps, contradictions and confirmations. This allowed for the identification of broad areas of improvement that will form the basis of further investigation.

13.4.2.1.4 Research Question 4: What teacher-identified professional development are teachers currently undertaking that will address NPST?

The reports generated from teacher-identified professional development entries were from a shorter period, as a content analysis needed to be generated to determine learning fields of teacher participation. The content analysis also provided information about teachers' understanding of the Standards and the role of professional development in the accreditation process. This information also provided data regarding the understanding of school leadership personnel of the Standards and the role of professional development in the accreditation process.

13.4.2.1.5 Research Question 5: What supporting advice will support school personnel and professional development providers with the implementation of the national teaching standards in NSW?

In relation to supporting advice for teachers, supervisors and endorsed providers, a proportion of the data had been analysed in relation to Research Questions 1, 2, 3 and 4. A further analysis of the results was required to enable a more focussed approach to the advice to clarify purpose, requirements and processes.

13.4.2.2 Results

13.4.2.2.1 Research Question 1: What process will be used to endorse professional development against the teaching standards?

Data from the pilot review indicated that provider endorsement categories needed to be clearly articulated at the application stage. In order to more clearly define the scope of endorsement and expectations of an endorsed provider. The ongoing PLEAC minutes confirmed the need to make provision for the range of providers that can support teacher quality in NSW. Clearer advice around the application requirements to meet the endorsement criteria for those categories was confirmed by the analysis of the data. The review panel working notes and reports further confirmed the importance of clearly articulated endorsement categories, to ensure providers work within their scope of endorsement and have integrated the endorsement conditions into their practice.

The provider review reports indicated that providers, in general, were operating within the scope of their endorsement and complied with the endorsement criteria. An analysis of the reports indicated that areas of improvement for providers related to the implementation of continuous improvement in operational systems and on the provider's use of evaluation data in their provision of future professional development. In relation to the Institute, the reports confirmed the current approval process and highlighted areas requiring improvement and/or investigation. Areas such as the Institute's summarised teacher evaluation reports to providers, supporting advice (the subject of Research Question 5), and IT specifications as it relates to provider's use of the online database (the subject of Research Question 3).

The general approval process was confirmed through the working group for the approval of providers at Professional Accomplishment and Professional Leadership, and the observation and discussion with individual providers working through the process. It was clear that the following improvements were required to assist the process. With the required improvements, the *Application form to become a provider of professional development – proficient teacher level* allowed for a clearer contextual focus for both the provider and the PLEAC when the following were included:

- Rationale for the course
- Summary of the course
- Further teaching opportunities added to application form

These inclusions, combined with the more clearly articulated endorsement categories, give the approval bodies a clearer and more reliable overview of the provider's representative sample of professional development courses.

The above observations also indicated that providers needed support around the interpretation of the NPST, particularly those that had worked closely with the NSW Professional Teaching Standards for a number of years. For example, one provider found

applying the NPST to a course addressing effective communication strategies limiting. This signals that advice to providers about the use of the NPST in this area needs emphasis.

13.4.2.2.2 Research Question 2: What existing NSW Institute Registered professional development already exists to address NPST?

The NSW Institute of Teachers has 175 endorsed providers. These providers supply teachers accredited at Professional Competence with Institute Registered professional development, which is one of the requirements for the maintenance of accreditation. As of the 15 November 2011, 2850 courses and 6638 sessions have been registered on the Institute’s database. This professional development has been the subject of numerous reports since 2006 across fields relating to the capacity of courses to address Standards, curriculum/syllabus areas, geographical access, teaching fields of accredited teachers, and teacher participation. These reports have led to targeted advice for providers, assisting them in directing their provision to actual teacher need.

The sample revealed that, generally, the existing Institute Registered courses address the NPST at the level of the standards. Similarly, this was the case for Teacher Identified professional development.

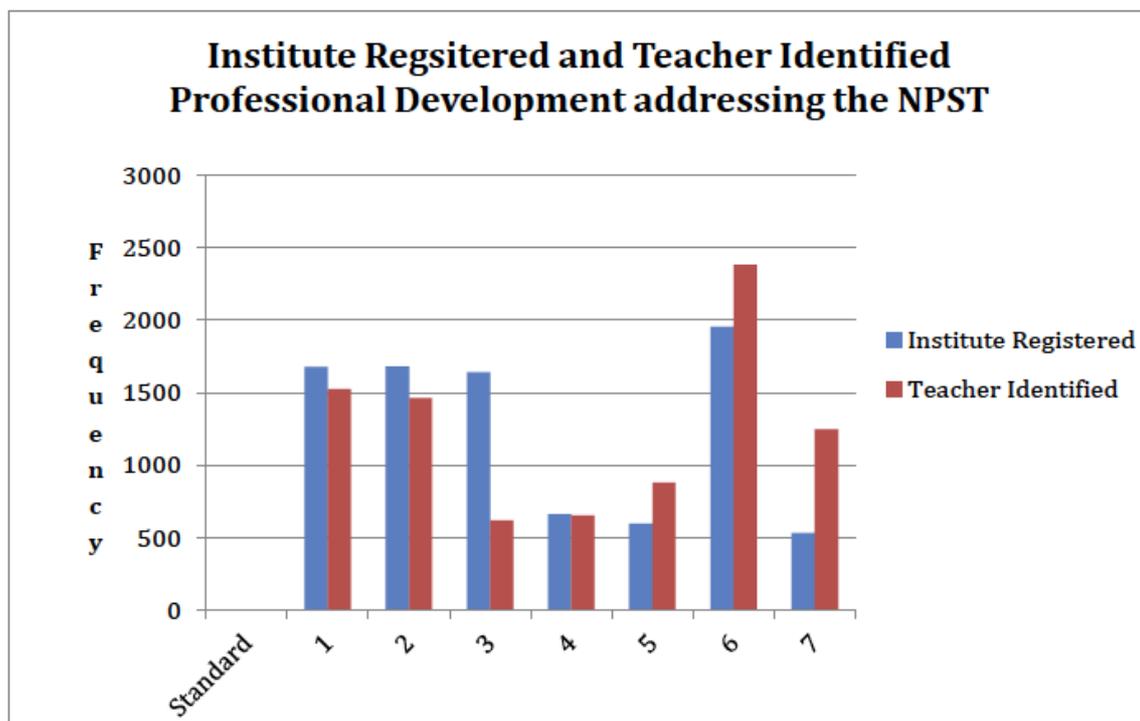


Figure 13-2 : Institute and Teacher Identified PD addressing the NPST

1613 Institute registered courses addressed descriptor 6.2 (Proficient level) which focuses on the participation in professional learning and improve practice. Five NSW Standards can be incorporated into descriptor 6.2 (Proficient level).

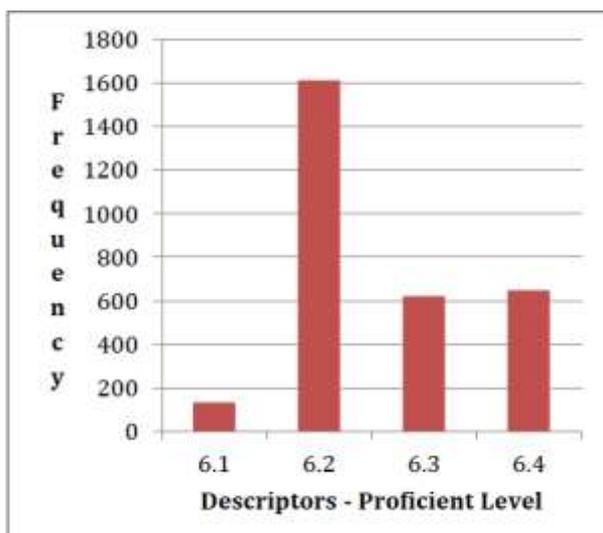


Figure 13-4 : Institute Registered courses addressing Standard 6 at the Proficient level of the NPST

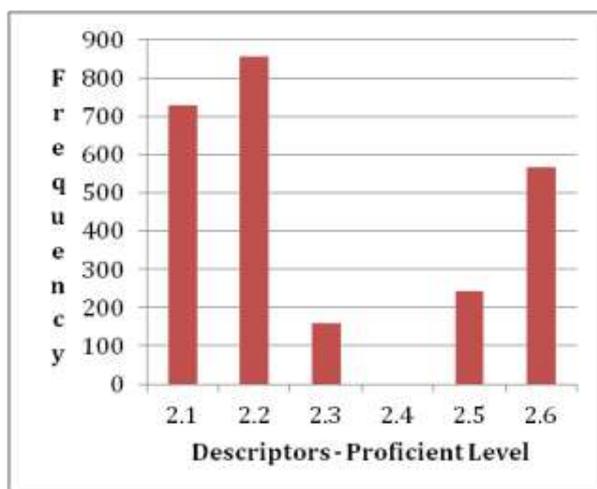


Figure 13-5 : Institute Registered courses addressing Standard 2 at the Proficient level of the NPST

983 courses addressed descriptor 1.5 (Proficient level) which focuses on differentiated teaching strategies to meet the learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.

Course data for Standard 2 indicates that descriptors 2.1 and 2.2 and 2.6 are highly represented. These descriptors focus on content and how to teach it with descriptor 2.6 focusing on Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The high representation of courses focusing on curriculum content is to be expected as the Institute has been mapping registered courses since 2007 against teaching standards, curriculum areas and geographical areas. This advice has helped target teacher support.

Descriptor 2.4 was also considered via a scan of course titles and descriptions. These tended to be conference activities and workshops supporting teachers implementing NSW curriculum which incorporates this knowledge area. As the Institute requires providers to identify standards/descriptors reports could be downloaded regarding courses addressing descriptor 2.4. The Institute will also need to emphasise this descriptor as an requiring attention from PD providers.

Descriptor 6.1 is identified in this analysis as an area that requires support. The low representation of Institute registered courses addressing descriptor 6.1 confirms the finding from the analysis of Teacher Identified PD. This was also supported through the teacher and supervisor forums. The Institute will need to provide more focused advice on the use of the standards and advice from colleagues to identify and plan professional learning needs.

Appendix 7 reports on the number of Institute Registered courses addressing the descriptors at the Proficient level of the NPST.

13.4.2.2.3 Research Question 3: What IT system is needed to assist teachers to electronically record, evaluate and reflect on their professional development?

The need for a new application that enables each teacher to maintain an ongoing log of PD of three types (Institute Registered, Teacher Identified and Postgraduate study) has been confirmed by the sources of data. The broad description that emerges at this point is focussed on user needs:

- teachers can record details of PD undertaken during each period of maintenance, for each of the three possible levels of accreditation and evaluate
- PD providers can upload details of Institute Registered PD for each of the three possible levels of accreditation, and the participation by individual teachers in that PD
- Principals and/or PD delegates – can validate Teacher Identified PD entries of teachers in their school and monitor teacher’s progress in complying with accreditation requirements
- Institute staff and TAAs can monitor progress of individuals and groups of teachers and make reports of that data

Additional descriptions of functions required:

- Records for teachers require the recording and collation of hours and minutes completed.
- An evaluation function, completed by teachers, is required for IR PD
- A validation function, completed by principals or PD delegates is required for TI PD
- An upload of participation data completed by IR PD provider, is required for IR PD provider
- IR provider’s level of approval (accreditation level and specific standard/descriptors) is recorded and will determine what information can be added.
- Teachers have a sophisticated search function for IR PD. They can search by standard and standard descriptor, course name, curriculum area, syllabus, stage of learning, geographic area of delivery, session delivery town/suburb location, participation mode (e.g. face to face attendance, online participation), session date, PD provider, time period or by combinations of these categories.
- PD for Accomplishment and Lead accreditation can also be accessed by teachers accredited at lower levels; PD at standards lower than accreditation level of the teacher can be viewed but not recorded against.
- TI PD for Accomplishment and Lead has an additional category (professional commitment/not) that requires collation of hours completed
- PD (both IR and TI) ability to look up multiple sets of standards (NSW and national);
- Lookup tables for two sets of standards at each level. All PD to be mapped against both standards OR one set on basis of a teacher’s accreditation date.
- Selection of standards by users to allow for multiple selection in one action
- Providers upload of participation data can be for individuals or for multiples of teachers in one school
- Providers upload of a course can allow for single or multiple sessions of the same course: sessions may vary by date or location
- Syllabus selection can allow for single or multiple syllabuses
- Providers can alter session date or session location prior to the session occurring
- Records of PD courses and programs, including PD completed through approved university courses, to be separate system from teacher qualifications (those necessary for provisional or conditional accreditation)
- Reporting functions to be available for teacher, PD provider, Institute office, principal and TAA/employer users. In general reports will need to show progress of individual teachers and specified groups of teachers (school, employer etc.) towards meeting requirements. Reports will need to access information from PD system and the general CRM database and collate onto reports. Report relating to individual teachers will be readily available to Institute office users on a teacher’s Institute record. The range of reports and information to be included will be further specified.

13.4.2.2.4 Research Question 4: What teacher-identified professional development are teachers currently undertaking that will address NPST?

The NSW Teaching Standards were mapped to the NPST at the descriptor level for the Proficient career stage. Teacher-identified professional development entries for the period October 1 – November 15 2011 were collated and analysed.

At the level of the NPST, teachers were able to participate in teacher-identified activities that addressed all seven Standards (see Appendix 8). Most teachers participated in teacher-identified activities addressing Standard 6. This reflects the accreditation requirement that NSW accredited teachers address all the Standards in the NSW Teaching Standards addressing continuing professional development (Element 6). This explains the over-representation of this category.

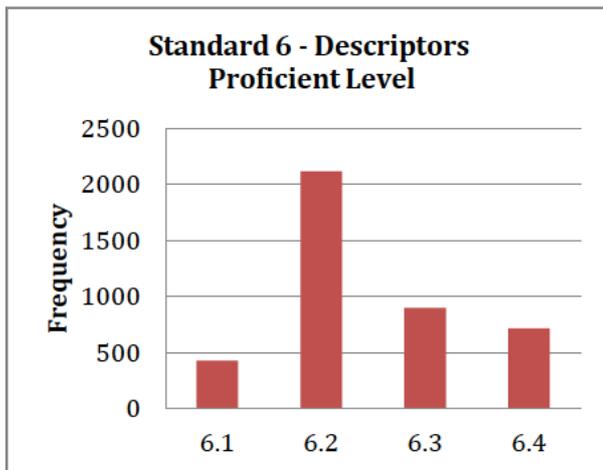


Figure 13-6 : Teacher Identified PD addressing Standard 6 at the Proficient level of the NPST

At the descriptor level of NPST, teachers were able to participate in teacher-identified activities that addressed most descriptors at the Proficient career stage.

In cases where a number of NSW Standards are combined to address one NPST at the descriptor level, this has led to a higher representation of that Standard.

Descriptor 2.4 and 5.3 required a scan across all title and description entries and an analysis for the period to determine whether these descriptors had been met, as there was no direct match to particular NSW Professional Teaching Standards. This scan indicated that there were activities that addressed these descriptors. These were not frequent.

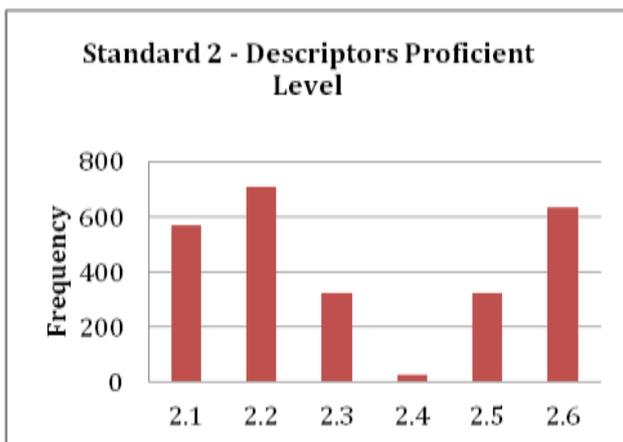


Figure 13-7 : Teacher Identified PD addressing Standard 2 at the Proficient level of the NPST

A content analysis of the entries considered the NPST domains of teaching that teachers identified as the focus of these activities. The most addressed area was in the professional knowledge domain, considering how students learn and how to cater for their needs. This area covered supporting students with special needs, differentiated strategies to support all students, cultural understandings and linguistic

development, and catering for different learning styles. Furthermore, the content analysis also indicated that teachers developed their understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.

The second most identified area by teachers was content knowledge, specifically curriculum which is also in the professional knowledge domain. In NSW, teachers directly focussed on the implementation of BOS syllabus documents, which was reflected through these activities. Further interrogation of the Institute's data relating to curriculum would assist the Institute in providing strategic advice to PD providers in light of the implementation of the Australian Curriculum.

Aspects of technology and professional engagement activities were also reflected in the sample.

Whilst assessment and reporting were represented, it is likely that the time of year in which the sample was drawn from has influenced the lower representation of this area.

The data analysis also revealed that a number of entries described activities that reflected the work of teachers rather than their professional development. For example, parent/teacher interviews and coordinating events, such as excursions and sports carnivals, are part of the work of teachers. This indicates that the Institute need to develop further support material to clarify the nature of professional development and its role in the accreditation process. As the teacher-identified professional development involves the teacher describing the activity and their supervisor/mentor validating this as professional development undertaken, the support needs to target groups across the system. Support material needs to be directed to teachers, their support personnel, principals, and systems.

13.4.2.2.5 Research Question 5: What supporting advice will support school personnel and professional development providers with the implementation of the national teaching standards in NSW?

Teachers

The forum of teachers and supervisors indicated that support material should be practical in nature, giving advice about logging professional development, the importance of evaluations, and explaining teacher-identified professional development. Teachers felt they needed a clearer explanation of the requirements and processes for the maintenance of accreditation at Professional Competence period, and would find annual reminders helpful.

The teacher forum considered a small group of focus questions (see Appendix 5) around what is good and useful professional development. The results of the discussion indicated that teachers found value in local professional development (school-level) that directly addressed their needs and those of the students they teach. In addition, engaging in professional development through professional bodies (teaching associations, Key Learning Area networks) was deemed beneficial, as teachers would garner subject specific advice and resources relevant to their teaching area. Some teachers representing the K-6 teaching area indicated that action research projects in collaboration with a consultant were useful to support their implementation of learning programs and enhancing the quality of their teaching.

It was evident from the discussions with teachers that support material needs to encourage dialogue about the nature of professional development and professional learning, and its use at the personal level, school level and the systemic level. Furthermore the support material would need to cater to a range of targeted professional learning planning tools addressing the NPST that could be used in a variety of school contexts.

The development of support materials about teacher-identified professional development was highlighted as an area of need for teachers and supervisors/principals who validate this category of professional development. This need was reinforced through the process of interrogating data from teachers' professional development entries under the category of teacher-identified professional development and the focus group discussion. A number of teacher-identified entries have identified activities that are work-related rather than professional development. These activities have been validated by supervisors as appropriate professional development. For example, parent/teacher interviews and coordinating events, such as excursions and sports carnivals, are part of the work of teachers.

