

# A Framework of Professional Teaching Standards

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# 1. General Introduction

This paper will propose an approach to professional Standards for teachers. It is written to assist increased understanding and cohesiveness around the teaching profession internationally. The paper will set out key elements of a Framework of Professional Teaching Standards that could be adopted as a common international approach.

The intended audience of the paper includes teachers, particularly activist teachers and their representatives, and education policy makers in international forums considering possibilities for supporting and developing the teaching profession. As well as proposing a Framework of Professional Teaching Standards, it is written to stimulate discussion and understanding of the nature and usefulness of such a framework.

While the primary audience of the paper is the teaching profession, the Framework of Professional Teaching Standards proposed is intended to support broad community expectations with a focus on the needs of students.

This is not an academic paper, though it is informed by academic work. It is not either, a simple promotion of a particular approach to teacher professionalism and Standards. It is rather an attempt to describe key elements of professional teaching Standards that can cohere as a common framework internationally. The model proposed allows for varied approaches to professional Standards, having regard to substantially different contexts for teaching and education generally and to the need for local ownership. The paper highlights the ways in which the various elements of the model allow for different approaches, while allowing for increased coordination and coherence over time, on the basis of common principles.

The approach proposed is informed by a study of teaching Standards around the world, and is particularly informed by successful implementation in Australia, Canadian jurisdictions and Scotland. Of course, these are not the only successful approaches. Perceptions are subjective, but work undertaken in other jurisdictions have made substantial and positive contributions to the status of the profession in those jurisdictions, and substantially inform this paper and the proposed framework.

By declaring the antecedents of the proposed Framework early, and by recognising the great variation of circumstances in which teachers work and through which they seek to progress their circumstances and those of their communities, the paper at least seeks to avoid fruitless proprietorial debates. The paper identifies common and essential principles for a professional model, but does not claim that the uses of terminology and the taxonomies employed are the only valid or useful ones. A variety of taxonomies and organisational frames are valid, but in the end judgments will need to be made that allow for coherence to be built internationally, over



time. This may include mapping of existing frameworks, or of frameworks that are currently being developed, to common elements. The paper is written to allow for such an evolutionary approach.

## 1.1 Overview

A profession is defined in its shared knowledge and expertise, and its shared commitment to defending its standards of practice. A profession's ethical commitment to protecting its standards is exercised in the interests of its members, and in the interests of each community, and society generally.

The nature of formal professional Standards is determined by these purposes. That is, professional Standards must capture and present statements of practice that reflect professional commitment, and practice, be recognised as credible by the profession, and generally be understood as an ethical stance in the interests of the community.

A Framework of Professional Teaching Standards can describe Standards at a number of levels, and across a number of dimensions. At the most general, and as a foundation for all other Standards, a Standards Framework will, either explicitly or by implication, build on a shared statement of principles that describe a unity of perspective at the heart of the profession. Such a statement represents a basic and agreed level of commitment among all teachers in all circumstances. When stated explicitly, it is itself a Standard. In its nature a statement of principles should direct further action and constitute a reference point for judging the fidelity of all other aspects of the Standards framework.

At the next level of a Framework for Professional Teaching Standards are the Domains, or categories, within which teachers' work can most usefully be described. This paper will suggest an approach based on the general categories, or Domains of: Knowledge and Understanding, Practice (pedagogy) and Teaching Relations (professional relationships). These are informed by taxonomies present in existing frameworks.

When considering the potential application and usefulness of a Framework of Professional Teaching Standards the profession may want to recognise that Standards can be described at different levels of expertise. All professions have some formal understanding of inexperienced or novice standing. In modern practice, across all secure professions, formal higher education is an essential initial step in gaining professional status. An individual then builds their professional expertise and standing through practice and continuing learning. Whether tertiary qualifications or higher education qualifications are contemporaneously required in all jurisdictions can only be determined by jurisdictions, while teacher organisations can reasonably present such qualifications as an expectation.



Most professions also have the capacity for systematic and reliable recognition of outstanding practice. Separately, as an additional or optional consideration, a Standards framework can allow for recognition of higher levels of professional. The advantage of formally recognising outstanding practice through professional Standards is that such judgments are more likely to be based on actual teachers' work, and be valid in the eyes of the profession.