The Institute has developed advice for teachers who are maintaining their accreditation that will be trialled in 2012.

Support School Personnel

Discussions with principals and supervisors indicated they needed to be included in the process, similarly understanding requirements and processes, and with advice around better supporting teachers maintaining their accreditation. This group felt that advice around collaborative structures to support teachers' professional learning would better position them to foster a systematic approach to the maintenance of accreditation period.

During the forum, principals and supervisors expressed the need for support material around assisting teachers to develop professional learning plans that addressed the Standards, student learning needs, school priorities and teachers' professional interests. It was also felt that advice about ongoing support through professional discussions with colleagues within school and beyond would help support the overall process. This finding correlates to the results found through the teacher discussion.

Providers

The data sources used in Research Question 1 were consistent in the finding that support material in this area needed to clearly state the principles that were used for endorsement to make them clear to providers who will support teacher development across the career stages of the NPST. During the trial approval process of providers at the Proficient level the endorsement principles for providers of initial teacher education were integrated into the process. The trial indicated that these principles were useful and needed to be included in the endorsed provider support.

The data sources indicated that further improvements were required in key support material, particularly the application form and the manual:

- *Becoming an Institute of Teachers' endorsed provider - Supporting the Maintenance of Accreditation at Professional Competence*
- *Application Form To Become An Institute Of Teachers Endorsed Provider Of Professional Development - Supporting The Maintenance Of Accreditation At Professional Competence.*

This related to more explicit advice regarding endorsement categories, the type of evidence required to demonstrate compliance with endorsement criteria and an application checklist to self-evaluate their application prior to submission. The application template was amended so

that contextual information about sample courses could help focus the provider's application and provide a more reliable snapshot for the PLEAC.

The provider survey indicated that providers were keen to have summary data from teachers' evaluations relating to their courses. The Institute will investigate reports of evaluation data that would meet the providers' needs while maintaining teacher confidentiality.

The teacher and principal/supervisor forum and the online teacher evaluation data provided data around teachers' perception of valuable professional development. These findings are useful for providers when designing courses and programs to meet teacher needs. The online evaluations and teacher forums revealed that participants responded positively to the Institute Registered course/program and find value in the professional development in which they participated. The content of the courses/programs included for the purposes of the provider review varied across a range of themes in education, including literacy, numeracy, assessment, curriculum differentiation, technology, classroom management, leadership, child protection, NAPLAN and HSC assessments, and the Australian Curriculum. The delivery modes of the nominated courses/programs included face-to-face sessions, online and school-based sessions.

Aspects that were identified as useful by teachers in their evaluations of the courses/programs included supplementary resources and course materials, practical components, expert presenters, suggested teaching strategies, group discussion, the flexibility of online delivery and on-going support from facilitators/presenters after the course. Teachers generally identified consistent limitations, of both the courses and their application of the learning from the courses, across the nominated courses/programs. These issues included limited access to technology or other resources, lack of interactivity in course presentation and personal time constraints to implement learning.

A communication strategy developed by the Institute, where key messages are disseminated via the endorsed provider manual, reports from the pilot review of endorsed providers and bulletins would assist providers.

Through the various pilot projects, discussions with providers indicated that they were interested in implementation information regarding the NPST. Current endorsed providers are interested in the transition process from NSW Standards to the NPST. Potential providers face different implementation issues with regards to the NPST. For example, existing providers will need to consider the interpretation of the descriptors of the NPST and will need time to consider whether existing courses address the descriptors and whether they have gaps in their provision. Both groups will need to develop new materials to address the descriptors of the NPST. They may need to be involved in an IT trial through the Institute (an IT solution that may translate NSW Standards to NPST descriptors). The Institute may need to investigate a differentiated process for existing providers currently working with the NSW Standards and potential providers who will commence with the NPST.

13.4.3 Summary

Significant preparation is needed to transition NSW accreditation processes to national standards without impeding progress for stakeholders.

1. The use of PD for NSW accreditation requirements requires a range of actions to make this transition. This includes making changes to some accreditation processes, developing new IT software, developing more targeted advice to specific stakeholders about the new standards and about the use of PD for accreditation.

2. The pilot project and other related work within the Institute confirmed the general approval process for endorsed providers of Institute Registered professional development. This work also indicated areas for review and improvement, such as the clarification of endorsement categories, the integration of continuous improvement processes for endorsed and potential providers, and clear advice about the use of the NPST descriptors in the endorsement of providers and registration of courses.
3. The coverage of professional development against the national standard descriptors is generally good, but there are some gaps where there is a change of emphasis to a descriptor or a new descriptor.
 - a. The current provision of Institute Registered professional development and teacher-identified professional development clearly addresses the NPST at the Standard level. Generally, at the descriptor level most descriptors are also addressed by the current provision of Institute Registered and teacher-identified professional development. Descriptors 2.4 and 5.3 do not have a matching NSW Standard. The representation of courses addressing these descriptors is therefore low. The Institute will need to provide advice for providers and teachers to support them in addressing these descriptors.
4. 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.
5. Identifying teacher professional learning needs using the NPST descriptors will be essential. In both Institute Registered professional development and teacher-identified professional development, descriptor 6.1 occurred infrequently compared to other descriptors in Standard 6. This data correlates with the discussion data from the teacher, supervisor and principal forum. The development and implementation of professional development advice and planning tools addressing the NPST that could be used in a variety of school contexts will need to occur.
6. The support material needs to be developed within the Institute's communication strategy and plan regarding the implementation of the NPST. This material needs to target specific stakeholder groups that engage with the provision of professional development that supports teacher accreditation.

13.5 Resources

13.5.1 Resources Developed for the Pilot

The following resources were revised through the pilot project.

13.5.1.1 For Providers

1. *Applying to Become an Institute of Teachers Endorsed Provider of Professional Development Manual*

13.5.1.2 For Teachers

1. *"Teacher's Guide" – one page*
2. *"Teacher Support Material"*

13.5.1.3 For Principals, Professional Development Delegates and Teacher Accreditation Authorities (TAAs)

1. *“Principals, Professional Development Delegates and Teacher Accreditation Authorities (TAAs) Guide” – one page*
2. *“Principals, Professional Development Delegates and Teacher Accreditation Authorities (TAAs) Guide”*

13.5.2 Existing Resources Used in the Pilot

The following resources supported various components of the pilot project.

1. *Mapping of National Professional Standards for Teachers to NSW Professional Teaching Standards, NSW Institute of Teachers, 2011*
2. *Maintaining accreditation at Professional Competence – Your Maintenance of Accreditation Report, Your Continuing Professional Development Information for Teachers, NSW Institute of Teachers, 2010*
3. *Logging on to your account and evaluating Institute Registered courses, PowerPoint presentation, NSW Institute of Teachers, 2011*
4. *School Principal’s Guide and PD Delegate’s Guide, NSW Institute of Teachers, 2010*
5. *Principal’s Guide – Maintaining Accreditation at Professional Competence PowerPoint, NSW Institute of Teachers, 2011*
6. *Teacher Accreditation Authority’s Guide, NSW Institute of Teachers, 2010*
7. *Becoming an Institute of Teachers’ endorsed provider - Supporting the Maintenance of Accreditation at Professional Competence*
8. *Application Form To Become An Institute Of Teachers Endorsed Provider Of Professional Development - Supporting The Maintenance Of Accreditation At Professional Competence*

13.6 Findings and Outcomes

13.6.1 Implications and Recommendations from the Pilot

13.6.1.1 The Local Perspective

Recommendations at the local level include:

- Development of new software
- More targeted advice for teachers, schools and providers to be developed
- Specific action in relation to some national descriptors is needed
- Using the standards descriptors as the basis for teachers’ professional learning should be strongly encouraged.

13.6.1.2 The National Perspective

13.6.1.2.1 Making Professional Development a requirement

Having professional development requirements for teacher registration initiates a cultural shift for the individual teacher, employers and PD providers. This requires a sophisticated

understanding of the role of professional learning in teacher development and collaborative processes engaging all involved.

13.6.1.2.2 Professional Learning Plans

If a clear purpose for the learning and a commitment to teacher development is not a focus then there is the risk that PD will only be undertaken to comply with requirements.

It will be critical to use the teaching standards at the descriptor level as the basis for planning professional learning for the individual teacher. This planning will be more effective if teachers are able to shape and manage their overall learning plan.

13.6.1.2.3 Equity of provision

Equity of professional development provision becomes a very significant issue and the reporting of the provision can assist in assuring equity.

13.6.1.3 Planning for the Future

Describe areas needing further work or which might facilitate participant engagement to be expanded/continued.

1. Pilot of advice with sample schools
2. Further development of IT specifications
3. Further development of the plan for implementing the NPST for NSW

13.7 References

Not applicable.

14 QUT

14.1 Introduction

14.1.1 Setting the Scene

This project is one of a number of pilots being conducted across Australia on behalf of The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). The purpose of the pilot projects is to validate the implementation of the *National Standards for Teachers* (hereafter referred to as ‘the Standards’)(AITSL, 2011).

Specifically, this project investigates the existing school-based practices and processes for Focus Area 5.4 from the Standards (AITSL, 2011). In particular, the project examines the practices of **Proficient**, **Highly Accomplished** and **Lead** teachers (as defined in the AITSL Standards document) in the interpretation, analysis and implementation of National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) data.

AITSL have identified seven standards within three domains of teaching: professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement. The seven standards are (AITSL, 2011):

1. Know students and how they learn.
2. Know content and how to teach it.
3. Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning.
4. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments.
5. Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning.
6. Engage in professional learning.
7. Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community.

Proficient teachers are described as meeting the requirements for full registration through the demonstration of the seven standards at this level.

Highly Accomplished teachers are recognised as highly effective, skilled classroom practitioners who routinely work independently and collaboratively to improve their own practice and the practice of colleagues. They are active and knowledgeable members of the school.

Lead teachers are recognised and respected by colleagues, parents/carers and the community as exemplary teachers who have demonstrated consistent and innovative practice over time (AITSL, 2011).

14.1.2 Contextual Issues

The Australian Government seeks to gain a return on its investment in education (Kemp, 1999) by various means. Two accountability mechanisms used by the government to ensure high quality teaching/learning and improved student outcomes in schools are the explicit listing of professional standards for teachers and high stakes testing in literacy and numeracy for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. These mechanisms fulfil the government’s demand for evidence on performance in order to validate their investment (Ladd, 2008; McWilliam & Perry, 2006). According to AITSL (2011), the professional standards ‘define the work of teachers and make

explicit the elements of high quality effective teaching in 21st Century schools which result in improved educational outcomes for students' (p.2). One way of measuring these student outcomes is by test-based accountability. This mechanism enables the government to hold teachers and schools accountable for student performance (Ladd, 2008). In Australia, since 2008, all students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 have participated in national literacy and numeracy high stakes testing annually. *High-stakes testing* is defined as test-based accountability through standardised testing from which school performance results are published and used to make significant educational decision(s) (Smeed, 2009). From these tests, achievement data is collected and returned to the school and the individual. Therefore, it is important that teachers can analyse, interpret and use the NAPLAN data in order to enhance student learning.

14.2 Research Question

The core research question which underpinned this study was:

What are the data-related practices that teachers at the three nominated Career Stages use?

14.2.1 Focus: Elaboration on the Core Research Question

14.2.1.1 Proficient (P) Teachers

How do proficient teachers use NAPLAN data to:

1. analyse and evaluate student understanding of subject/content;
2. identify what intervention is needed; and
3. modify their teaching practice as a result?

14.2.1.2 Highly Accomplished (HA) Teachers

How do highly accomplished teachers:

1. work with colleagues in the analysis and use of NAPLAN data;
2. evaluate learning and teaching;
3. identify what interventions are needed; and
4. modify practices?

14.2.1.3 Lead (L) Teachers

What practices exist in your school for the coordination of:

1. student performance; and
2. program evaluation using NAPLAN assessment data in order to improve teaching practice?

14.3 Methodological Considerations

A qualitative method featuring semi-structured interviews was adopted as an appropriate technique for this study. Qualitative research seeks to listen to participants' stories, interpret their views, and retell their accounts of their experiences in order to explain their sense of the world (Glesne, 1999). One way of achieving this is by conducting interviews which provide 'a unique opportunity to uncover rich and complex information from an individual' (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran, 2001, p. 138).

While a particular school or other educational site could have been identified as a case study, with us as researchers immersing ourselves into the culture of that one educational establishment (Cope, 2004), we wanted to incorporate as broad a range of participants as possible. Therefore, our case was based in the Brisbane area of Queensland and encompassed teachers from primary and secondary schools as well as state, independent or of religious affiliation.

According to Freebody (2003) in its most general form, the goal of a case study is 'an inquiry in which both researchers and educators can reflect upon particular instances of educational practice' (p. 81), in this case, how NAPLAN data is used in school-based practices and processes.

For our project, the boundaries are set by the demographic region, thus meeting Merriam's (1998) requirement that unless the intended phenomenon is bounded, it is not a case study. As well as having a strong sense of place, this project also has a strong temporal dimension. Yin (1994) maintains that a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. Implementing professional standards and using high-stakes testing data are currently priority areas in the educational field.

14.3.1 Data Collection and Management

Semi-structured interviews (Cavana et al., 2001; Merriam, 1998) were conducted to address the core research question: What are the data-related practices that teachers at the three nominated career stages use? Interviews for the study were conducted at a mutually accepted site and at a time convenient for the nine interviewees.

14.3.1.1 Data Collection and Interview Design

Interviews were conducted face to face for approximately thirty minutes and followed a sequence proposed by Cavana et al. (2001). The interviews began with the ritual greeting and some general conversation. Then, a brief synopsis of what the project was about occurred as a way of establishing rapport (Cavana et al., 2001). The semi-structured approach to interviewing was outlined to assure the participants that there were no right or wrong answers and they were encouraged to elaborate on their practices and processes in relation to the use of data. With the consent of the participants the interviews were audio-recorded allowing the researcher to concentrate on the interview and to acquire a full and accurate record.

Each participant was asked the following closed questions to identify and log explicit facts about them. These questions were as follows:

1. How long have you been a teacher?

2. What subjects and/or year levels do you teach?
3. Where, what else have you taught?

These questions allowed the participants to feel comfortable and settle into the conversation. Cavana et al. (2001) refer to this as 'entrance time investment'. After these initial closed questions, the interview proceeded using a semi-structured approach allowing for rich dialogue and detailed accounts of the participants' practices and processes in relation to the use of NAPLAN data. This approach was chosen as it was necessary to ascertain the practices and processes in terms of the descriptors provided by the standards document. Probing was used to clarify particular practices so that the rest of the interview was an opportunity to think and talk freely about them, exploring the outer and inner parameters of the participants' understanding.

It was important to get a balance between leading the interview and attempts to 'lead' the interviewee to comment on their practices. It was crucial that the researcher practised active listening throughout the interview session (Stake, 1995). While it is unrealistic to presume an absence of all prior perceptions by any researcher, by using 'bracketing' or *epoché*, judgement was suspended so that as little bias personally held beliefs as possible were reflected in the interview process.

All interviews were conducted through interaction and coordinated mutually by both speakers. However, the research assistant as interviewer nominated what was relevant and chose aspects on which the interviewee was asked to elaborate. Lead-ons and reinstatements were used where the researcher thought something might be of interest. These types of moves do coordinate the talk and shift emphasis on issues (Freebody, 2003). Even with such caveats, however, the main aim was to take a step back and try to see the NAPLAN data practices through the respondents' eyes.

Paraphrasing was another technique used to clarify inconsistencies. This allowed for further reflection or development of thinking or re-orientation of the interview if miscomprehension had occurred. The style of questioning was chosen deliberately, avoiding why questions and concentrating on what and how as the intent was to orient participants towards their lived experiences (Sandberg, 1994). Answers from interviewees were based on impromptu perceptions. Whilst a more carefully prepared, rehearsed and intellectualised response might have elicited different notions related to their receptive understanding of the use of NAPLAN data, these data sets had the benefit of immediacy, potentially tapping into the 'tacit knowledge' that guides practice. Participants commented that they found the interview quite challenging, but also very reflective.

At the end, the interviewer summarised the session and the interviewee was offered the opportunity to ask any further questions or make any further comments. Throughout the interview process, the researcher was mindful of both interviewing ethics and the ethics of the study, particularly in relation to confidentiality. These were articulated strongly to the interviewees. After interviewing it was usual for stimulating educational conversation to continue which acted as a winding down from the intensive interview process. Cavana et al. (2001) refer to this as the 'exit level investment' or the ritual good-bye.

14.3.1.2 Data management

The following process was undertaken for the transcription of data. Interviews were recorded on a digital recorder and downloaded onto the research assistant's computer for safe storage. The recordings were transcribed. Transcripts were checked by listening to the recordings again and comparing this to the written text. Errors were corrected. Pseudonyms were used on all transcripts to protect the anonymity of the participants. The pseudonyms used were as follows: P1, P2 and P3 for Proficient teachers, HA1, HA2 and HA3 for Highly Accomplished teachers and L1, L2 and L3 for Lead teachers. All data were stored digitally on an electronic file and hard copies were kept in a locked facility by the research assistant.

14.3.2 Analysis of the Data

14.3.2.1 Analytical Procedures

Hatch (2002) maintains that analysis is a means of 'organising and interrogating data in ways that allow the researcher to see patterns, identify themes, discover relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, mount critiques, or generate theories' (p. 148). By revisiting the interview recordings and re-reading the transcripts, the researchers became very familiar with the collected data. Using a third of the transcripts, the researchers established a process for coding the information. This encompassed vertical, line-by-line or statement-by-statement coding, according to the participant's comments (Merriam, 1998). The data were then assigned to themes.

The themes were established by three people who worked independently; two academic researchers and the research assistant assigned to this project. This was done to improve credibility and confirmability. After working independently, the team then worked collaboratively, cross-referencing the themes and the sub-themes within to look for comparability. This whole process was conducted with a high degree of openness to new interpretations; it was a strongly iterative and comparative process of sorting and resorting of data (Akerlind, 2002).

The themes were continually reworked and refined until the final set (as shown in the results section below) were determined. Following this, files were set up for each of the identified themes and selected quotes or statements from the interviews were cut and pasted into these files.