This Framework of Professional Teaching Standards describes 10 Standards across the 3 Domains. By necessity the Standards are global statements. The key requirement of the Standards in this framework is that they reflect generally acceptable demarcations of teachers' work, expressed as an expectation of practice.

Application of these Standards in any jurisdiction would require that jurisdictions recognise the Standards as valid general descriptors of teaching, and that they are able to map their own approaches to them, forming an agreed international core of teaching Standards.

The subsequent question for consideration is: How might achievement against Professional Standards be applied? And if applied, how will they be judged? This will vary substantially between jurisdictions. An effective Framework of Professional Teaching Standards that can have cross jurisdictional applications, in ways that serve the interests of the profession and the community, should allow for the varied contexts within which teachers work. Judging achievement against the Standards requires that the Standards are written in ways that teachers understand in common ways.

In this framework the mechanism for translating the Standards for any possible application is through Elaborations of each Standard statement. The Elaborations of the Standards identify the key and specific aspects of each of the 10 Standards. There are 2 Elaborations of each Standard. The Elaborations in the framework are not expressed as Standards, but rather as topics, or dimensions of each Standard. This is because the wording of each Elaboration should depend on the uses to which the Elaborations might be applied. It is also because the wording should be developed at a jurisdictional or local level, to reflect the specific applicable intentions of the profession in that jurisdiction or locality.

The Framework of Professional Teaching Standards will describe all these dimensions and will highlight different ways in which jurisdictions might exercise authentic judgments in local processes, while maintaining the coherence of the Framework for increasing international coordination.

## 1.2 Use of the term Standards and its relationship to this framework

It is understood that the term Standards, with regard to teachers' professional practice, can signify different things in different contexts. There are technical or definitional issues as well as political effects to consider. In many cases these are simple matters of translation or cultural



resonances. In others, there are concerns based on local and sometimes bitter experiences of using professional discussions of Standards to impose specific employment practices.

It has occasionally been argued that any discussion of the quality or nature of practice in the profession will allow undue space for rhetoric and policy intended to undermine the standing of teachers, and their working arrangements. The punitive, anti-teacher intentions of some policy makers cannot be defeated through professional teaching Standards, just as Standards do not create such ill intent. An argument can be made that credible, well considered Standards, will help protect teachers from hostile governance or policy, but it is at least true that professional Standards do not themselves elicit anti-teacher politics.

In some circumstances the use of the word Standards denotes a definitional approach to teachers' work that is seen to inherently narrow the understanding of what teaching is, and undermines professional judgment and discretion, and therefore, professional standing. This perspective can be informed by cultural theory that recognises the capacity of systems to establish 'norms' that constrain more varied and fruitful human interaction. From this perspective the professional Standards agenda is more likely to lead to increased monitoring, or surveillance of teaching practice, than support higher standing of the profession. To some extent this argument is opposed to the idea of professional Standards as much as to the terminology itself. Arguments from this perspective are also sometimes made opposing the concept of professionalism as a tool of constraint or conservative political hegemony.

This paper will not re-prosecute arguments for or against Standards or the terminology in these political contexts. In itself, the paper recognises the importance of descriptions of professional practice as an important tool for protecting and building the standing of the teaching profession. The arguments against Standards or Standards terminology, though described in a very cursory fashion above, are respected and in fact inform the nature of the framework proposed. Specifically, the approach to Standards proposed here does not aim to describe the nature of teachers' work in any way that might be said to be definitive or comprehensive. It is also designed to not allow for supervisory processes of measurement or monitoring that are against the interests of professionalism and therefore against the interests of teachers. The ways in which this approach is cognisant of protecting the professionalism inherent in the complexity of teachers' work, is most effectively illustrated as the framework is set out below.

### **1.3 Parameters of this framework**

This framework does not cover all aspects that relate to processes for developing teaching Standards, or their potential applications and effects. Governance arrangements, either for developing or for applying Standards, for example, are not addressed. Processes for teacher participation in developing the framework for local application, for interpreting and assessing



possible applications and effects are not addressed, except that the framework and discussion seeks to highlight the importance of both coherence and local ownership.

Similarly, issues of community participation in teachers' work are not addressed. The paper and framework are limited to setting possible common and agreed reference points for describing, and therefore promoting and defending, the core work of teachers, in the interests of both teachers and the community.

At a technical or definitional level, academic work has been done that identifies different types of teaching Standards. One taxonomy separates: Ethical Standards, constituted generally in relatively broad statements of expectations of the profession's nature, ambitions and dispositions; Content Standards, describing the scope and specific nature of teachers' work; and Measurement Standards, which set the level or 'quality' of teacher expertise. This paper draws on this broad taxonomy in a very general way to present and discuss the framework.

A specific set of ethical Standards, as such, are not proposed in this Framework. A set of Principles of Professional Teaching Practice which is proposed as an underpinning of the framework, carries within it a strong ethics dimension. More specific ethics statements can be said to be inherent in the aspirations represented in the Standard statements themselves. It is appropriate that jurisdictions augment this framework with statements of ethics or in-principle intents, which resonate most effectively within the jurisdiction.

## 2. Professional Standards as Universal Principles

### 2.1 The Role of a Guiding Set of Principles

A set of underlying principles inform the purpose of Standards and help shape their nature and potential application. If the framework is effective, it should be clear how the professional Standards help address the principles. A set of professional principles should commit the profession to a broad purpose, and set the expectations that the profession holds of itself against this purpose. On the basis of the commitment of the profession to such a statement of principles, across borders and contexts, descriptors of aspects of professional practice, Standards, can be developed and applied.



In effect, a statement of principles expressed in these terms helps constitute a profession. In describing expectations that practitioners have of themselves` as a whole and for each individual, teachers describe their commonality as well as the commonality that they consider worth defending and promoting. The principles themselves taken together can be said to constitute the primary professional Standard.

It is necessary to understand that the purpose of these principles is to provide a common foundation for the framework, rather than displace existing and accepted statements of educational principles. It is therefore only necessary that these Principles of Professional Teaching Practice are consistent with existing, more global statements endorsed and accepted by the profession.

Agreed statements of ethical expectations can exist at a more granular level as well, as they do in many Standards frameworks already in place. They can be described more specifically with regard to relationships with parents and the community, or with regard to relationships with students, for example. It also the case that professional Standards will always be imbued with an ethical disposition to some extent – that is, implied rather than specified. For example, a statement such as: Teachers have regard to their students’ cultural background in planning appropriate lessons, is both a description or explication of an aspect of teaching practice, as well as an ethical expectation.

It is important to recognise that in designing some Standards framework choices are made and therefore discretion is exercised. The values and objectives that determine those choices should be clear and understood. The recognition that this Standards framework does not seek to ‘bottle’ the essential nature of teaching, is itself a values statement that acknowledges the variable and even ephemeral nature of effective teaching. It also recognises that Standards are a formalist structural process that serves administrative, social and political functions.

The principles described below are general but seek to apply to the context within which teacher professionalism might be addressed through this Framework of Professional Teaching Standards. They seek to highlight the interrelationship between the ethical mission of teaching and the essential nature of the work in practice. They are intended to be equally valid in all jurisdictions. On this basis the draft principles:

- Establish a basis for a more detailed exposition of teaching and its positive social purpose, that is, Standards
- Set parameters for the development of the Standards, that is, ensure that Standards are consistent with the ethical mission of teaching.

All other elements of the Framework of Professional Teaching Standards must meet the implied criteria established by these principles. Consultative and collaborative processes for local, regional or global contributions to the Standards debate should be able to use these principles



as reference points for determining the validity of the Elaborations of the Standards and the processes for applying them. It is on this basis that the principles themselves constitute the primary professional Standard for teaching.