14.4 Results From Engagement

After the seven themes were established, sub-themes were identified (Table 1)

Table 14-1 - Identified Themes and Sub-themes from the Interview Responses

Theme	Subthemes	P. HA. L.								
Approaches to the use of data	• Whole school approach			X		X	X	X	X	X
	• Hierarchical approach					X				
	• Ad-hoc	X	X							
	• Individual		X							
	• Collaborative				X					
Who uses the data?	• Principal	X							X	X
At what level?	• Deputy / Head of Teaching & Learning			X		X		X	X	X
	• Deputy - Data analyst					X	X			X
	• HODs			X		X	X		X	X
	• Classroom Teacher	X	X		X		X	X	X	X
								X		
How data is analysed	• Using electronic Programs						X		X	X
How data is Interpreted	• Manually		X		X	X			X	X
	• Track Performance								X	X
	• Individual Point in Time	X						X	X	X
	• Class Point in Time			X	X	X	X		X	X
	• Project Forward		X						X	X
	• Value Added								X	X
How data is implemented	• Intervention based on Data									
	• Targeted Programs					X			X	X
	• Gifted and Talented						X		X	X
	• Gender								X	
	• Indigenous								X	X
	• Special Needs	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
	• Embedded into Classroom Practice								X	X
Existence of accountability				X					X	X
Using data to change culture	• Identifying and Promoting Success									X
	• Recognition of Students Doing Well								X	
	• Recognition of Classes doing Well									X
	• Parental Involvement									X
	• Promoting Competition									X
Identifying best practice									X	X

14.4.1 Findings and Outcomes

Seven themes were identified and expanded to thirty sub-themes in relation to the core research question: *What are the data-related practices that teachers at the three nominated career stages use?* Results are shown in Table 1 (above). Below are the elaborations on the core research question. Each question has been addressed using participants' quotations in order to tell the story of the use of NAPLAN data in relation to the themes and thirty sub-themes identified.

14.4.1.1 (P) Proficient

How does a Proficient teacher use NAPLAN data to

1. analyse and evaluate student understanding of subject/content,
2. identify what intervention is needed, and
3. modify their teaching practice as a result? (P)

For the Proficient career stage, the approaches to the use of NAPLAN data are either hierarchical or on an ad hoc/individual basis. Where the approach is hierarchical, it is the Deputy Principal (DP) through Heads of Departments (HODs) who manage the process. P3 states: 'In our science meetings we are told that there are ... certain target areas that need to be addressed – they tell us to incorporate them [target areas] into our classes. She continues, 'we just get a focus area to incorporate into our planning'. This is a reaction to class point in time data. The teacher under the direction of the DP and HOD use the NAPLAN data to evaluate subject content and then target areas for improvement.

However, the other two proficient teachers organise themselves or work with other members of staff in an ad hoc fashion. P1 states, 'I work with the teachers whose classes my students are included in'. This particular teacher is a member of a Special Needs Department and works with the regular classroom teacher to 'organise and plan individual programs'. This is an example of individual point in time data. P2 does collaborate sometimes but usually works in isolation with her classes' data to identify 'strengths and weaknesses and where class programs need to be adapted'. She says 'as a classroom teacher, I have implemented the programs that I have developed and set up'. In her individual capacity, this teacher analyses the data from the school intranet by her own means – 'you are free to use the data as you see fit' (P2).

This is an example of this teacher's own manual manipulation of the data. She also comments on using the data to project forward – 'as a junior school teacher, I look at the data and use that data to implement strategies to help the students as they move up to Year 3'. Therefore, it can be seen that the proficient teachers use the data to identify strengths and weaknesses in order to determine what type of intervention is needed. Apart from using data for their own particular students individually or by class, the other group the proficient teachers refer to is special needs students. Again, they use the data to ascertain strengths and weaknesses.

These teachers all modify their practice based on their analysis and evaluation of NAPLAN data, whether this is on their own initiative, working with a partner or as a directive through the hierarchy. Where the process is managed through the hierarchy, P3 sees this as an accountability mechanism – 'HODs check up ... they check that things are being done'

14.4.1.2 (HA) Highly Accomplished

How do highly accomplished teachers

1. work with (1) colleagues in the analysis and use of NAPLAN data,
2. evaluate learning and teaching,
3. identify what interventions are needed, and
4. modify practices? (HA)

For the Highly Accomplished career stage teachers, the approaches to the use of NAPLAN data are either hierarchical or by means of collaboration with other colleagues.

For two of these teachers it is the HODs, DP or the Deputy Data Analyst who are instrumental in the management of NAPLAN data. HA2 comments – ‘the data that is sent to us at my present school is used by HODs and the DP’. However, she also implies the lack of a whole school approach by maintaining that ‘the data does not filter down to all teachers’ (HA2). This is surprising as in her school, there is a Deputy Principal Analyst whose job is to look at all data which he does in collaboration with the Deputy Principal Curriculum.

HA1 sees the approach to the use of NAPLAN data in her school as collaborative. For her, teachers of Years 3 and 5 ‘sit with their teaching partners and use the data’. She continues by saying that depending on the approachability of the teachers, ‘I would meet with the 4s and 6s and say, these are the curriculum areas that we are lacking in and we need to pick them up’ (HA1). This teacher also models to her Year level how she analyses the data so they can do the same for their classes – ‘I let my year level partners know’.

For this career stage, involvement in the use of NAPLAN data is a little more structured, whether this is through the hierarchy or by having teaching partners. Regardless of the approach used or who has this responsibility, all participants analyse the data in a similar fashion by looking for ‘gaps and weaknesses’ (HA1). In one school, this happens by electronic means – ‘I can go onto *One School* any time and access data’, whereas the other two schools do this manually. In all schools it is class point in time data that is investigated.

An example of this is in HA3’s school, where they use the data to determine cohorts for extension activities – ‘they [HODs] use the data to decide who goes into the Maths Extension class in Year 8. This is also an example of projecting forward. The other group mentioned by this career stage is the Gifted and Talented. HA3 uses the data and selects students who ‘come into class during lunchtime for tutoring’.

Practices are modified in various ways by participants. These include: ‘small group activities’ for those who need to be brought ‘up to speed’ on particular activities (HA1); ‘time management, questions that are comprehension based and questions on subject matter (HA2) or just different ‘class activities’ (HA3).

14.4.1.3 (L) Lead

1. What practices exist in your school for the coordination of student performance? (L)

2. In what way do lead teachers co-ordinate the evaluation of programs using NAPLAN assessment data in order to improve teaching practice? (L)

All teachers at the Lead Teacher career stage maintain that in their schools, the use of NAPLAN data occurs either by a whole school approach or by a hierarchical approach, although there is some admission by L1 that this is not always successful – ‘data analysis is not always filtered down from HODs’.

Across the three participants’ responses there are a variety of hierarchical levels in their school responsible for the use of data. These include the Principal, Head of Lower School programs (L3), Head of Curriculum (L2), the NAPLAN group, HODs and curriculum groups (L3). L3 in particular maintains that ‘data analysis is every teacher’s business ... every teaching staff member should be able to access and utilise NAPLAN data’. She continues by saying that ‘it’s not one person’s job, it’s considered everyone’s job and you have to be able to not only know where to get the data from but also what to do with it’ (L3).

For these lead teachers, they are either involved in the whole school approach or are a link in the hierarchy.

The NAPLAN data are analysed for many purposes. These include:

1. as an indicator of improvement – ‘we look at the data in relation to how we have done in previous NAPLAN tests’ (L2),
2. teachers use NAPLAN data ‘in terms of how they [students] have gone against the National mean’ (L3),
3. ‘to compare classes against each other’ or ‘to get the data for the schools in the area ... including feeder schools’ (L2).

Both (1) and (2) are examples of value adding, where individual or class point in time data are analysed manually or by electronic means – ‘we get it [data] through *One School*, Queensland Studies Authority (QSA), Sunlander, and the NAPLAN websites’ (L2). (3) is an example of tracking performance and projecting forward.

From the analysis of data, a variety of intervention programs take place. These include: targeted programs – ‘when we hear what the writing genre is for next year ... then the Year 8s immediately start working on it in class’ (L2), and programs that are targeted towards specific groups of students including, gifted and talented, special needs, Indigenous, or by gender. Therefore, NAPLAN data is used to improve the teaching and learning in all these different areas. Two of the three respondents refer to the use of NAPLAN data as embedded into regular classroom practices.

Accountability is foreground for two of the lead teachers. They use data to check on other teachers work – ‘I go into the classrooms and check that the work is being done’ (L2).

What is mentioned at this career stage that is absent in the two stages previously discussed are the use of data to change culture and to identify best practice. Changing the culture includes such practices as promoting competition, rewards, and encouraging a competitive spirit. Where best practice is identified, this is shared with staff at meetings.

14.4.2 Summary

The approach to the use of NAPLAN data is inconsistent across the participants' schools. Only two of the nine teachers interviewed, identified a whole school structured approach to the use of data. For most participants, their engagement with data either came as a directive through the hierarchy or by teachers working individually or collaboratively in an ad hoc fashion. Findings also revealed that various levels of the hierarchy use the data for various purposes, for example value adding or projecting forward.

Every interviewee was aware of some type of intervention within their schools based on NAPLAN data but once again, there was inconsistency in the participants' experiences. Only three teachers related the use of NAPLAN to accountability and it was only at the lead career stage where two teachers related data to school culture and identifying best practice.

14.5 Implications and Recommendations from the Pilot

From the study, the researchers wish to highlight several implications and make recommendations to encourage greater use of high-stakes educational data.

14.5.1 Implications

The study has illuminated the following implications:

Responses from the proficient and highly accomplished teachers suggested that the analysis and use of data is driven by a top-down hierarchical model. The implications of such a practice are that the knowledge and skills required to analyse educational data is kept at a level above both these career stages. This could lead to a reduction in the breadth of those with skills in this area. By adopting such a practice, schools could risk:

1. lack of ownership of data;
2. lack of willingness to engage with data'
3. the 'data person' moving on and taking the relevant knowledge and skills; and
4. limited specific targeting of students' learning which could be problematic.

There is an ad hoc relational approach used by teachers in the proficient and highly accomplished career stages. The implications of such an approach may be:

1. failure to engage with the data;
2. incorrect analysis and interpretation;
3. teachers efforts may be misdirected; and
4. lack of specific intervention.

Where the use of data is seen as a mechanism for scrutiny and holding teachers accountable for lack of student achievement, the implications could be:

1. movement of teachers out of the profession;

2. movement of teachers/students to what are perceived as 'good schools';
3. schools equipping teachers with the relevant data analysis and interpretation skills; and
4. rewards and sanctions from those in authority.

High-stakes testing data is returned to schools with the expectation that teachers will use it. This then, has implications for teachers. Teachers need to be:

1. skilled at data analysis;
2. skilled at data interpretation;
3. skilled at data application; and
4. supported in their analysis, interpretation and use of data.

The findings showed that two of the three lead teachers were highly competent in the use of NAPLAN data. This implies that the use of data and the skills needed for such use is inconsistent across schools even at the lead career stage. Teachers with such skills should be given the time and means to professionally develop both highly accomplished and proficient teachers in a whole school approach.

14.5.2 Recommendations

The researchers make the following recommendations in relation to this project.

1. Schools and systems up-skill or professionally develop teachers in the analysis, interpretation and use of high-stakes educational data.
2. The inclusion of Standard 5.4 (AITSL, 2011) in school role descriptions and duty statements for teachers.
3. Schools are assisted in developing a targeted approach to the use of data.
4. Educational data should be accessible to all teachers in schools.
5. Universities ensure that their graduates have the necessary skills to engage with educational data.
6. AITSL partners with QUT to put forward an ARC Linkage Grant application to conduct a nationwide study of the existing practices and processes in the use of NAPLAN test data.

14.5.3 Planning for the Future

The researchers in this study work at a university that has a reputation for engaging with educational data at a university and school level. Final year students undertake a unit in using educational data. This is the only such unit taught at an undergraduate level in Australian universities. Additionally, the researchers work widely with schools and systems in Queensland on school performance and the use of educational data. Therefore, their skill and expertise is shared with the wider educational community.

We therefore recommend that:

1. Other Australian universities incorporate educational data units into their courses;
2. Professional development on the use of educational data be made widely available; and
3. Further research into practices in other states and territories.

To conclude, it is obvious that all the participants are aware of the importance of the use of educational data. Therefore, this focus area from the standards is being addressed across the participants' schools. However, what is also obvious are the differences in the approach, access and use of educational data by individual schools and teachers. There is an expectation that teachers will use educational data but not all teachers have the skills to achieve this. Furthermore, not all universities are preparing their pre-service teachers for this educational data world that they are going to enter.

14.6 References

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15 REFA

15.1 Introduction

15.1.1 Setting the Scene

The central question addressed by this pilot project is the extent to which an online platform promotes collegiate learning consistent with the National Professional Standards for Teachers (hereafter referred to as 'the Standards') in rural and remote learning settings. The pilot focuses upon the professional engagement detailed in Standard Six – *Engage in professional learning*. The pilot has been conducted in the Murchison Network and coordinated by the Rural Education Forum Australia.

The pilot will inform and support teacher professional learning through an online environment that includes the use of group forums, topic forums, blogging, professional readings and resources, and a range of connectivity capacities. The final report will present findings in three areas:

The ways networking within and across schools in a remote network enhance professional learning and dialogue.

Does the platform have the potential to support collegiate learning within rural and remote locations?

Does a blended approach enhance collegiate mentoring in supporting individual professional learning as described in the Standards?

The Murchison Network

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 schools are: Cue Primary School, Mount Magnet District High School, Meekatharra District High School, Mullewa District High School, Pia Wadjarri Remote Community School, Sandstone Remote Community School, Yalgoo Primary School and Yulga Jinna Remote Community School.

The network has a teaching staff of 65 (including principals), 474 students – of whom 396 are Indigenous. Five of the eight schools are classified Level 3 (numbers between 10 and 100).

Personal and Professional Isolation

During times of high rainfall, usually associated with cyclones in the North West of the state, it is common for gravel roads to the remote community schools to be closed for five to seven weeks a year. For example, in February 2011 the two main highways to six of the eight schools were closed for up to a week. The two-day instructional strategies workshop at Mount Magnet, attended by all Murchison staff was significantly modified, with the staff from three schools leaving at the end of the first day and three other schools at the end of the second.

Given the large distances to travel between schools in the network and to Geraldton, the seasonal disruption to access and the difficulty of travelling at night; an online capacity to share information, resources and professional learning was seen as a priority by the leaders in the

network. Five of the schools are too small to conduct effective stand alone professional learning sessions. A sense of the geographic context of the Murchison cluster of Schools is provided in Figure 1.

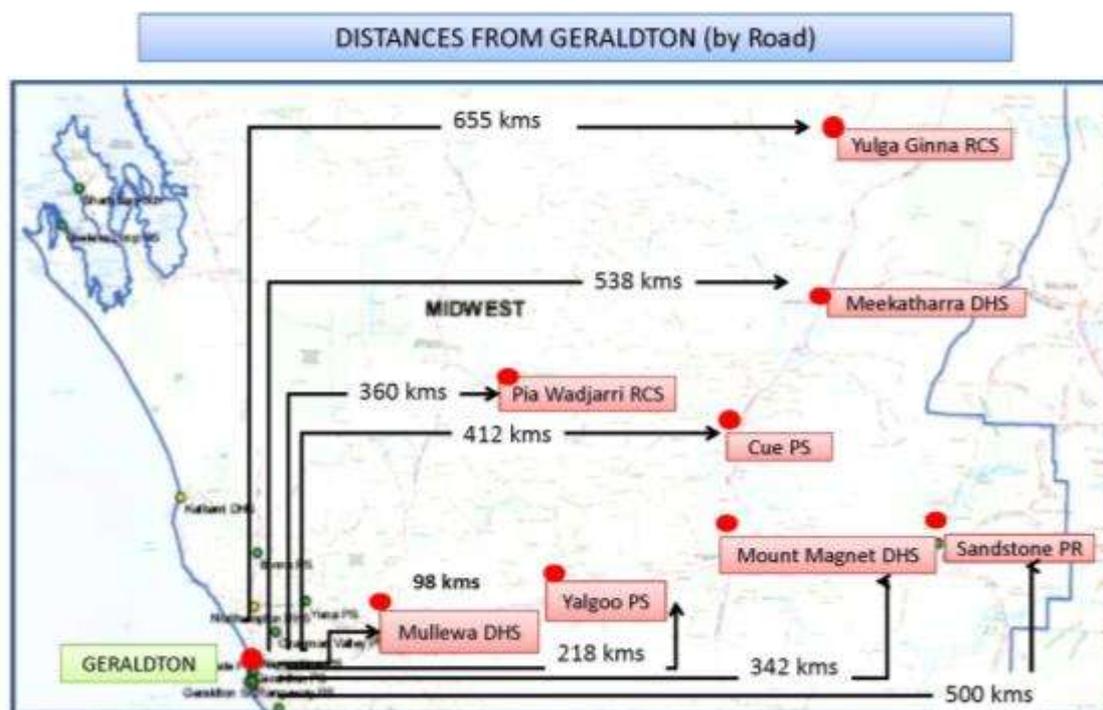


Figure 15-1 : Distances From Geraldton of the Murchison Cluster of Schools

The Rural Education Forum Australia

The Rural Education Forum Australia (REFA) is a collective of national organisations which represent the consumers and/or providers of education services in rural and remote Australia. REFA's work recognises the importance and value of people in rural and remote areas being able to realise their full potential in their environment, and the fundamental importance of education in enabling them to do this. Two of its member organisations have contributed to the pilot – The Country Education Project Inc. (based in Victoria) and the Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia.

15.1.2 Contextual Issues

In 2009 the Murchison Network implemented the Murchison Education Strategy 0-18 Years (Appendix A), the following two of the eight recommendations identified in the strategy underpin the pilot (see page eight of the Strategy).

- 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, staff travelling to another network school (four times a year), staff travelling to Geraldton and to Perth for face to face professional development. These methods are extremely time consuming and costly.

The use of an online platform is a means of addressing a real need in the network. The distances between schools, the low number of face-to-face meetings, the ever present management and curriculum requirements on staff, the difficulty of finding replacement staff and the implementation requirements of the Murchison Education Strategy (MES) all add to the very real need in the network to use available technology to provide an alternative mode of communication and professional learning delivery, thereby building staff. The following is an extract from page 16 of the Murchison Education Strategy: capacity consistent with the Standards.

The consultation identified the need for professional support mechanisms for principals, teachers and support staff. Leadership teams and teachers articulated that they would like strong networking and mentoring opportunities. Networking and mentoring could improve by using existing technology available including video conferencing or via email.

The online platform is seen as a support mechanism that uses technology beyond video conferencing and email.

The Country Education Project Inc. in Victoria, has developed, over the past three years an online learning platform for staff professional development and student subject delivery. The online platform forms part of a blended learning approach (the use of a variety of modes of learning) promoted by the project to its constituent rural schools. The pilot is an excellent example of two states collaborating, and through their work, informing the national learning community.

REFA recognised the opportunity provided by the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership through its pilot program to connect the expertise of CEP with the need of the Murchison Network to explore new ways of approaching professional engagement consistent with the Standards.

15.2 Research Questions

The focus for the Pilot was:

To what extent does an online platform promote collegiate learning consistent with the Standards?

This focus was elaborated in terms of 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 survey questions contained in Appendix C were developed by the reference group (See Appendix B) in consultation with our support personnel from the National Research Centre of Science, ICT and Mathematics Education for Rural and Regional Australia (SiMERR). The questions were formed from the focus areas in Standard Six of the Standards (*Engage in professional learning*).

15.3 Methodological Considerations

REFA formed a reference group (Attachment Two) which met via teleconference on a regular basis. One face to face meeting was held in Perth to analyse the data and frame the final report. All staff in the Murchison Network were invited to be part of the pilot. The network principals participated on the platform, and as a group were also connected via Blackboard Collaborate. The period of the pilot project was term three: July 26 – September 30. The short timeframe for the pilot did have a significant impact upon the engagement of staff.

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

Firstly, 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 then include:

- A principal's network exploring leadership issues through the online forum and the interactive platform Blackboard Collaborate, and
- An early years forum.

An initial training session was held for the network staff on the connections to and use of the CEP online platform. There was ongoing online support for the Murchison staff, as required, provided by CEP personnel. After realizing the potential on the network in-service day (July 25), the principals were provided with two training sessions on the use of Blackboard Collaborate. The teacher online forum was used for staff discussion, sharing of resources and professional support (Attachment Three).

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 driving this learning. Unfortunately, this appointment could not be made until September 21, as a successful candidate could not be found.

The staff completed an online survey during the week of October 24 – October 28.

Staff Engagement

In the **Murchison Network Site** over the period of the pilot there were 673 page visits, of which 404 were unique visits, that is, they went in for a purpose, they logged onto the Murchison Network page.

The average stay was two minutes. The bounce rate (they enter and exit from a particular page) is 17.74 percent. The extent to which this surfing is constructive (for professional learning or resource gathering) is difficult to quantify. However, as a result of using the forum, six Murchison Network teachers became members of the Rural New Graduate Forum on the CEP site. An overview of engagement with the site is provided in Figure 2.

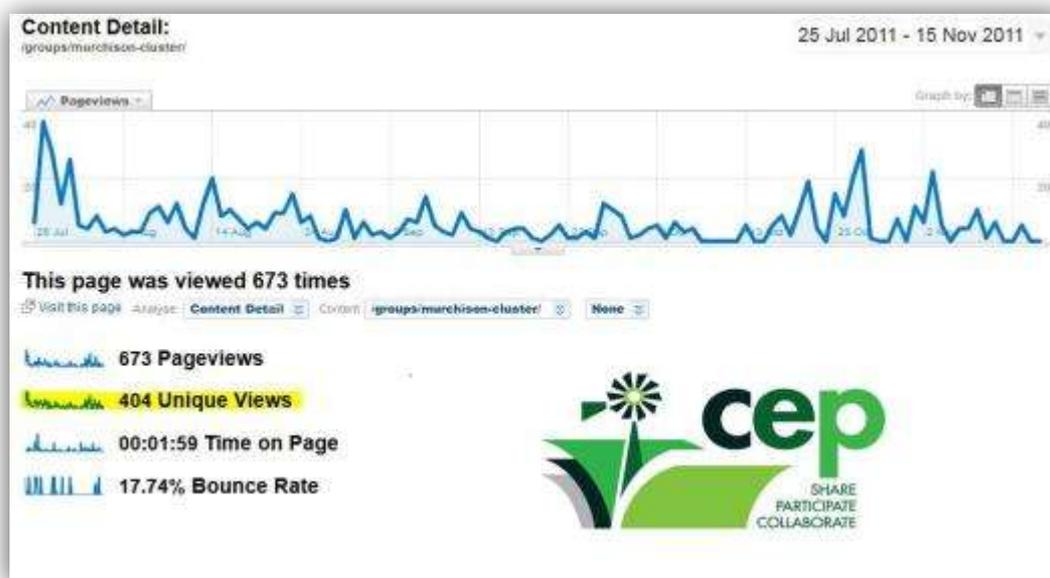


Figure 15-2 : of Network Site Visits for the Period of the Pilot

A sample of the type of entry recorded on the site by participants is provided below.

I had a little buzz today when one of the year ones, who up until now has never written without copying, created her own sentence and own words. Yes, the spelling and grammar were way off the mark, but I was so pleased for her. I have a policy of never correcting work in writing books. If the spelling is incorrect it goes on the word wall. If they have to ask, "Hey Mister, how do you spell, motorbike?", they have to make sure that it is not on the word wall and if it is not, it gets added. A seemingly innocuous moment that I thought I would share. It made my day.

Have been using Kagan materials in class lately. Have found them to be very good and make cooperative learning in class much easier. Highly recommended resources

Had an awesome day of automotive classes yesterday in conjunction with Durack Institute from Geraldton, covered the measurement unit in which the boys learnt to calibrate and use micrometers, use and read vernier gauges and to calculate the size of an engines capacity in cubic centimetres and cubic inches. The boys then stripped some small engines and used the micrometers and vernier gauges to measure the various components such as the crankshaft, bore width and depth and the exhayst valve and inlet valve. It was applied mathematics and it was pleasing to see the boys grasp the main concepts and apply them to a real world situation.

Hi everyone, At our Principals Meeting on Monday we briefly discussed giving the Murchison Cluster/Network an identity by "badging" it. That is, coming up with a logo or design which would be unique to our cluster and which we could use on flyers, our space

on this site, stationary, etc. If anyone would like to have a go at a design for this we would love to see your ideas. We are looking for something unique to reflect the unity and diversity of our schools. Have a go and pass it on to your Principals. Thanks

Attended a fantastic Numeracy PD on Tuesday in Meekatharra. I found out about a fabulous resource on the Department website... Learning Sequences. I found that the easiest way to find them is by going through the portal, clicking on K-10 Syllabus, click on middle childhood and scroll down to literacy and numeracy resources hit either open or download, and finally click on Numeracy Resources. I thought these would be so useful, especially for graduates, that I have decided to plan my numeracy lessons again using these. I think they are going to make things so much easier! Will let you all know in a week or so how they have been going. I hope you find them as useful as I did

Unpacking the Australian Curriculum The article below comes as part of the "Teachthis" site. This membership offers lots of information to spice up teaching. here are so things happening in other states. the link is: <http://staffroom.teachthis.com.au/?p=171> This new curriculum brings with it some exciting new changes. For some states, it requires a change in how we read and interpret curriculum documentation. What I am most excited about, however, is that we can take a sneak peak at what each of the states have produced for teachers. Recently I have spent quite a bit of time looking closely at documentation from Queensland and New South Wales. QSA has produced some very handy year level plans well worth taking the time to look through. It's a good idea to have a quick glance at the grades immediately above and below your own to see where gaps may appear in content. For those of us moving onto the National Curriculum in 2012, now is the time to devise a plan to bridge the gaps. As a school, you can decide if you will teach the prerequisite knowledge for next year so that your current students are up to date before they enter the next year level. Alternatively, you may simply be able to point out the gaps that will exist so teachers can effectively plan for next year's classes. Check out the documentation provided by other states though because you will definitely find some gems that will support you in the classroom. Here are my favourites so far. A handy link to QSA is: <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/13642.html#16410>. The mapping, year plans and exemplar units will be a valuable resource. Just remember that they are meant as a starting point and are not meant to be followed exactly. The NSW Draft Syllabuses can be viewed at <http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/australian-curriculum/phase-1/k-10.html> and are well worth the read. Share your links to other documentation that supports the implementation of the Australian Curriculum. Related posts: 1.Australia's National Curriculum 2.Australian National Handwriting Style

Hello Everyone, If you are able to it would be great to have someone from your school attend the following professional learning opportunity. I have done it and it is just fantastic. Workshop Title: Cooperative Learning Days 1 & 2 Workshop Location: Conference Room, Mid West Regional Education Office Workshop Date: Group 1: Tues 25th & Wed 26th – 18th Oct 2011 8.30am – 3.30pm Group 2: Mon 24th – Thu 27th Oct 2011 4.00pm – 7.00pm If you are interested please contact me for more details.

15.4 Results from the Engagement

15.4.1 Data Collection and Management

The preceding outcomes support the view that the use of the online platform in the Murchison Network in term three enhanced staff learning and dialogue consistent with the professional

engagement focus areas detailed in the Standards. However, we believe the following factors impacted upon the momentum of the pilot.

1. The time line for the pilot project was too short. The Melbourne meeting to refine the research focus was not held until July 26-27 two days after the first, and only, face-to-face meeting of the network staff. This impacted upon the time allocated to provide the staff with adequate training of platform use and protocols.
2. School leaders must have time to promote, encourage, mentor and drive important initiatives. In most remote schools the principal must drive staff professional learning, they have few, if any, lead and highly accomplished teachers to take on this role. They needed to be confident with the technology, resource the initiative and manage the change - all requiring time.
3. In small isolated schools staff numbers are small, sharing the workload for curriculum development and responding to both internal and external professional learning requirements places great pressure on staff. There is a view that the “pull up the drawbridge” phenomenon may exist to a limited degree. That is, some teachers in very remote locations become so absorbed in their environment that they fail to reach-out to embrace support or initiatives designed to assist them. In these settings more time is needed to convince staff that additional tasks are worthwhile.
4. Professional learning time in level three schools is very difficult to organise. Out of school time is usually the only option. Whilst having a negative impact at some sites, the point obviously reinforces the urgent need for effective online communication and learning forums in these schools.
5. Time is also needed to put into place change management protocols. Identification of an adequate transitional period depends upon the initial strength of the network, the nature of the change, and in networks/clusters, the number of school sites involved will impact on the length of this period. If this stage is not recognised or given the appropriate time, staff members resisting the initiative will not be properly managed.
6. The disparate modes of technology and download speeds in the network provided some staff frustration with the use of the platform. Although the Western Australian Education Department continues to work through the challenges of technology delivery in the state, the restricted access to platform licences remains a frustration within the network. The principal forum flourished using
7. Blackboard Collaborate (provided by CEP under licence in Victoria) there was insufficient time and access to this mode of delivery to the staff.
8. Access to simple pieces of equipment in isolated communities is an issue, for example at one site it took three weeks to purchase headphones. Again, this reinforces the point that adequate time is needed in such locations to reduce staff frustration with new professional learning methods.
9. Initially, there was strong staff excitement about the potential of the pilot. Answering survey question one, seventy percent of the respondents were enthusiastic about the possibilities of the online platform at the start of term three, with eleven percent not

enthusiastic. The failure to appoint the mathematics mentor teacher slowed the momentum of the First Steps program – the curriculum based driver of the network wide forum focusing on instructional learning and numeracy. This we believe reduced the total number of visits to the site, the average time of the visit and the number of unique visits.

15.4.2 Analysis of the Data

The complete online survey results are provided in Appendix C.

15.4.2.1 Question 1-14

These were answered by all teachers who participated in the survey (Total number: 39).

Seventy five percent of the respondents were enthusiastic about the possibilities of the online platform at the start of term three. Jason Whiteley, from the staff of the Country Education Project, went to the face-to-face staff meeting held at Mount Magnet on Monday 25 July to provide an in-service on the CEP online network site.

At the end of the pilot period 82.5% of the respondents held the same view re: the possibilities of the platform, with 17.5% changing their view.

Sixty percent of the respondents believed that the online platform significantly supported their professional learning, and 62.5% believed that their collaborative practice across the network was enhanced. In both cases 30% were neutral.

The majority of the respondents believed that the use of the online platform enabled them to engage in professional dialogue (82.5%), and improve their knowledge of available resources (73%). Sixty nine .2 percent disagreed that use of the online platform saved time and 50% disagree that it enhanced their professional satisfaction.

The majority said that access to the online platform was straightforward (75%) and that it was easy to use (82.5%).

The majority of the respondents believed that the use of the online platform promoted professional dialogue within their school (52.5%), and within the Murchison Network (82.5%). A minority of respondents believed it promoted professional dialogue with colleagues outside the network (47.5%).

The minority of the respondents believed that use of the online platform promoted collegiate mentoring in support of their professional learning (47.5%), with 52.5% believing that its use assisted them to self reflect upon their professional learning.

When describing their use of the online platform 12.5% said it was not at all, with 7.5% believing its use was imposed and 10% self motivated. Regular use was 15%, with 65% describing their use as occasionally. It should be noted here that no definition was provided to the respondents to assist them to determine regular/occasional use.

15.4.2.2 Survey Questions 15-22

Answered by Graduate Teachers completing the survey (Total number: 20 (50%))

Table 15-1 - Graduate Teacher Survey Responses (Questions 15-22)

Focus Area	Strongly-Slightly Agree	Neutral	Strongly-Slightly Disagree
6.1 Professional Engagement Identify and plan professional learning needs	Question 20 Reflect on future professional learning needs 50%	30%	20%
6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice	Question 17 Assisted with problem solving 45% Question 19 Access to a variety of teaching resources 65%	35% 25%	20% 10%
6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice	Question 16 Eased sense of professional isolation 70% Question 21 Rapport with other teachers in Network 65% Question 22 Enabled me to be mentored by other network staff 40%	15% 25% 40%	15% 10% 20%
6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning	Question 15 Enhanced my understanding of individual student learning needs 40%	30%	30%

The majority of graduate teachers agreed that the use of the online platform eased their sense of professional isolation, provided them with access to a variety of resources and improved their rapport with teachers in the network. These are consistent with descriptors in focus areas 6.2 and 6.3 of the Standards. There is a high percentage of neutral responses.

15.4.2.3 Survey Questions 23 – 28

Answered by Proficient Teachers completing the survey (Total number: 8 (20%))

Table 15-2 - Proficient Teacher Survey Responses (Questions 23-28)

Focus Area	Strongly Agree	Slightly Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree
6.1 Identify and plan professional learning needs			50%	25%	
6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice	Question 28 Reflect on my own future professional learning needs 25%				
	Question 25 Improved my knowledge of a variety of teaching programs 37.5%		37.5%		25%
6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice	Question 26 Adjust my teaching programs to improve student learning needs 12.5%		62.5%		25%
	Question 24 Enhance provision of a safe learning environment 37.5%		50%		12.5%
6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning	Question 23 Improve understanding of individual student learning needs 50%		37.5%		12.5%
	Question 27 Improved understanding of different assessment and reporting techniques 50%		50%		

The majority of proficient teachers disagreed that the use of the online platform improved their abilities consistent with the descriptors contained in Standard 6 – Engage in professional learning. There is a significant percentage of neutral responses in all questions.

15.4.2.4 Survey Questions 29 – 36

Answered by Highly Accomplished Teachers completing the survey (Total number: 4(10%))

Table 15-3 - Highly Accomplished Teacher Survey Responses (Questions 29-36)

Focus Area Professional Engagement	Strongly-Slightly Agree	Neutral	Strongly-Slightly Disagree
6.1 Identify and plan professional learning needs	<p>Question 29 Assist network colleagues in their professional learning 75%</p> <p>Question 36 Enhanced understanding of my own future professional learning needs 50%</p>	25%	25%
6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice	<p>Question 32 Keep abreast of latest content in this term's professional development 50%</p> <p>Question 33 Accessing current research in this term's professional development 50%</p>	25%	25%
6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice	<p>Question 30 Improved my ability to initiate professional learning dialogue 75%</p> <p>Question 31 Support colleagues to evaluate and modify their teaching practices 75%</p> <p>Question 35 Sharing different assessment tools 50%</p>	25%	25%
6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning	<p>Question 34 Increase in use of learning forums within the network 50%</p>	25%	25%

The majority of highly accomplished teachers agreed that the use of the online platform improved their ability to initiate professional learning dialogue and support colleagues to

evaluate and modify their teaching practices. These are consistent with the descriptors in focus area 6.3 of the Standards.

15.4.2.5 Survey Questions 37 – 42

Answered by Lead Teachers completing the survey (Total number: 8 (20%))

Table 15-4 - Lead Teacher Survey Responses (Questions 37-42)

Focus Area Professional Engagement	Strongly-Slightly Agree	Neutral	Strongly-Slightly Disagree
6.1 Identify and plan professional learning needs	<p>Question 39 Improved my understanding of inclusive learning environments 87.5%</p> <p>Question 41 Enhanced my ability to evaluate this term's professional learning 100%</p>	12.5%	
6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice	<p>Question 38 Enhanced my ability to share innovative teacher practice 87.5%</p> <p>Question 40 Increase my mentoring role 87.5%</p>	12.5%	12.5%
6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice	<p>Question 37 Enhanced my ability to model innovative teacher practice 62.5%</p>	37.5%	
6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning	<p>Question 42 Enhanced my ability to revise future network professional learning. 87.5%</p>		12.5%

The majority of lead teachers agreed that the use of the online platform improved their ability to evaluate the term's professional learning, model and share innovative practice, increase their mentoring role, improve their understanding of inclusive learning environments and to revise future network professional learning. These are consistent with the descriptors in focus areas 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 of the Standards.

15.5 Resources

15.5.1 Resources Developed for the Pilot

None were developed for the Pilot.

15.5.2 Existing Resources Used in the Pilot

SurveyGizmo: Online Surveys and Data Collection and Integration: www.SurveyGizmo.com

15.6 Findings and Outcomes

1. The staff's enthusiasm and perception of the possibilities of the online platform did not change significantly over the period of the pilot.
2. The value of the online platform was seen as significantly supporting professional learning, enhancing collaborative practice, improving knowledge of available resources, assisting them to self-reflect upon professional learning, promoting professional dialogue within the school and most importantly, within the Murchison Network.
3. At the end of the pilot the majority of staff did not agree that the online platform promoted professional dialogue with colleagues from outside the network, save them time or promoted collegiate mentoring in support of their own professional learning.
4. Adequate time to plan, resource, in-service and learn is essential to the introduction of this platform into a network system. This is extremely important if the network wishes to then develop dialogue and collegiate learning outside the network.

There are few whole staff network face-to-face meetings in a year. Those that are scheduled are planned well in advance and have a full program. The organisers of the July 25 meeting were able to reschedule to allow an in-service of the CEP online platform, but the time was insufficient to allow all staff to be convinced of its usefulness in enhancing their professional engagement.

What is an adequate time period will depend on circumstance. The number of schools in the network, the level of their use of online modes and the existing strength of the network in delivering collegiate curriculum support in this manner are important considerations.

The Murchison Network has a large number of schools, the online capacity was being introduced and therefore an established foundation for the work did not exist. More time was needed to implement the reform and to allow staff to use the technology. Given these limitations, we believe the pilot has been very successful in starting an online capacity.

The development of dialogue and collegiate learning outside the network was limited. In our planning this was an identified area of need, particularly for secondary staff in one teacher faculties, with few or no colleagues within the network. Time to provide the expertise and the motivation to be involved was insufficient.

5. Adequate time is needed to allow for connectivity to build a momentum, thus building towards significant staff engagement.