## 2.2 Principles of Professional Teaching Practice

- Quality school education is a universal right of children and young people, in the interests of individuals, communities and societies
- Quality school education is predicated on high quality teaching, for all students, in all circumstances
- Teachers' work is organised around maximising student learning and welfare
- Teachers are defined as individuals holding formally recognised teaching qualifications and who meet standards of practice that are defined, judged and recognised through the teaching profession
- The teaching profession is constituted by teachers so defined, and in alignment with teacher representative organisations
- It is in the interest of the community generally and children particularly, that only members of the teaching profession be engaged to undertake teachers' work
- Effective and ethical school organisational practice is built on teachers' professional judgment and standards of practice defined by the teaching profession
- Members of the teaching profession with administrative responsibilities in schools support teachers at all levels to achieve, maintain and defend professional standards
- Professional teaching standards address and actively support universal access and opportunity for quality schooling for all
- The teaching profession as a whole, and its individual members, are ethically and actively committed to supporting the principles, precepts and standards of teachers' professional practice in the interests of all students, teachers and the community, globally.

# 3. Domains of Standards

## 3.1 Standards as Formal Descriptors of Professional Practice

A Framework of Professional Teaching Standards cannot and should not aspire to describe teachers' work comprehensively, having regard to all variations and subtleties that might emerge in a process as varied as human relations themselves can be.



For these reasons the taxonomies developed for this framework are designed around already commonly agreed dimensions of teaching practice. Along with the Principles of Professional Teaching Practice, above, the Domains below are a step toward common ground for the profession.

### 3.2 Considering an Approach to Describing Teachers' Work as Standards

A number of issues emerge when considering the ways in which professional Standards might be organised. A credible and sustainable Framework of Professional Teaching Standards will need to accommodate the complexity of teaching, while being applicable in real circumstances requiring professional judgment.

In describing teachers' work for these purposes, it might be possible to adopt wholistic or broad Competency based descriptors. In this context Competency is used to mean a descriptor that incorporates knowledge and skills. For example: Teachers are able to effectively manage their class. This describes a general behaviour. The underpinning teaching capacities are implied to exist because of the effect in practice. Such a description is general, but recognisable. There are a number of shortcomings to describing teachers' work only in the form of Competencies however. A Competency approach tends to rely on demonstrated behaviours. Statements of behaviours such as Competencies are verifiable because they can be observed. Teacher attributes such as deep knowledge or empathy, for example, are not specifically apparent in such global statements and are therefore not as easily valued. The professional attributes that are not directly or specifically observed in a teacher's behaviour, such as Teachers hold deep knowledge of their subject matter, tend to be undervalued in a pure Competency approach. Describing teachers' work in the Competency form can however inform or form part of an effective teaching Standards framework.

A common approach to setting professional Standards is to set aspirations or targets for all teachers. For example, Teachers are committed to students achieving their potential. Such descriptors set out the most essential dimensions of teaching practice, often in an ethical frame. Depending on the potential uses of a Standards framework such rhetorically based statements can be valid. The Principles of Professional Teaching Practice in this framework might be seen as such a Standard. As generic or descriptors such statements without additional elaboration do not allow for judgment of what meets an appropriate professional Standard. For example, a Standard statement such as that above does not itself allow the profession to consider the differences in expectations that we might hold for a recent graduate teacher from that for an expert or senior teacher. Nonetheless, setting aspirations or expectations in Standards is an important aspect of a professional Standards.



There are myriad potential approaches to describing teachers' work as a Standards framework. The two issues above are used to illustrate the importance of a Standards framework having regard to the full roundedness of teachers' work and the need to go beyond rhetorical statements.

### 3.3 A General Taxonomy for Professional Teaching Standards - The Domains

Within existing Standards frameworks, categorisations that reflect a very general distinction between the knowing and understanding, and the actual practice, generally apply. These are often accompanied by additional categories that go to issues of more specific applications of Standards, or incorporate professional and other relationships. As noted, this framework does not seek to address any particular application of professional Standards, and ethical domains are also not explicitly addressed except at the very general Principles of Professional Teaching Practice.

The most 'natural' or easily recognised system of categorisation, which would allow commonality, would therefore include: Knowledge and Understanding as one category, and Practice as another. Teaching Relations, as a third category, can include within it the range of applications that might apply in different contexts, and the range of activities that are included in teaching but are not 'intuitively' reflected in the terms 'knowledge and understanding' or 'practice'.

It is proposed that teaching Standards be described within the following categories: Domains of Professional Teaching Standards:

- Teaching Knowledge and Understanding
- Teaching Practice
- Teaching Relations

These Domains are not Standards in themselves, they are categories that teachers understand and under which more specific descriptors of teaching - Standards - can be developed and then applied for various purposes.

They are appropriate to this purpose because they are recognisable by teachers globally as genuine, though not immutable, areas within which teaching can be described.

It is important to note that the three Domains overlap significantly and can only constitute effective practice when applied together, in varied forms and combinations; achieving professional status against Standards would require recognition across all three of the Domains in some way.

#### Teaching Knowledge and Understanding



It can be taken as given that effective teaching relies on teachers being expert enough at the knowledge, skills and understandings of particular subjects or learning areas to be able to teach them. Good teachers know and understand their subjects as well as their students. Teachers also understand the social, cultural and developmental issues that might relate to their students and their learning processes. Specific learning content will vary substantially within jurisdictions, let alone globally, but teaching will always require enough depth of knowledge, skills and understanding of content, the students in the class, and contextual issues, to be able to bring the students to their own appropriate level of understanding.

### **Teaching Practice**

The Standards in this Domain describe the key dimensions of the direct engagement of teachers with their students.

Effective teaching is crucially determined in this Domain. Within this Domain the practices that most distinctly constitute teaching can be elaborated. In practice, teaching activities will manifest in innumerable ways and will always reflect our ambition for, and understanding of, student learning, welfare and development. Effective teaching practices within this Domain rely on the Knowledge and Understanding Domain as well as on various Teaching Relations.

### **Teaching Relations**

Teaching is inherently constituted in relationships. Along with engaging with students, professional relationships with colleagues, with parents or caregivers are crucial to effective teaching. Relations with the general community might be crucial to a teacher's work, and are always crucial to the profession as a whole.

Issues within this Domain of professional activity are often contested in political and industrial contexts. Expectations of formal line-management reporting requirements for example, might be presented as professional responsibilities. Similarly, accessibility to parents might have industrially based time implications for teachers. The validity of inclusions in this domain of Standards should be tested against the words and intent of the Principles of Professional Teaching Practice. The development of Standards within this Domain is necessary for the profession to assert an ethical and sustainable approach to these issues when they are contested.

# 4. Levels of Professional Teaching Practice

## 4.1 Essential Levels of Professional Practice

Standards can be developed for different levels of professional practice. Again, the approach to Levels of Standards will be determined ultimately by the purposes to which Standards might be applied.

The most fundamental purpose to which teaching Standards are applied is in determining a minimum level of professional attainment - what is known most commonly as Teacher Registration. This raises the question of what level of practice and formal recognition is appropriate for being regarded a member of the teaching profession.

All modern professional practice regards formal tertiary or high-level formal qualifications as an essential foundation for initial entry into professional practice. It is also the case however that most teachers regard the largely theoretical basis of formal study as essential but not sufficient for independent practice.

In this framework there are two Levels of mandatory attainment identified within the framework: Graduate Teacher and Practising Teacher. They can be applied as one Level or as distinct Levels, and this is discussed later in the paper, but the capacities and dispositions that they describe are the core of professional practice.

Standard Levels required for all Teachers:

- Graduate Teacher
- Practising Teacher Graduate Teachers

Graduate teacher Standards emphasise knowledge and understanding, as well as capacity, rather than consistent and sustained practice. Building initial high levels of knowledge and understanding, as well as demonstrating an initial capacity to undertake teaching tasks, are necessary dimensions of the Graduate stage of professional development.

Subject content knowledge is an area in which a level of depth is required before practice, and is generally attained through study, even as it necessarily continues to be developed while in teaching practice. Another example is a teacher's research and analytical skills which are introduced as part of theoretical preparation. Such skills might be applied to research new subject content or pedagogical developments, for example. But in any case, the capacity to



understand and derive meaning from research and analysis that can then be applied to practice is an essential underpinning of professional practice.

### **Practicing Teachers**

The Practicing Teacher Level of Standards is where the Domains of: Knowledge and Understanding, Teaching Practice, and Teaching Relations apply most completely for all teachers. The Standards, as described at this Level, constitute the professional practice of teaching as required to meet expectations held of the profession by itself and by the community.

The 10 Standards set out below are described at this Level, as the core of this Framework of Professional Teaching Standards.