This finding is made after comparing the slowing of visits to the site after the initial enthusiasm for the project with the relatively high number of unique visits and the level of constructive use (rather than simply surfing) towards the end of the pilot period - as evidenced by the visit statistics and by the number of graduate staff who joined the CEP New Graduate Forum. As a result of the evidence of the degree of connectivity and momentum, CEP took the decision to continue supporting the staff's use of the platform into term four, after the end of the pilot project.

The relatively low bounce rate was encouraging, indicating that the majority of visits had a purpose.

The success of the principal engagement we believe is an important factor in building staff acceptance and momentum. We saw a trickle-down effect as principals mentored the platform's use and were enthusiastic about the platform with the staff. The principals were able to access Blackboard Collaborate through the CEP site, with two in-service sessions organised. This provided them with a more blended use of the technology and the administrative and communication benefits were quickly realised.

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

The network did not have a formal change management process. A transitional period was not established nor was a formal mechanism to assist staff to move through the change. Given the number of schools in the network it is reasonable to suggest that the transitional period would be at least six months. This is supported by the increased number of visits to the site at the end of the pilot period, and from feedback given to principals.

Most importantly we believe the inadequate trial period did not allow the staff to contextualise the initiative. This may have been addressed if a transitional period had been recognised and set.

7. Seven: All principals in a network must accept and mentor the change.

The staff at two of the eight schools were slow to engage in the professional learning through the online platform. At one other site, staff members did not use the site until after the pilot had officially ended. At one site, where there was a perceived need to connect secondary staff to others in the network and to outside colleagues, this was not attempted during the time of the pilot.

At both sites the principals were slow to accept the pilot. However, when they became involved (after the Blackboard Collaborate in-service), the attitude of the staff became more positive. In small rural and remote settings the role of the principal in driving professional learning is crucial. This differs from larger schools in metropolitan and larger regional centres because:

- Principals have a significant teaching role (in the Murchison Network five of the eight principals have a significant teaching load), and they are a significant teacher role model, and
- They rarely have the capacity to delegate the responsibility to another leader, who may have the skill or wish to model the change, in the school.

Once the principals were engaged we saw a trickle-down effect to those staff who did not initially embrace the platform.

- 8. Eight:** There is a need to create a culture of network online professional learning.

There is much to learn from the principal forum within the online platform. They had time to use and extend the capabilities of the platform. They were able to use features in the forum to support their roles in the network. They quickly accepted online professional learning. Some principals perform the role of a lead teacher in their school. Some answered the lead teacher category in the survey. It is therefore not surprising that the level of agreement registered by lead teachers in the survey is high.

The high level of neutral responses from the proficient teachers indicates that a culture of online learning is not present, or understood.

We question the level and quality of online platform capacity-building professional development given to teachers and pre-service teachers.

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

Anecdotal evidence supports the need to allow sufficient time for teachers to have constructive “play-time” within the forums. It is difficult to say what time on the site is constructive and what is surfing.

- 10. Ten:** 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.

It is impossible to establish the link between staff buy-in and the failure to appoint the mathematics mentor teacher from this pilot, the time was too short. However, it is the feeling of the reference group and the network leaders that the momentum and connectivity from the use of the online platform would have been better if the appointment had been made. We remain convinced of the importance of this connection.

Again it is important to note here that the failure to appoint was due to the availability of a mathematics mentor teacher. The advertisement was made well before the start of the pilot. In fact the First Steps program was selected for the pilot as a sensible curriculum driver, as it would have the mentor teacher to support the professional learning of the staff. This is a common problem for rural and remote schools. Achieving successful outcomes is often frustrated by the recruitment and retention of quality qualified staff.

Pitching the online platform professional learning to the level of expertise of the individual teacher is an obvious strategy to achieve improved engagement. However, it is worth stating in the report.

- 11. Eleven:** The success of the principal forum points to the need to have:

- a blended learning strategy

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

The principals had two formal sessions on the use of Blackboard Collaborate, allowing them to use a range of tools to share information and communicate. They were able to navigate through the CEP online platform, enter a variety of forums and access information, and develop their own Blackboard Collaborate sessions. In their online in-service sessions they could speak, post documents and use a whiteboard during the one session.

The principals were led through these sessions by Jason Whiteley (CEP), and had the advantage of Barb Glenister – principal mentor for the network, leading by example. The personal learning that occurred and the benefits of this blended approach to the network became obvious. The principals also had the time for a second face-to-face meeting to add to their understanding of the platform.

With hindsight we believe the online platform would have been more effectively introduced by appointing a mentor staff member – one who is relentless and has expertise in online communication.

15.6.1 Implications and Recommendations from the Pilot

***Recommendation 1:** That an appropriate national research body conduct an audit of professional learning programs designed to build teacher and pre-service teacher online platform capacity.*

***Recommendation 2:** 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 to build collegiate learning consistent with the Standards.*

15.6.2 Planning for the Future

Professional learning and dialogue are enhanced by the provision of an online forum to discuss learning and teaching issues when face-to-face contact is impossible or difficult. A majority of teachers believe that the use of the online platform promoted professional dialogue within their school and within the Murchison Network, and that its use enhanced collaborative practice.

The forums within the platform provide a catalogue of resources built collegiately and are able to be accessed by all teachers. The use of the forum leads to connectivity with other professional sites and access to additional resources.

The online platform provided collegiate professional learning within the Murchison Network, a geographically large network, with eight sites. The experience of this pilot will inform rural and remote learning communities starting or enhancing networks.

The pilot points to the advantages of taking a blended learning approach in order to support individual learning as described in the Standards. The principal group (not officially part of this pilot) had the time and capacity to take a blended approach. This group stated that the use of

the platform enabled them to increase their mentoring role. A minority of teachers felt that the online platform promoted collegiate mentoring in support of their professional learning.

15.7 References

16 SSI

16.1 Introduction

16.1.1 Setting the Scene

The Stronger Smarter Institute (SSI) works with a number of school and community leaders across the country to improve the educational outcomes and wellbeing of Indigenous students. <http://www.strongersmarter.qut.edu.au/>

The Stronger Smarter Leadership Program (SSLP) equips school and community leaders with the belief and capacity to play a part in transforming their own schools and communities. Intensive residential programs are run throughout the year providing a dynamic learning experience and an opportunity for participants to reflect on their own values, beliefs and practices, and to work with the Stronger Smarter team and colleagues to make a difference in Indigenous education. <http://www.strongersmarter.qut.edu.au/leadership/program.jsp>

This AITSL pilot project provided a unique opportunity for targeted school leaders to work with the SSI across a range of contexts:

- Metropolitan Queensland primary and secondary schools with a minority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Provincial primary and secondary schools on the North Coast of New South Wales, with significant numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Very remote Kimberley schools catering to a population with a majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders students, families and community members.

Key school and community leaders from each of the schools we worked with on this AITSL pilot project have completed the SSLP and continued their engagement with the SSI through the Stronger Smarter Learning Communities (SSLC) project <http://www.strongersmarter.qut.edu.au/sslc/>

All participating schools are part of the hub and affiliate network that forms the Stronger Smarter Learning Communities. The schools comprised:

6. A State and Senior High school in Queensland – both hub schools
7. Two district High Schools in Western Australia – a hub and an affiliate school
8. Two Public Schools and a High School in Northern New South Wales – one hub and two affiliate schools



Figure 16-1 : Sites of Participating Schools

SSLP and SSLC develop the capacity of hub school leaders to support, develop and challenge schools within their learning communities and across the national network. Involvement in this AITSL pilot project was embraced by the principals and seen as a means of working with the Stronger Smarter team, to use Stronger Smarter processes and personnel to work with students, teachers and Communities to:

- add value to existing school activities
- facilitate constructive conversations around the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*
- provide students, teachers and community with a significant professional learning experience (stronger smarter)
- capture unique perspectives and voices from community members, students and teachers
- seek individual and collective input
- enhance understandings of community engagement,
- identify attributes effective *deadly* teachers
- Identify improved ways of working together that can be incorporated into the schools professional practice

The information collated from each of the workshops had a dual purpose. One was to inform the schools and provide valuable community perspectives, including those of parents/carers, teachers and students, to stimulate constructive dialogue. The second was to provide insights that can be drawn upon to inform AITSL and the profession about the attributes of effective teachers working in a range of contexts. It was considered important to describe these attributes and to identify elements considered essential, to enable genuine community engagement within diverse school communities.

It is important to note here that SSI was conscious to ensure that the information was given back to the schools in ways that might assist them to build on the relationships and communications that were cultivated in the workshops.

In addition to the workshops, SSI capitalized on scheduled activities and accessed:

- teachers and community leaders at a regional SSLP program in the Kimberley to provide definitions of what community engagement means to them, and
- a group of undergraduate education students from Queensland University of Technology (QUT) to provide their definitions of community engagement.

A team of SSI staff trialled and implemented a number of strategies at the Northern NSW site and documented the community engagement that occurred during this process. The DVD produced in this context will provide a resource from which the school can build upon by documenting what came out of the workshops. Often an outside agency comes into schools and communities, seeks information and then leaves. We were conscious to ensure that while we would facilitate processes to stimulate the dialogue, informing our understandings, we also gave back to the schools useful information which they could utilize to improve community engagement in their contexts and communities.

The workshops were designed around *Engoori* which is an Aboriginal framework introduced to the Stronger Smarter Institute by Scott Gorringer, a Mithaka man, who has developed the framework by drawing upon his years of experience as a leadership consultant combined with the wisdom and teaching of his old people. The framework is based on honouring strengths, visioning the future and actioning the present. The framework has been further refined overtime by Scott Gorringer and David Spillman (Gorringer & Spillman, 2008).



Figure 16-2 : An Overview of the *Engoori* Framework

Engoori has been described as an “Aboriginal framework that focuses on reconnecting people and reigniting authentic dynamic conversations of strength to create strong foundations from which to build positive school cultures” (Gorringer & Spillman, 2008).

So, in the spirit of building dynamic conversations and focussing on the first two phases of the framework, the structure and processes of the workshops were designed to inform the AITSL pilot project by incorporating processes used and refined at the Stronger Smarter Leadership Program that honour strengths and vision the future.

These workshops intended to facilitate dialogue that explored beliefs and assumptions and to reveal individual and group perspectives from community, students and school personnel. The focus was on community engagement and identifying the attributes of effective teachers drawn from diverse school and community contexts.

It was considered important to encapsulate attributes of effective teachers when considering community engagement to recognise the notion that professional practice and professional engagement as detailed in the Standards do not occur in isolation. It is not possible to have one without the other. In fact, community engagement does not exist when genuine relationships within the schools and Communities are not established. Relationships are the foundation of creating environments where sustained engagement becomes part of the ongoing school culture and practices.

16.1.2 Contextual Issues

Diversity was a consideration in the selection of communities to participate in the pilot project. This consideration was a deliberate effort to ensure that any broad generalisations were not attributed to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities and students, and to avoid the notion that there is only one experience or perspective representative of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the country.

Workshops conducted were responsive to the needs and requirements of the participating schools and uniquely structured to accommodate the individual sites in the time available. Consistent processes and similar statements were used throughout to enable comparison across sites and to build a clear picture by capturing key messages.

The Stronger Smarter Institute team facilitated a number of workshops to draw on community, student and teacher voice and perspectives. These workshops explored participants’ beliefs, experiences and assumptions around attributes of an effective *deadly* teacher. Building on the positive narratives explorations of what constitutes community engagement, including a range of processes and strategies that need to be demonstrated, in order to establish and sustain genuine engagement of the school and community were identified.

Within the tight timeframe of the pilot project, and with such an ambitious scope, the findings need to be considered as preliminary. An important outcome has been the capturing of views and perspectives from a wide range of people with differing experiences. These perspectives highlight areas that can inform practice and be further investigated over a longer period of time.

The conversations that occurred during the workshops highlighted that some basic information often assumed by teachers educational institutions can lead to mixed messages between

school personnel and Community. In some instances there are not shared understandings as to the purpose, benefits and definition of what community engagement actually is. The activities undertaken during this pilot to clarify the understandings of community and community engagement highlighted that while schools have planned activities designed to promote community engagement, the purposes are not always explicit or clearly articulated.

It is interesting to note that the principal in one of the schools was surprised at some of the conversations that arose from the stimulus processes. He later reflected that when they last had a whole staff focus on Indigenous students and connecting with parents, the composition of the staff was vastly different, indicating that strategies related to community engagement are not something that are ticked off at some stage and not revisited again for some time. Rather, they are part of an ongoing process requiring continual development and refinement.

The Appendices to this report contain documents that capture the voices and perspectives of participants across the different sites. They have been grouped in schools to identify the several perspectives conveyed through each of the processes. We have endeavoured to keep the integrity of the contributions by presenting the community perspectives as a collection of responses from each of the school communities. In this way the information can be used to inform practice in each of the sites while providing us with key messages consistent across all schools and communities.

The conversations that were facilitated at workshops raised issues and provided stimulus for rigorous debate. These points, listed below, are worth noting and provide a basis for further investigation.

- What constitutes 'community' and is it the same for everyone?
- Are there shared understandings of what community engagement looks like?
- Why is community engagement important?
- Whose engagement is required and for what purpose?
- How does community engagement contribute to improved outcomes? There is a need to articulate this clearly to all parties, and to establish shared understandings and goals which will provide motivation and purpose, conducive to engagement
- Is community engagement defined by how many times parents come to the school and perform tasks required of them by the schools, or is it about a shared partnership between schools and communities, which looks different in different contexts and changes within a school community overtime?
- Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have had very different experiences of schools than children experience today. Many have also had negative experiences of interacting with school personnel and this has impacted on the interactions they have today. The need for strong respectful relationships is highlighted throughout. The video prepared from the workshops conducted in Northern NSW, and which will form part of the presentation to AITSL in February captures the concerns some Aboriginal parents and family members face when entering a schoolyard, as a result of their own previous experiences and histories. Such experiences and the impact on individuals' confidence and capacity to engage with schools call for understanding and support.

16.2 Research Questions

16.2.1 Rationale

The MCEECDYA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan 2010 – 2014 refers to engagement and connection at the national, systemic and local levels, as integral elements to the plan.

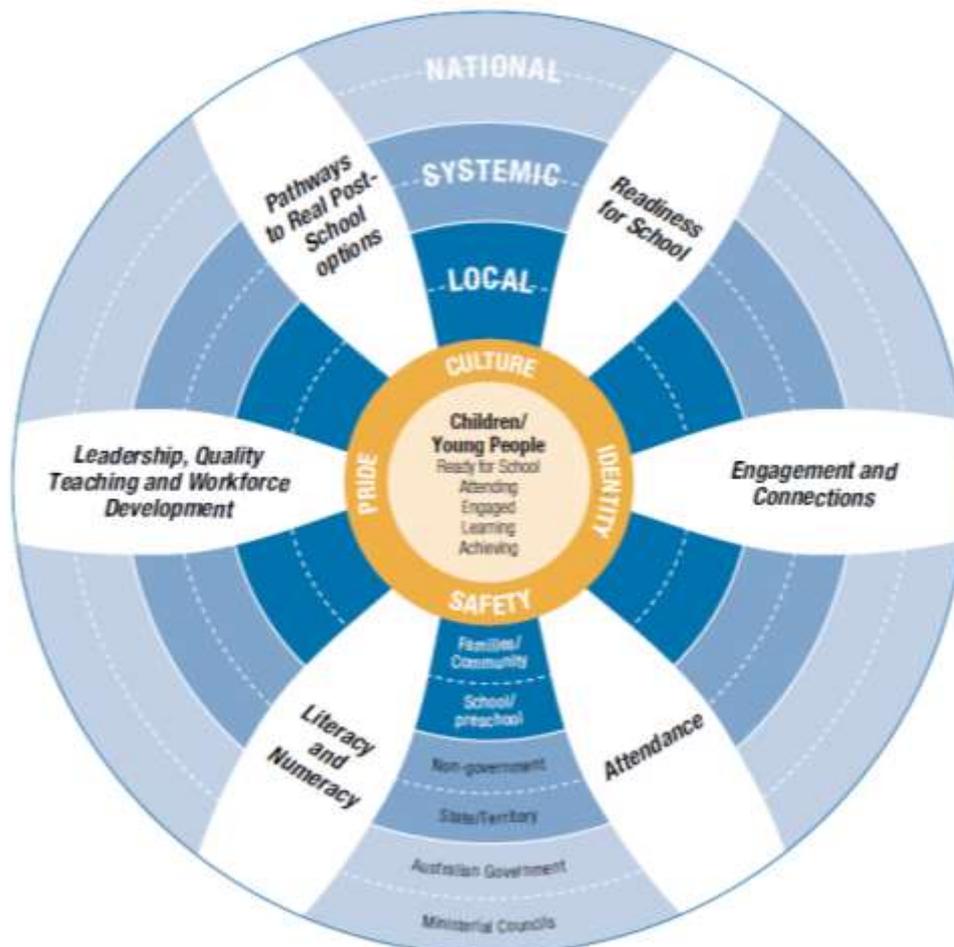


Figure 16-3 : MCEECDYA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Plan 2010 - 2014, Conceptual Design (p5).

State and Territory Smarter Schools National Partnership agreements and most school plans incorporate a focus on engaging communities. Yet the conversations at the local level could be enhanced by developing shared understandings of the nature of community and engagement, and then clearly articulating how genuine engagement contributes to improved outcomes for students. These basic understandings are often assumed knowledge. This is particularly important when it is considered that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents come from language and cultural backgrounds very different from those of the teachers. The continuum activity utilized in the workshops (detailed on page 21 of this report) and the processes designed to obtain definitions of community engagement, stimulated rigorous debate and highlighted the need for community engagement to be understood and clearly articulated, so that it looks the same for all stakeholders in the school community. Do teachers

and community have similar perspectives of community engagement and have the purpose, roles and responsibilities been clearly articulated and understood?

The research questions focussed on describing the attributes of an effective *deadly* teacher and how they facilitate and support community engagement from community, student and school perspectives. This recognises the symbiotic relationships established by effective teachers with key Community personnel and also highlights the strategies they put in place for building a school environment conducive to an ongoing process of genuine community engagement.

The workshop processes required teachers, students and community members to reflect on their own experiences, beliefs and assumptions and hear other peoples' perspectives. Each school's data set is provided in the Appendices of this report and they reveal insights that provide guidelines for schools that can be built on to enhance community engagement, and inform teachers of the valued attributes they demonstrate that clearly impact dramatically on students.

Research Question 1: What are the attributes of teachers and school leaders who effectively facilitate and support engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and Communities in education?

An article titled *Building an Emotional Bank Account with Students*, (Sarra, 2011) provides an appropriate backdrop for the responses we had from community members and students recalling their experiences of a *deadly* teacher. In a workshop visualisation activity, these responses overwhelmingly demonstrated the importance of the relationships teachers build with their students. See student and community responses in Appendix D.2.3. Figure 4 is an illustration provided by a secondary student from Northern NSW who described the teacher supporting her as represented by the seat and the flowers represented her growing from the teacher's support, fed by that fact the teacher believes in her.