There is of course overlap and continuity between the mostly theoretical learning of initial teacher education, and the further understanding developed through full teaching practice. Equity or socially inclusive practice is an area of professional practice that highlights the continuity of professional development across the Levels. Understanding and dealing with the educational expressions of the social, economic and cultural interplays of disadvantage requires analytical capacities developed through higher learning. Professions generally rely on tertiary study to assure the attainment of such capacities. It is equally true however that socially inclusive teaching cannot be realised through theory but through practice.

The Level of Practicing Teacher is best understood as incorporating within it the essential requirements of the Graduate Level. It is only possible to operate effectively at the Practicing Teacher Level as described in the Standards for that Level, if the capacities described in the Standards for Graduates are considered inherent.

The point at which one is considered a Teacher, a member of the profession, Registered, should be determined within jurisdictions. For these purposes, the Graduate Standards can be applied independently or in combination with those of Practicing Teacher, and with elaborations developed for the purposes of valid application within the jurisdiction.

## **4.2 Optional Higher Levels of Recognition**

The following discussion on Higher Levels of Recognition sets out issues and processes that can be considered additional or supplementary aspects of a cohesive Framework of Professional Teaching Standards.

A characteristic of most professions is to recognise and celebrate outstanding practitioners. The history and structure of teaching in most circumstances has placed an emphasis on employer based judgments of effectiveness that then translate into management or supervisory/promotional arrangements. In this framework it is proposed that an option exists



to apply Standards that recognise outstanding teachers as part of a full, career spanning, professional framework.

The Principles of Professional Teaching Practice would require that any approach to formally recognise outstanding practitioners be on the following basis:

- The Level of Practicing Teacher, inclusive of the requirements of a Graduate teacher, remains the credible and valid requirement for all teaching in the interests all students. Applying Standards at higher levels than for Practicing teacher can only therefore be exceptions to usual and expected practice. They can only ever be regarded as voluntary, rather than necessary for meeting the needs all students as per the Principles of Professional Teaching Practice.
- Applying Standards at these Levels requires that they are seen as expression of great teaching practice that is integrated with the fundamental level of Practicing teacher. That is, applying Standards to recognise outstanding practice is not isolated, but evolved from, the Standards for Practicing Teacher

On this basis it is appropriate to describe Standards for: Voluntary Levels of Outstanding Teaching

- Highly Accomplished Teacher
- Professional Leader

The terminology employed is the least important aspect of this proposal, and should be subject to deliberation by all stakeholders within the teaching profession.

The viability of this approach rests on whether there is a reliable and consistent distinction that can be drawn between the three levels of practice (Practicing, Highly Accomplished, Leader). An assertion of gradients of practice can be open to ideologically based presumption rather than actually reflecting practice. It is important that there are clear, valid and reliably identified differences between the Levels of practice.

These categories recognise distinctions that already arise informally in the profession and that can therefore be recognised formally in a Standards framework. The usefulness of such formal recognition processes will vary between jurisdictions.

### **Highly Accomplished Teacher**

Highly Accomplished teaching represents practice across the three Domains that mirrors the descriptors of teaching at the Practicing level, but recognises the performance or execution of that practice as being both uncommon and highly regarded by colleagues.



An approach to for describing the differentiation between the Levels of practice within this framework, using locally developed Elaborations of Standards is described below. The Elaborations of the Standards themselves need to reflect real and recognisable distinctions in practice.

### **Professional Leader**

This level of teaching identifies and recognises the specific practices, based on high expertise in each domain, that support colleagues and lead to the further development of the profession. They are not therefore a simple escalation from Highly Accomplished Teacher Levels. The Elaborations of the Standards for this Level represent the specific activities which model for, or lead, other teachers and assist in their professional development. The activity relies on outstanding professional capacity but describes the additional steps of active professional leadership. Examples might include mentoring new teachers in key aspects of practice across the Domains. They might also include presenting and workshopping practices and understandings to Practising teachers, or presenting lectures or tutorials, for example.

More fine-grained distinctions to establish a hierarchy of teaching practice is not supported by research or by the evidence of teacher feedback. That is, teachers don't in normal professional interaction recognise a multi- step hierarchy of effective practice in a way that is shared and agreed.