Figure 16-4 : Student visualisation of positive qualities of teachers



Figure 16-5 : Wordle from primary students describing attributes of a *deadly* teacher

Figure 5 represents a Wordle from an activity undertaken by year 4, 5 and 6 students describing how a *deadly* teacher made them feel. Their descriptions convey the positives and the impact teachers have had on them, using words such as *Skudda* to mean really good, or impressive, and happy, calm and relaxed to describe their influence. They also referred to ways teachers made them feel and identified as a positive that they were learning more everyday; one child said he feels 'brainy and cool'. It is interesting that while many references were made about being made to feel good, there were also several descriptions that fit with a high-expectations learning environment. This message was consistent across sites with a Northern NSW student summing up her experience of a teacher making her feel like she was 'on top of the world' and 'teaching (her) so she can go anywhere, even to the city and graduate' (Figure 6).



Figure 16-6 : View of the impact of a positive teacher by a Northern NSW Student

Another student's account of a *deadly* teacher raised the issue of respect, which became a consistent theme and seemed to be a big factor in how students and community felt they were treated by the teachers and the school. When there are respectful relationships positive narratives described effective student engagement: "A *deadly* teacher makes me feel happy bubbly and fun. When it is fun we wanted to do more so we could have fun and learn. Everyone respects you more. If they are nice to us then you get more work done" (Secondary student, Qld). Figure 7 illustrates a student's feeling of strength and importance when treated with respect.



"My *deadly* teacher made me feel welcomed, she made me feel stronger and didn't make me feel bad ... she noticed me" (Secondary Student, Qld.)

Figure 16-7 : Student representation of how a *deadly* teacher made him feel

The sad clarifying comment here that 'she noticed me' highlights the little things teachers do such as greet students in a welcoming way which make a difference. Another said "when you are welcomed there is a sense of belonging." The community group at the second Queensland school also talked about the welcoming atmosphere at the school that extended from the principal right across the school to staff and other students.

Bishop and Berryman (2006) in their book *Culture Speaks - cultural relationships & classroom learning* includes interviews with Maori students in New Zealand who describe the impact resulting from teachers showing an interest in their cultural heritage or making an effort to pronounce their names properly. The same could be said about the responses we received across all sites in this project. These are instances of actions that cannot be listed within a set of strategies because they are more than tasks; they are about authentic interactions and respectful dealings with students and Community.

Research Question 2: What strategies and processes are required for successful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and Communities?

There was quite a lot of discussion across various sites about the schools and teachers getting out of the school environment to meet parents and carers in the community in settings, such as, at church, sporting events or the supermarket. It was noted that some schools have planned strategies, such as, home visits with Aboriginal support staff to introduce teachers to the

community, whilst other schools leave it entirely up to the teachers to develop their own connections. Some teachers in their survey responses described varying degrees of confidence and commitment to connecting with parents and carers. Others successfully develop sensitive respectful relationships and some require additional support and impetus to do so.

National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week activities were raised across several sites and the community groups made the point that these activities should be more ongoing throughout the year and not just a special event. A parent had a strong message about “more learning about culture in the curriculum, more dance and chances for kids to feel proud and to share their knowledge”. Her definition of community engagement was about community playing an integral role in embedding Indigenous perspectives across the curriculum and ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were delivering that aspect of the teaching and learning program. This is consistent with the Stronger Smarter meta-strategy to acknowledge and embrace a positive sense of Indigenous identity.

The majority of descriptions recounting how schools engaged community described special events rather than a formalised part of the teaching and learning program. Conversations were often centred on what support looks like, taking into consideration that parents may not feel they need to come up to the school to support their kids, due to a range of other commitments, and that they trusted the school to teach their children. Support for these parents may be ensuring that kids get to school and helping them with homework. Teachers on the other hand often interpreted that as not being interested in their child’s education. Such commentary raised the question of whether or not the responsibility to engage always rested with the families. Some responses conveyed a level of blame, ‘we have tried that and they didn’t turn up’ rather than exploring options for what could be done differently to build connectedness and to foster the idea that ‘we are all in this together.’

The text responses to the survey described what teachers do to engage with families. Some were dismissive and others described a lack of confidence or support. This was intriguing because it seemed to imply there is an option for teachers to opt out when it comes to engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents. Others described means of building relationships with families and community by going out into the community themselves. A teacher from Western Australia talked about how building relationships with the community increased his knowledge and improved his capacity to teach. This was in contrast to some of his colleagues and teachers in the Queensland schools who described the need for parents to come in and help them with school-based tasks in the classroom.

16.2.2 Focus

The investigation undertaken for this pilot study was based on a Strength-based approach in an effort to shift the conversation from the usual blame and disabling negative patterns. Instead, the focus was on positive narratives derived from responses that illustrated real life experiences of how schools have engaged community in the past. Elaborating on the personal narratives also contributed to enhanced understandings of the attributes of a *deadly* teacher.

During discussions with the regional program participants, an important question about identity was raised:

“Who is community? Sometimes our students in the high school are in the parenting role. Maybe the school needs to consider the role of those students and informing them

of arrangements or seeking advice from them... more questions need to be asked to ensure the right people are advised and consulted.” (Teacher, WA, SSLP follow-up)

The teacher raised here the first in a set of assumptions that schools need to consider by articulating a question about what constitutes community in this context? Is there an assumption that ‘parent’ or ‘carer’ are the same for all regardless of home circumstances, and do schools need to adjust who they perceive as a parent or carer, as a beginning point. A teacher at one of the Queensland schools mentioned that “some of our students don’t live with their parents.” This comment was based on an assumption that ‘parent’ and ‘carer’ relate to a concept of the nuclear family, which may not be the case for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Nor is it representative of many cultural groups or individuals living in Australia today, e.g., foster families, extended families or where older students may be playing a significant role in ‘growing up’ the child. Before developing programs designed to engage community there is a need to understand the unique role many play in ‘growing up’ a child and therefore to consider who needs to be engaged. Once assumptions about who to engage have been challenged and resolved, the appropriate people can be identified and worked with, to develop meaningful relationships from which to proceed.

16.2.3 Understanding Community Engagement

The teachers at one of the Queensland schools described community engagement as parents coming into the classroom to help them with reading and conventional school tasks. Other community and student groups described it as NAIDOC week activities or sporting events. Most of these activities involve parents coming into the school rather than the school going out to the community.

The undergraduate student definitions of community engagement (Appendix K.1.1) were interesting because they revealed quite different concepts of community engagement from school personnel. These students who are in the process of studying to become teachers have a working definition of community engagement that differs considerably from teacher definitions. It is understandable that the teachers’ conceptual understandings of community engagement are shaped by their school experiences but it also highlights that community and undergraduate teachers do not necessarily share the same understandings of the key elements of community engagement. These disparate understandings further emphasizes the need to start the conversation by defining community engagement to ensure a shared understanding is the foundation and then devise ways of connecting with and engaging with the community in the ongoing process from the planning to implementation phase.

16.2.4 Focus Area 3.7 Engage parents / carers in the educative process (Professional Practice Domain)

Standard 3 – Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning				
Focus area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
3.7 Engage parents/ carers in the educative process	Describe a broad range of strategies for involving parents/carers in the educative process.	Plan for appropriate and contextually relevant opportunities for parents/ carers to be involved in their children’s learning.	Work with colleagues to provide appropriate and contextually relevant opportunities for parents/ carers to be involved in their children’s learning.	Initiate contextually relevant processes to establish programs that involve parents/ carers in the education of their children and broader school priorities and activities.

Figure 16-8 : National Professional Standards for Teachers - Focus Area 3.7

While most schools have established practices that are intended to engage community the emphasis is often on getting the community into the school as opposed to what teachers can do themselves to ensure genuine engagement becomes a reality.

Across the sites, community, teachers and students described the relationships that transformed engagement in schools, whether it was a significant teacher demonstrating they cared about individual students or those teachers who actively sought out opportunities to meet with parents outside the school environment. These activities formed the basis for establishing respectful relationships and provided opportunities to share information and positive stories of children’s progress. These informal approaches were raised across sites as being something that teachers, can do beyond the school gate. A Queensland teacher said “the school fence is a boundary not barrier”, a statement that echoes a core idea that is reflected in the work of the SSI.

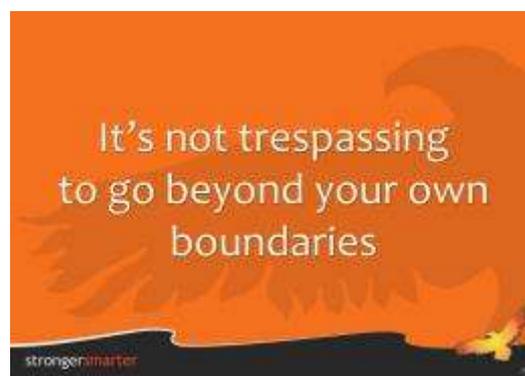


Figure 16-9 : Stronger Smarter Institute Provocation Statement

A community member from Northern NSW said “I haven’t seen a good report for any Aboriginal student in my time”. Such a comment is worth remembering in the context of parents who may appear reluctant to engage with the school. Some parents and community members may have constantly had negative experiences as a result of being approached only when issues or concerns are raised. All the more reason for positive relationships and friendly approaches to become an essential starting point.

School based community engagement initiatives described often referred to whole school approaches and did not clearly set out a role for all teachers. However the workshops particularly emphasized the important role individual teachers could make when building caring relationships with students and developing connections with carers. In some conversations and survey responses teachers highlighted concerns about going out into the community. It should be remembered the important role teachers make when building the relationships in the classrooms and this becomes an important starting point. However, schools have a responsibility to support teachers to build their capacity and confidence to engage with parents and carers. Strategies, such as, pairing new graduates with a community member often provides that mentoring support and can become the basis of developing nurturing relationships.

16.2.5 Focus Area 7.3 Engage with parents / carers (Professional Engagement Domain)

Standard 7 – Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community				
Focus area	Graduate	Proficient	Highly Accomplished	Lead
7.3 Engage with the parents/carers	Understand strategies for working effectively, sensitively and confidentially with parents/carers.	Establish and maintain respectful collaborative relationships with parents/carers regarding their children's learning and well-being.	Demonstrate responsiveness in all communications with parents/carers about their children's learning and well-being.	Identify, initiate and build on opportunities that engage parents/carers in both the progress of their children's learning and in the educational priorities of the school.

Figure 16-10 : National Professional Standards for Teachers – Focus Area 7.3

Parents and community have often had very different experiences of the education process than schools provide today. It is therefore important that community, and students for that matter, have a strong sense of connectedness to the school, beyond the significant relationships individual teachers develop. Professional engagement needs to occur aligned to whole school strategic plans and initiatives that have involved community in developing and implementing the strategies.

The Stronger Smarter philosophy advocates high-expectations learning environments and the importance of embracing a positive sense of cultural identity for students and communities within schools. It is important to note the two metastrategies are complimentary, that you can have a high-expectations learning environment and embrace a positive sense of cultural identity. As teachers demonstrate professional capabilities across the four career stages, they do not lower expectations when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and communities and the imperative to build relationships will ensure the strategies used are informed by the community context and shaped by community input.

16.3 Methodological Considerations

The Stronger Smarter Institute invited schools from within our existing networks to participate in the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Pilot, to ensure we captured the experiences and views of participants working in vastly different environments by including teachers, students and community members from different demographics including metropolitan, provincial and very remote contexts.

A core premise that guided the selection of schools and the structure of the pilot study was that we respect and honour the diversity of views, experiences, histories and beliefs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Efforts were made to include schools and communities from the Torres Strait but it was not possible to conduct workshops within the tight timeframe. Some Torres Strait Islander students attend schools in which we conducted these workshops. Extensive efforts were made to ensure community, student and teacher voices were central to the report and each of the school data sets is provided in the Appendices.

Workshop processes used in the Stronger Smarter Leadership Program were adapted for this pilot project to promote sharing of ideas, views and beliefs in order to elicit key messages and insights from a wide range of people. The physical environment was arranged to ensure

everyone could participate, positioned to be at the same level with all participants comfortable and able to contribute.

Stronger Smarter Processes:

1. Setting the circle

Honouring all contributions from community, students and school personnel and ensuring all contributions are regarded by all as being of equal importance and value.

2. Check in and check out

At the beginning and end of each session working with teachers, parents or community a Stronger Smarter Institute ritual, known as *Checking in and Checking out*, is enacted to set the values for the processes and ensure everyone is aware their contributions are equally valued, honoured and accepted.

3. Continuum

Specific statements are made and participants physically situate themselves along a continuum from Strongly agree to Strongly disagree. The conversations that occur around these statements indicate individual's beliefs and assumptions and facilitate rigorous debate. Participants are free to adjust their position in response to alternative views that may influence their thinking.

4. Visualizing the attributes of effective teachers

Drawing on their own experiences participants represent what it felt like when they had a *deadly* teacher, recalling what it felt like, then describing how the teacher made them feel. Illuminating the attributes demonstrated by effective teachers when building these relationships.

5. Never ending conversation (Northern NSW workshops only)

A conversation is started where each participant adds to the previous person's comment creating an ongoing dialogue around what is community engagement and why it is important. The process of the *Never Ending Conversation* was only used at the Northern NSW workshops as it was difficult to get people to engage and it was felt that the process required more time and practice before more constructive conversations occurred. However reviewing the student responses to the *Never Ending Conversation* provides some interesting comments. (Appendix E.4.2)

In two sites, surveys were given to teachers to complete. While these were small sample sizes they represented vastly different contexts. We were trying to gauge whether there were substantial differences in teachers' perceptions of what community engagement is in a school with a minority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students compared with a school where Aboriginal people made up the majority of the town's population. The free text responses (Appendix A.2.1 & Appendix B.2.1) gave us interesting insights into assumptions and beliefs and indicated how teachers see their roles and responsibilities related to engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and communities.

Overview of Schools:

Provincial Learning Community Schools, Northern New South Wales: Two Public Schools and one High School, combined to engage in the workshop with participants representing community, students and teachers. Some of the community members were representing more

than one school because they had experiences of and connections to primary and secondary schools in the area.

Very Remote Western Australian Schools: Workshops were conducted at two District High Schools. In addition to the workshops school and community leaders, from schools across the region attending a Stronger Smarter Leadership Program (SSLP) were asked to describe their understandings of community engagement. These workshops in the two District High Schools were facilitated by Dyonne Anderson, Stronger Smarter Institute, principal in residence, without the support of additional Stronger Smarter personnel owing to the remoteness, logistics and costs involved. Individual workshops were held in each site and adapted to suit the needs of the schools in the time available.

Metropolitan Brisbane schools: Workshops were conducted in a State High School and a State Primary School. At the State High School a workshop was conducted with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student leadership group, 3 Aboriginal school staff, a teacher, a Teachers Aide and school community liaison officer, as well as a community Elder. At the State Primary School the teacher workshop was conducted during an afterschool staff meeting and the surveys were administered at the end. Not all teachers completed the survey. The community and student workshop was conducted the following afternoon during school time.

In each site the workshops were tailored to the specific context. In the remote WA District High School for instance the principal was new to the school and the data collected provided a 'point in time' perspective on community engagement and a baseline on how the community and students felt the school was engaging with the community. Some sites had limited time and availability so processes were adapted to ensure the school's needs were met while we were stimulating dialogue that would inform our purposes.

The key messages were drawn from the responses of community, students and school personnel and documented in the Appendices to this report. The power of the narrative is captured in the school data sets.

16.4 Results from the Investigation

16.4.1 Data Collection and Management

Surveys were completed by staff at two schools in an attempt to gain a snapshot of their teaching experience, a baseline from which to gauge their self assessments and to ascertain whether there were marked differences in perspectives from such different contexts.

The survey analysis (Appendix G.1) is very limited and highlights the differences between the years of teaching experience with the very remote school having a large proportion of graduate staff, which is reflective of many remote and very remote schools across the country. It must be noted that the teachers across both sites had limited prior knowledge of the National Professional Standards for Teachers, so their self-assessments were not informed by a set criteria and may not align with years of experience or relate to demonstrated skills. There is a need in all sites to introduce the Standards and to engage teachers with the Standards. Some teachers showed genuine enthusiasm to learn more about them and were grateful of the opportunity to learn about the Standards. Copies of the Standards were distributed to interested parties.

The survey data was interrogated at a very basic level recognising that the teachers in both the Queensland and Western Australian samples had limited exposure to the National Professional Standards for Teachers, so their responses were fairly subjective and further descriptors or criteria need to inform their self-reflection or ratings, to ensure accuracy and to allow comparison. The text-based answers (Appendix A.2.1 & Appendix B.2.1) that are part of the school data sets reveal interesting perspectives.

16.4.2 Analysis of the Data

The voices of community, students and teachers were honoured, drawing on consistent themes and using quotes or information gleaned from the workshops to capture and represent the key messages.

The data captured through the workshop processes including the conversations, the survey responses, and the artworks have been scrutinized to highlight the messages that were raised across the different sites.

16.4.3 Analytical Procedures

By drawing out the themes this process becomes a mechanism for the narrative of many to inform the report while using specific people's responses to convey the messages. More responses can be found in video grabs, notes in the appendix and through viewing the video (to be shown as part of the presentation in February).

The investigators have experience working in similar contexts enabling the sharing of insights from an informed position. In addition, post-workshop debriefing sessions informed refinements and enabled issues to be deconstructed..

16.4.3.1 Results

16.4.3.1.1 Research Question 1: What are the attributes of teachers and school leaders, who effectively facilitate and support engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and communities in education?

While some people recounted the role the teacher played as a sports or dance teacher, their descriptions revealed that what makes a *deadly* teacher, is not about what is taught but is about the interactions with students, and the impact these have on how they are made to feel.

The processes were centred on a strength base, though at a High School the conversation with students covered negative experiences in schools prior to coming to the school. One secondary student described being ridiculed by her maths teacher and after being strong at maths previously, now takes no interest in maths and has dropped it as a senior subject. Her statement was that that teacher "made me feel like nothing" (Appendix D.2.3.). This is mentioned because the workshops were eliciting positive stories and the clear messages about positive influences of *deadly* teachers that can be taken from the comments. However, the opposite is also true and the dramatic impact of negative interactions having a lasting effect was also raised.

In the context of building an emotional bank account with students, Sarra (2011) states:

"This is why schools and teacher student relationships today and into the future must be resolutely positive. The learning environment and the teacher student relationship must be relentless around a message that says consistently to learners: 'Hey, I believe in you!'"

This message came out strongly in the visualisation of a *deadly* teacher process, as well as from community discussions that emphasized the central importance of the student teacher relationships. Sarra (2011) highlights here the need to ensure the relationships are positive but some of the conversations during the workshops raised concerns and alluded to the impact on students when the relationships are not positive. Demonstrating the importance of getting the relationship right, with students in the first instance and then extending the focus on positive ways to engage with parents, carers and the wider Community.

16.4.3.1.2 Research Question 2: What strategies and processes are required for successful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and communities

The data collected does not reveal a set of skills or processes that can be ticked off or achieved but rather an ongoing process to be built upon. This process involves genuine relationships between, individual teachers and parents and carers, as well as whole school and community initiatives that are inclusive and which are developed from partnerships with community as significant contributors..

The visualisation activities explained the attributes of teachers seen to impact on students that result in quality relationships. These factors such as showing you care, respecting students, making them feel welcome and helping them to be the best they can be, can also be applied to effectively working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and carers.

16.4.4 Summary

Mackie (2011) refers to the importance of a caring adult and the responses we had from all stakeholders during the pilot project overwhelmingly demonstrated that the *deadly* teacher made it clear to students that they cared. The feelings associated with these recollections were often very colourful and positive. Interestingly most students easily identified a teacher who has had or is currently having a significant impact on them.

Mackie refers to a connectedness paradigm and describes activities that many schools engage in, such as, extra curricular activities designed to promote a positive school culture. The schools we worked with could list initiatives within their schools as evidenced by the examples of community engagement offered by community, students and teachers from their own experiences. However Mackie also makes the *'important distinction that connectedness is child and community centred while fostering of a school spirit can be seen as school centred'* (Mackie, 2011, p 10).

Perhaps this is the most important factor that schools are often busy attempting to engage community to 'foster a school spirit' without fully capitalising on the connectedness and ensuring shared understandings have been co-created to leverage community ideas. Real engagement occurs when equal partners in a reciprocal relationship work together and all fully understand the purpose, processes and intended outcome. Often with the best intentions, schools implement programs that are important to schools without explaining the purpose or seeking advice from community in the first instance. Chris Sarra from the Stronger Smarter Institute talks about **working with** communities **not doing** things to community. This distinction could inform the ways schools do business.

Another rewarding aspect of the workshops resulted from the inclusion of students in the process. Not only did they contribute valuable information and ideas but they expressed such gratitude about being consulted and commented on being respected and valued.

Primary students at one of the Queensland Public Schools commented in their *Check Out* that they were proud to be part of this group (small group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students chosen to participate) and their involvement in the project may instigate an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in their school to participate in a leadership group. A secondary student in Western Australia said in his *Check Out* “This is really worthwhile and I felt valued because it was the first time the school wanted to know what I thought”. This powerful response impacted on adults in the room who started the conversation around ‘where to from here’ – how can we conduct these types of workshops in other remote schools and build on what was started in this school?

Community members at all sites were also appreciative of their involvement and valued an opportunity to contribute. Schools could build on this goodwill and use these processes as the foundation of building stronger partnerships.

The information collected from community, schools and students was rich and informative. While the data informs the schools and this report, the processes initiated in the workshops were positively received and have seeded new ideas.

The data collected represents diverse perspectives but often has a consistent message regardless of the contexts. It is clear that improved understandings and better communication will enhance community engagement. It is also clear that schools, communities and students have valuable contributions that can inform processes.

16.5 Resources

16.5.1 Resources Developed for the Pilot

Posters were developed from the visualisation activities and will be presented back to the schools to honour individual contributions that convey the key messages.

A video has been developed from the Northern NSW Learning Communities schools and will form part of the presentation to AITSL in February. The video is a means of documenting the processes and will become a record of the initial conversation that is seen as the beginning of a journey, to build authentic school and community relationships within this Learning Community.

The surveys (Appendix F) developed were seen as a means of capturing attitudes and beliefs from a range of teachers in an efficient manner and would guide further investigations.

16.5.2 Existing Resources Used in the Pilot

The schools were drawn from the wider Stronger Smarter networks and their engagement with this project was a result of existing relationships and a willingness to work with and capitalise on, involvement with the institute.

Intellectual property of *Engoori* remain with Scott Gorringer, David Spillman and the Stronger Smarter processes remain with Stronger Smarter Institute.

Indigenous knowledges that have contributed to ways of doing business with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have informed how we structured the workshops and the type of information sought.

16.6 Findings and Outcomes

16.6.1 Implications and Recommendations from the Pilot

Further work needs to occur to ensure all stakeholders have a shared understanding and are in a position to contribute ideas. Beliefs and assumptions need to be expressed around community engagement, its identity, its role, why it is important, and how to effectively build on school and teacher practice.

During one workshop a facilitator posed the question of whether community engagement is important at all. This outraged the participants who responded sharply without being aware that the statement was made to provoke a strong response. Statements like this and those used during the Continuum activity forced the participants to reflect on their beliefs and then to articulate their views. This type of response revealed assumptions and beliefs and allowed for interesting discussion. Staff, community and students were able to debate a range of topics revealing their understandings and beliefs and provide the basis from which to move forward. These processes were an effective means of facilitating debate, revealing misunderstandings or concerns and identify strengths. The positive responses received from all participants, but particularly community and students. This demonstrated that involving community and students in the conversation is of paramount importance. Involvement in this process was seen as the beginning of a journey.

16.6.1.1 The Local Perspective

The individual schools involved in the workshops can use the data to inform future directions and the workshops can form the basis from which to build an invigorated relationship with key community members. Issues raised in the different context can be addressed using the student, community and teachers ideas. Once some of the assumptions have been challenged and clearer shared understandings are formed, the schools can be proactive in ensuring the contributions of all impact on the planning and implementation of programs across the whole school.

The schools can reflect on areas they can improve on, based on the conversations that took place at the workshops and which have been documented through the processes (Appendix, school data sets)

The data packages compiled for the AITSL pilot project consist of insightful contributions that need to be incorporated into planning so that involvement in this process adds value. The views and perspectives shared are honoured and enhance the operations of the school, particularly for teachers in their classrooms as they deal with parents, carers and school executive teams on a daily basis.

16.6.1.2 The National Perspective

The information from the various contexts highlights the importance of drawing on the expertise and experiences within the school and community context. Involvement in these workshops and the rich contributions received demonstrate the value of involving community, students and parents.

There is no 'silver bullet' of a few tasks to tick off, but a commitment to an ongoing process that changes over time and constantly builds on genuinely respectful relationships.

The journey is predicated on building relationships, improving understandings and communication, and capitalising on the goodwill and commitment to improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. These notions exist across sites, but sometimes need to be refocussed. Community, students and school personnel displayed a commitment to learn from each other and to work together to help schools be the best they can.

16.6.2 Planning for the Future

Each school that participated in workshops expressed gratitude and enthusiasm about their involvement. The intention is that information gained from the feedback from community, teachers and students will be used to inform planning for the future. In some of the sites bringing community and students in to seek their views was an initiative and will become part of the school's practice.

Possible enhancements could be:

- A small-scale research project which builds case studies of teachers working effectively with communities and explicitly showcases attributes and highlights strategies these teachers and schools use to engage with communities in a range of contexts. Building on the work of SSI and *What Works*.
- A professional learning module (PLM) designed for teachers at different career stages to develop personal and professional plans for individuals and whole schools plans, reflecting on current practice, setting goals. Building the capacity required to achieve the next career stage and enacting and reporting on strategies for improving parent and community engagement.
- Professional learning opportunities designed to work through with community, mapping processes, building on community school partnerships and ensuring the conversations and relationships are continually growing. This process in itself can enhance community engagement.
- Localised activities that ensure teachers across a range of diverse contexts, including remote and very remote communities, have access to learning opportunities that introduce them to the National Professional Standards for Teachers and enable them to understand and use them regardless of their career stage or demographic.

16.7 References

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Research into truancy and school attendance and implications for the six RSD communities.

For further information

National Curriculum Services: retrieved 1/12/2011

What Works have developed *the school and community working together* series June 2009

www.whatworks.edu.au

<http://www.whatworks.edu.au/dbAction.do?cmd=displaySitePage1&subcmd=select&id=398>

17 VIT

17.1 Introduction

17.1.1 Setting the Scene

The Institute is an independent statutory authority for the regulation of the teaching profession in Victoria and operates under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. All teachers working in Victorian Government, Catholic and Independent schools are required to be registered with the Institute.

As a standards-referenced regulator the Institute requires Victorian teachers to meet and maintain professional standards for registration. New registrants are provisionally registered for up to two years until they are able to demonstrate that they meet the Victorian Standards of professional practice for full registration. These Standards were developed in consultation with the Victorian teaching profession and have a close correlation with the National Standards.

The pilot project investigated the professional learning of PRTs in relation to the National Standards at the Proficient Teacher level and the requirements for full registration in Victoria. Artefacts of professional practice were developed, including contextualized case studies, samples of practice, and records of professional conversations between PRTs and their mentors.

17.1.2 Contextual Issues

This pilot project builds on the Supporting Provisionally Registered Teachers (SPRT) Project, developed by the Institute in 2003 to provide support for the professional learning of Victorian Provisionally Registered Teachers (PRTs) as they develop evidence of their practice to meet the standards for full registration.

This is a small scale study that seeks to be a representative sample across groups. The Institute is aware of the limitations of the size of the study, but it provides broad indicators of how up to 3500 PRTs who apply for full registration each year will may use the National Standards to evidence practice.

The Institute's evidence-based process for teachers to apply for full registration requires a minimum of 80 days full time teaching in a school. Most PRTs teach for at least three terms before full registration. The study was confined to eight weeks and the teaching time for some teachers was less than six weeks; these constraints may have implications for the findings.

The Pilot was supported by staff in the Institute's Standards and Professional Learning Branch and involved the participation of PRTs, their school-based mentors and principals across a range of school types in regional and metropolitan Victoria.

17.2 Research Questions

The overarching question for the Institute was:

How does the current process for full registration accommodate the Standards for teachers at the proficient level?

The questions that focus the investigation were:

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

17.2.1 Focus

The Victorian Standards were developed in consultation with the Victorian teaching profession and have a close correlation with the National Standards as shown in Table 1.

Table 17-1 - Victorian and National Standards

VICTORIAN INSTITUTE OF TEACHING – STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE							
1. Teachers know how students learn and how to teach them effectively.	2. Teachers know the content they teach.	3. Teachers know their students.	4. Teachers plan and assess for effective learning.	5. Teachers create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments.	6. Teachers use a range of teaching strategies and resources to engage students in effective learning.	7. Teachers reflect on, evaluate and improve their professional knowledge and practice.	8. Teachers are active members of their profession.
NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS							
KNOWLEDGE		PRACTICE			ENGAGEMENT		
1. Know students and how they learn.	2. Know the content and how to teach it.	3. Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning.	4. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments.	5. Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning.	6. Engage in professional learning.	7. Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community.	
37 areas of focus relating to 4 levels of career progression, Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead							

The current Victorian Standards have associated characteristics of practice similar to the Descriptors of the National Standards, but these do not have to be referenced specifically. Victorian teachers are currently required to provide evidence against the eight Victorian Standards. The current process is based on presumption of success in achieving the National Standards. This has allowed the Institute to focus on the development of professional practice and the learning associated with this as much as the assessment of competency.

Consequently the focus was on investigating the use of the National Standards to inform the professional learning required for registration.

17.3 Methodological Considerations

The scope of the project was an investigation of the use of the National Standards for Proficient teachers to guide and support the professional learning of Victorian PRTs in relation to:

- the evidence-based requirements for full registration;
- collegial practice and mentoring by experienced colleagues; and
- reflection on practice to identify future learning needs.

It involved a mixed method approach with both quantitative and qualitative data collection. The prime focus was in gathering qualitative data. Due to the small scale of the project the quantitative data could only provide broad indicators and trends.

The pilot project was contextualised within school settings and in the normal practice of beginning teachers. The sample of PRTs included primary, special and secondary teachers from Government, Catholic and Independent schools, located in metropolitan, regional and rural school settings.

- Six schools in the Ballarat area and nine schools in the Melbourne metropolitan area participated. These schools comprised 9 Government Schools, 4 Catholic Schools and 2 Independent Schools.
- Two workshops (Appendix A), (1 metropolitan location; 1 Ballarat location) were facilitated to:
 - interrogate the Standards;
 - complete pre-assessment of the Standards for proficient teachers to provide benchmark data of PRT practice;
 - consider focus for collaboration between PRT and mentor over an eight week period; and
 - develop an action plan in mentor/PRT teams (Appendix 2).
- Schools were allocated to SPL managers for follow up contact, which included a site visit by two SPL managers (Appendix C). This included classroom visits to further understand the context in which the PRT works. Over half the schools were visited again to provide follow up on the action plan.
- Data collection included:
 - pre- and post-assessment of PRT practice against the Standards' descriptors by PRTs and mentors and the collection of qualitative data about development of practice;
 - evaluative questionnaire completed by each PRT/mentor pair that focussed on the value of descriptors related to evidence of practice;
 - online survey for participants completed at the end of the process – separate surveys for PRTs and mentors, who were requested to assess against the National Standards and descriptors; and
 - individual case studies, which included the collection of artefacts in relation to using the Standards in practice - focus on collegial practice.

PRTs and their mentors worked with the Standards during term three in August and September. The first four weeks of the term four were, then, used to evaluate professional learning, collect evidence and artefacts of teacher practice.

Participants used a modified version of Option 3 provided in the current guide to full registration for PRTs. They were requested to identify an aspect of their practice that they were seeking to develop to improve student learning. Appendix H lists a synopsis of each action plan.

Table 17-2 - School Participation by Broad Location, Sector and Type

Location	School	Number of mentors/PRTs
Ballarat	Government Primary	1/1
Ballarat	Independent Secondary	1/2
Ballarat	Government Secondary	1/1
Ballarat	Government Primary	1/1
Ballarat	Catholic Secondary	1/1
Ballarat	Catholic Primary	1/1
Melbourne Metropolitan	Government Primary	2/2
Melbourne Metropolitan	Government Primary	1/1
Melbourne Metropolitan	Independent Secondary	1/1
Melbourne Metropolitan	Catholic Secondary	1/1
Melbourne Metropolitan	Government P-12	1/1
Melbourne Metropolitan	Government Special	1/1
Melbourne Metropolitan	Government P-12	2/2
Melbourne Metropolitan	Catholic Primary	1/1
Melbourne Metropolitan	Government Secondary	1/1

17.4 Results from the Engagement

17.4.1 Data Collection and Management

This section provides a tabular summary of the data collection instruments and their application, together with brief descriptions of and how the data were managed and organised for analysis.

Table 17-3 - Survey Instruments

August 3 & 8 workshops	Survey 1 (Appendix D) was designed to capture the initial responses of both PRT and mentor to the National Standards for Proficient teachers, including each of the 37 descriptors. PRTs were requested to indicate their current level of proficiency. If any descriptors were seen as not applicable to their current situation they were requested to indicate this. Mentors were requested to indicate the proficiency of their PRT. As this was the first time that the participants accessed the Standards and descriptors, this was considered benchmark information
September-October	Case Studies (Appendix H) - PRTs and mentors developed an action plan that focussed on an aspect of teaching that the PRT wished to develop in relation to improvements in student learning. As part of the school visits and follow up contact. PRTs developed and submitted evaluations of the plans, reflections on the impact of the change to practice and artefacts used in their practice. Many participants correlated this against the Standards. This was useful as an organiser.
Mid October	Survey 2 (Appendix E) is termed an 'Evaluative questionnaire' and was provided to each mentor/PRT as part of the school visit. Each pair was requested to indicate which descriptors they were either able or unable to evidence within the case study. Where a descriptor was evidenced each pair was requested to state if it was a major focus of the case study
By Late October	Surveys 3 and 4 (Appendices F & G) are two online surveys developed using Survey Monkey for the participants to complete. One was developed for the PRTs and the other for the mentors. Within each, the first section was a repeat of the individual rating against the Standards for proficient teachers. This was designed for comparison with the benchmark information following up to eight weeks of focus and discussion on the National Standards. Other questions in each survey were drawn from similar questionnaires used complete the current evaluate the professional learning and other benefits of the current process for full registration.

17.4.2 Analysis of the Data

17.4.2.1 Analytical Procedures

Due to the small sample size the pre- and post-assessment surveys against the Standards and descriptors provide only high level trends and the count of those descriptors perceived as not applicable in the context of the case study.

For the purposes of this report and to comply with the deadline the case studies have only been provisionally analysed and summarised.

17.4.2.2 Results

Data from pre- and post-assessment surveys

The purpose of the pre-assessment survey was to ascertain the PRTs' perception of their proficiency against the Standards and their descriptors. This was done at the time of first contact with the Standards and has the potential to provide benchmark information. The post-assessment survey was administered towards the end of a period of working with the Standards. The purpose in asking the mentor to rate the PRT was to give an indication of whether the observation of proficiency and practice correlates with the self awareness of the PRT of their practice.

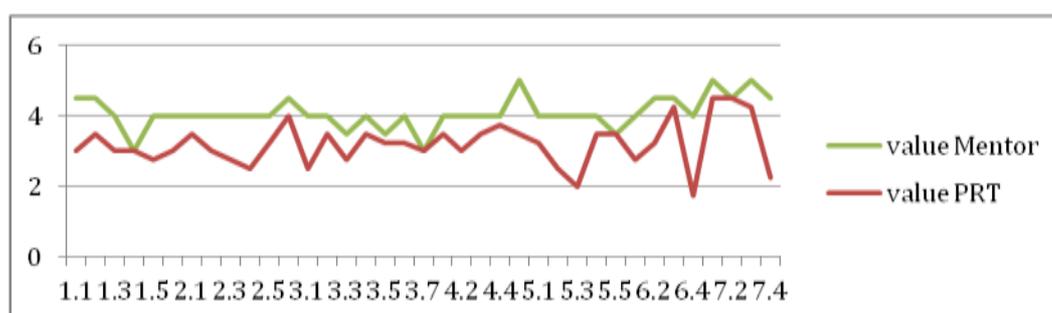


Figure 17-1 : Pre-assessment of PRT against the National Standards

(A graph identifying all Descriptors can be accessed as part of Appendix I(iv))

Figure 1 provides a benchmark on which to base the results after using the National Standards to guide practice. It provides comparability between the PRT and mentor perceptions.

Figure 1 shows that the PRT's and mentor's assessments of proficiency against the National Standards' Descriptors were similar, although the mentor's rating was the same or higher than those of the PRTs in all cases. Mentors indicated that their PRTs were capable (<3 on a 5 point scale) against all Descriptors. PRTs, on the other hand, felt that they had not yet attained capability in 8 areas of focus of the National Standards. These were:

- 1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities;
- 2.4 Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (most responses to this descriptor were N/A; see figure in appendix I(iv));
- 3.1 Establish challenging learning goals;;
- 3.3 Use teaching strategies;
- 5.3 Make consistent and comparable judgments;
- 6.1 Identify and plan professional learning needs;
- 6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning; and

- 7.4 Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities.

The descriptors that the mentors and PRTs rated similarly were:

- 1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (note: most responses to this descriptor were N/A; see figure in Appendix I(iv));
- 3.7 Engage parents/carers in the educative process;
- 5.5 Report on student achievement; and
- 7.2 Comply with legislative, administrative and organisational requirements.

The descriptors that the PRTs rated considerably lower than the mentors were:

- 2.4 Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (note: most responses to this descriptor were N/A; see figure in Appendix I(iii));
- 3.1 Establish challenging learning goal;
- 5.3 Make consistent and comparable judgements;
- 6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning; and
- 7.4 Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities.

Mentors rated the PRTs particularly highly on the following descriptors:

- 4.5 Use ICT safely, responsibly and ethically;
- 7.1 Meet professional ethics and responsibilities; and
- 7.3 Engage with the parents/carers.

Figure 2 shows that the PRTs were far more confident of their capability against all Descriptors of the National Standards after working with them for 8 weeks and their ratings were more comparable with the perceptions of the mentors. The mentors continued to rate the PRTs higher, but PRTs now felt they were capable against all descriptors at the level required to be proficient.

The Descriptors that the PRTs still rated lower than their mentors were:

- 1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (note: most responses to this descriptor were N/A; see figure in Appendix I(i)); and
- 3.7 Engage parents/ carers in the educative process.

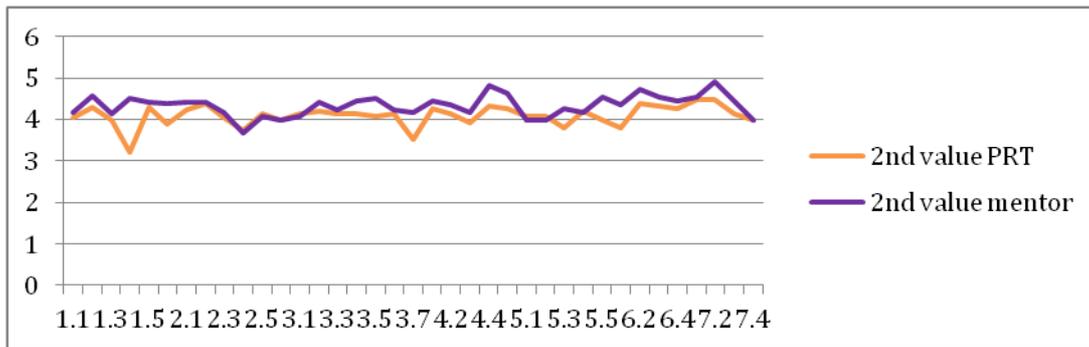


Figure 17-2 : Post-assessment of PRT Practice Against the National Standards

(A graph identifying all Descriptors can be accessed as part of Appendix I(ii))

Participants felt that the vast majority of descriptors were relevant to their action plans. There was a consistent response from both PRTs and mentors regarding the descriptors that were not applicable to the action plan being developed. A range of Descriptors (2.4, 1.4, 1.6 and 1.3) were identified in both the pre- and post- assessment by PRTs and mentors as being not applicable (see Appendices I(i) and I(ii)).

Evaluative questionnaire

The evaluative questionnaire was used to assess which descriptors each PRT/mentor pair was either able or unable to evidence within the case study. There were eight descriptors that all teachers could evidence, regardless of context. This suggests they will be more visible and easy to see in teacher practice. Descriptors that were a major focus are found across all Standards. They are most prevalent in Standard three ‘Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning (see Figure 3 or Appendix I(v)).

The majority of teachers expressed concerned about evidencing only a few descriptors. However, the time limitations of the project meant that this was an indicator only and may not be accurate across a larger sample and longer timeframe for implementation.

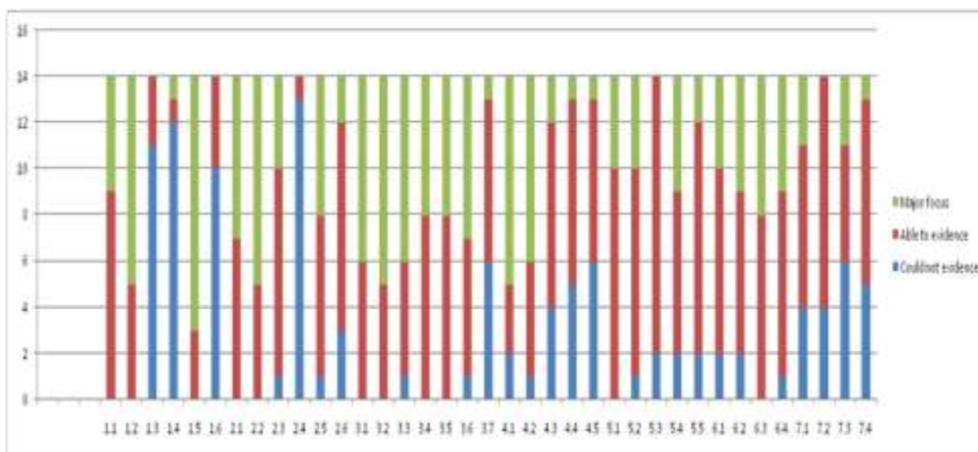


Figure 17-3 : Evaluative Questionnaire from PRT/Mentor Pair

(A graph identifying all Descriptors can be accessed as part of Appendix I(v))

Online surveys focused on learning and understandings arising from use of the Standards.

A series of questions to mentors and PRTs interrogated the extent to which the National Standards assisted professional conversations and the extent of the improvement of the PRT and the level of support from mentors. These questions mirror those that are asked in the current evaluation of the Institute’s full registration program. While numbers are small, the responses reflect the results of evaluations that use the current Victorian Standards. Results from PRTs and mentors were consistently positive (Table 4).

Table 17-4 - Responses form PRT Survey

Answer Options	Did not assist	Some assistance	Valuable	Highly valuable
Working with the National Standards supported the discussion of effective professional practice with my mentor.	0	2	6	7
Working with the National Standards supported me to receive feedback about my practice in the classroom.	1	1	7	6
Discussion with my mentor assisted me to understand my practice in relation to the National Standards.	0	1	6	7
Working with the National Standards supported a focus on improving professional practice.	0	1	5	9
Working with the National Standards supported a focus on improving student learning.	0	1	6	8

Table 4 indicates that PRTs felt that working with the National Standards was valuable in relation to discussions with their mentors on professional practice to improve student learning. Figure 4 indicates that the case study approach, which models the current practice for full registration, assisted in improving professional knowledge.

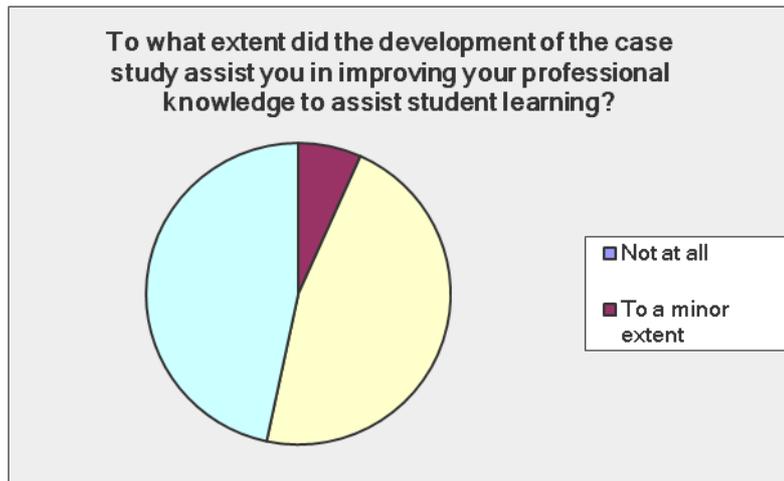


Figure 17-4 : Responses from PRT Survey About Case Study

Responses from mentors

Figures 5 and 6 indicate that the mentors saw improvements in their PRT’s professional knowledge and that the National Standards assisted the mentors to understand their own professional practice, respectively.

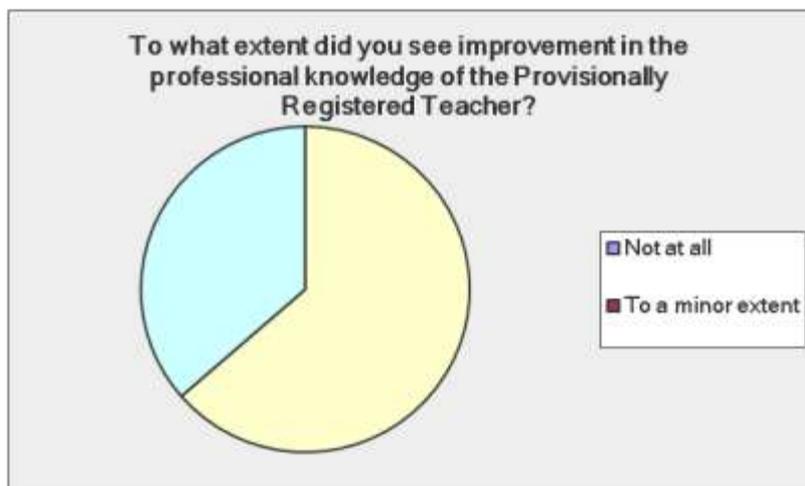


Figure 17-5 : Extent to Which Mentors Saw Improvements in the Professional Knowledge of PRTs

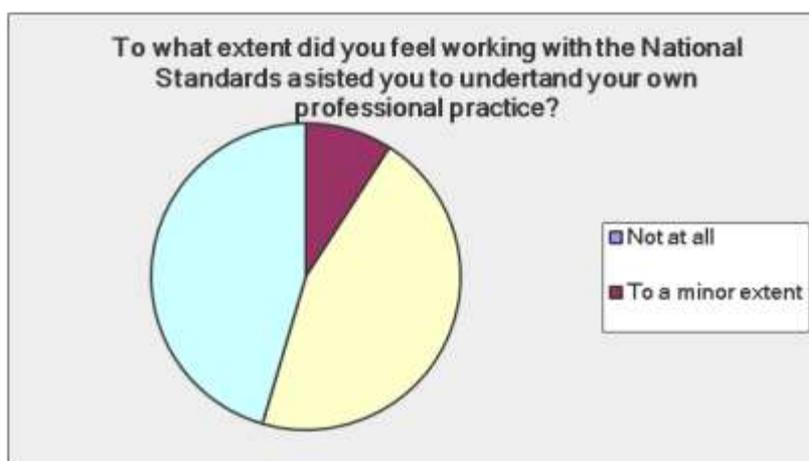


Figure 17-6 : Extent to Which Mentors Felt Working With the National Standards Assisted Them to Understand Their Own Practice

17.4.2.2.1 How are the National Standards at the Proficient level understood and used by provisionally registered teachers (PRTs) for full registration

Evidence from the evaluative questionnaire, the online survey and anecdotal comments provided as part of the school visits indicated that the National Standards for Proficient teachers assisted in the professional conversations about improving classroom practice. PRTs consistently voiced the view in school visits that the descriptors were valuable in understanding the Standards. Mentors used examples of the PRT practice to relate to the descriptors.

Examples from PRTs are:

Constant referral to the *National* Standards helped me to maintain the focus and objectives of lessons, become more familiar with the *National* Standards and the practical application of them amidst the 'business' of a class, identify the extent to which I was already applying the *National* Standards and where I could improve.

I worked closely with the VIT Standards when completing my university degree and so the transition to the National Standards was pretty smooth. I think in some respects they are easier to understand than the VIT Standards. When reflecting on the *National* Standards after almost a year of teaching, it has been good to see that I have improved in a number of areas, but also good to see where my weaknesses lie.

All the *National* Standards are well-explained and sequenced so I could work through them and look at how my case study addressed all applicable points of each Standard.

17.4.2.2.2 How are they used by mentors to support PRTs to do this?

Mentors rated the PRTs more highly than the PRTs did themselves. Mentors generally thought that the PRT was at the level of the proficient teacher, PRTs less so. This information is consistent with data provided through the current process for full registration.

Some examples of how the mentors worked with their PRTs using the Standards are illustrated in the following comment.

*Professional engagement increased, as did her knowledge, particularly using the **National Standards**. Having the **National Standards** to work with provided a context into pedagogy and teaching practice. My PRT shared her project and findings with others in a PLT meeting and informally with colleagues throughout the project. She presented to staff at a whole staff forum, explaining the project and the improved student learning outcomes as a result.*

17.4.2.2.3 How do the National Standards support the development of PRT practice?

Mentors' responses supported the view that the PRTs developed their professional practice. A mentor's comment in support of Figure 5- illustrates this.

My PRT is continually developing her professional knowledge in a variety of ways including PD, collegiate discussions, PLT planning etc. The National Standards and the pilot project supported further development and focus for her.

In a brief analysis of the action plan reports it was noted that some PTS linked the National Standards with elements of their action plan. In all cases, all Standards were addressed.

17.4.2.2.4 What professional learning benefits are there for mentors.

Mentors were positive that the project developed their professional knowledge as illustrated by Figure 7. One mentor commented that:

The project.... allowed me to focus on certain aspects of my own teaching and learning and also confirmed my beliefs and understandings and practices. [It also] provided an opportunity for reflection on my own teaching practice and how my knowledge of teaching could be used to improve the teaching practices and professional learning of a junior colleague.

One question required mentors to identify the career stage that characterised their practice and most nominated that they were working at the Lead level.

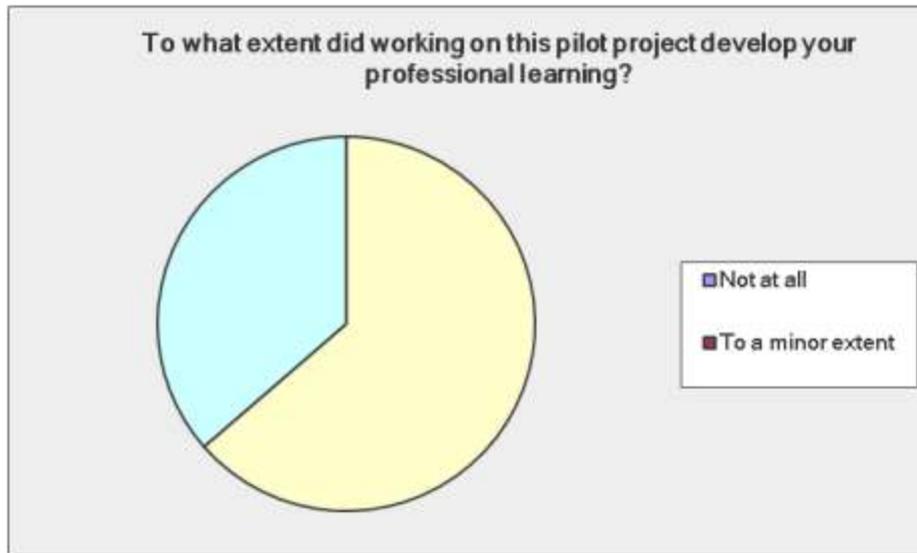


Figure 17-7 : Extent to Which Mentors Perceived That Participation in the Pilot Developed Their Professional Learning

17.4.3 Summary

These findings indicate the following.

- Teachers could use the National Standards in the current process for full registration. Whilst the sample was small, all teachers in all contexts were able to use the National Standards.
- Evidence from both the PRTs and the mentors indicate that they responded positively to the process set in place for PRTs to gain full registration.
- PRTs used the National Standards to support their practice. Mentors used the National Standards to support the practice of the PRT and in doing so supported the development of their own practice. This is consistent with findings of current practice.
- The Standards:
 - provided a basis for improvement in practice.
 - could be evidenced with reference to the majority of Descriptors. Some descriptors were more easily evidenced than others. Teachers' responses appeared to be correlated to the background and circumstance of the students they were teaching. It is acknowledged that this is set within the limits of small scale and tight timelines.
 - were a good way to frame discussion between mentor and PRT about practice.
 - supported mentor's reflection of their own practice.
 - are seen by mentors as similar to the Victorian Standards.

The National Standards can be set within the current process for full registration and will result in fulfilling the Institute requirements for provisionally registered teachers to attain full registration by meeting professional standards.

17.5 Resources

17.5.1 Existing Resources Used in the Pilot

The manual 'Supporting Provisionally Registered Teachers: A guide to the evidence based process for full registration' (VIT, 2011) was used as the starting point to design the action plan that PRTs undertook.

Option 3 – Collegial practice with a specific focus was the starting point.

17.6 Findings and Outcomes

17.6.1 Implications and Recommendations from the Pilot

17.6.1.1 The Local Perspective

Feedback from PRTs, mentors and Institute managers indicated there were no major issues with transference from the Victorian Standards to the National Standards within the current process for full registration.

The pre- and post-assessment of the PRT practice against the National Standards' Descriptors raised issues that require further inquiry. These were:

- The discrepancy between the PRT and mentor in the pre-assessment. While mentors generally rated the PRT higher some showed a sizable difference.
- After using the National Standards for a period of time the PRTs' and mentors' values were closer. However, there were still discrepancies with a few descriptors for which the mentor's rating increased or remained high but the PRT's did not.

The transition from one set of standards to another will require reorganisation and reprinting of all materials associated with the process for full registration. However, the evidence-based approach will be retained and most importantly the partnerships and relationships that have been developed will be maintained.

Of issue is the range and types of descriptors that PRTs were able to evidence as part of the Pilot. This will require the Institute to more fully investigate the Descriptors and the implications for the process towards the full registration.

The mentors' perceptions of their career stage were of interest. The Victorian Standards do not have levels above that required for full registration. The responses indicate the need to highlight and differentiate between position, or role, description and evidence of practice related to the descriptors.

17.6.1.2 The National Perspective

This project is unique to the Victorian regulatory environment. The findings are contextualised within the way that the PRTs in Victorian schools provide evidence for the full registration with the support of a mentor.

It is likely that other regulatory authorities following similar paths could draw from these findings. Those that are developing a similar process to the Victorian Institute's may benefit from this pilot project.

17.6.2 Planning for the Future

It is the intention of the Institute to extend the investigation, where necessary, beyond the AITSL defined end date to further analyse and assess the evidence in relation to the use of the National Standards for full registration. The Institute will focus on the development of examples of Standards-based evidence that are drawn from work across the school year and consideration of how mentors will use the Standards to support PRTs to gain full registration. The Institute will interrogate the descriptors more fully as part of a longer-term project to revise this process. The AITSL evidence guides, comprising annotated illustrations of practice, will assist in this work.

Undertaking the Pilot has provided the trigger to reconsider and revise the current registration process. Timperley, Parr & Bertanees' (2009) work on inquiry based professional learning has also influenced this thinking.

This study did not investigate use of the National Standards by PRTs who are working outside schools as education officers and casual relief teachers. This will need to be investigated during 2012.

Case studies developed as part of the Pilot will provide rich illustrations (see Appendix J) of practice at the proficient level. This work may have application for regulators across Australia and New Zealand and also provide illustrations of practice for schools and professional networks to use.

17.7 References

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