Teachers do however recognise the simply outstanding practitioners among their number, as individuals or as a general category. In addition, they understand that among those outstanding practitioners there are those that include support and leadership of colleagues in their normal professional activity.

## 5. The Professional Teaching Standards

### **5.1 Placing Standards at the Heart of the Framework**

The elements of the Standards framework described so far constitute key organisational points for Standards, rather than Standards as such. They seek to present common and agreed reference points for describing teaching practice that can apply across jurisdictions globally. The Principles of Professional Teaching Practice establish a common benchmark understanding as an ethical and organisational basis for guiding the design and potential implementation of the Standards. The measure of the effectiveness of this framework is that it can accommodate a



teacher's broad view of professional practice, notwithstanding the context in which professional teaching occurs.

At the centre of this Framework of Professional Teaching Standards are 10 Standards, or Standard statements. These Standards seek to be generic enough to be universal, but particular enough to be usable as a genuine reference points for developing approaches to professional judgments.

The Standard statements must present as the core aspects of teaching in each of the Domains of Knowledge and Understanding, Practice and Engagement. Additional statements can be valid at jurisdictional level. Their appropriateness should therefore be judged on the basis of presenting simple and direct statements of teachers' work. Individuals' perceptions as to whether the demarcations separating the Standards are strictly correct for their circumstance. Of overriding importance is that teachers in varied contexts recognise the most essential or core aspects of professional practice across the Standards.

The Standards are written to reflect most directly the work of a Practicing Teacher, rather than any other Level. The ways in which this expression of professional Standards level might apply across other Levels is described below.

## 5.2 The Standards

Teaching Knowledge and Understanding Teachers know and understand:

- How students learn, and the particular learning, support and development needs of their students
- The content and related methodologies of the subject matter or content that they are teaching
- Core research and analytical methods that apply in teaching, including with regard to student assessment

### Teaching Practice

Teachers' practice consistently demonstrates:

- Planning and preparation to meet the learning, support and development objectives held for students
- An appropriate range of teaching activity that reflects and aligns with both the nature of the content matter being taught, and the learning, support and development needs of the students
- Organisation and facilitation of student activity so that students are able to participate constructively, in a safe and cooperative manner



- Assessment and analysis of student learning that informs the further preparation for, and implementation of, the teaching and learning activity required

### Teaching Relations

Teachers actively participate in:

- Cooperative and collaborative professional processes that contribute to collegial development, and support student learning and development
- Communications with parents, caregivers and members of the community as appropriate to support the learning objectives of students, including formal and informal reporting
- Continuous professional development to maintain currency of their professional knowledge and practice.

## 5.3 Elaborating the Standards

The Standards for Practising Teacher are elaborated to identify specific issues that are essential to understanding each Standard.

Each of the Standards is elaborated to ensure that its possible dimensions are recognised across the profession for different purposes. The Elaborations presented attempt to identify the core issues that can be agreed to exist within each Standard. The Elaborations are worded as topics rather than descriptions of practice. The specific wording of Elaborations as descriptions of practice will be developed by jurisdictions as the basis for effective application of the Standard, to the extent that is considered appropriate. It is therefore much more likely that there will be substantial variation across the profession in the wording that might be utilised. It is possible to word the Elaborations of the Standards so that they themselves constitute a Standard, and such wording will depend on the nature of any application within the jurisdiction.

It is also likely that jurisdictions may seek to augment the core or essential issues identified in the se Elaborations to meet priorities identified within a jurisdiction. This is consistent with the intended use of this framework, and is discussed further below.

None of the Elaborations are presented or should be regarded as independent in practice from each other, across any of the Standards.

To a large extent, the Elaborations are inherent in the Standards and can be read into the existing wording. The Elaborations themselves should not be considered an essential part of the Framework of Professional Teaching Standards but rather as a guide to assist common and agreed understanding of the Standards.



## Elaborations of the Standards

Practicing teachers know and understand:

- How students learn, and the particular learning, social and development needs of their students:
  - Implications of students' physical, social and intellectual development
  - Implications of social, cultural and economic diversity, and related circumstances of students and their learning environment
- The content and related methodologies of the subject matter or content being taught:
  - Core content knowledge and skills
  - Implications of the content knowledge for teaching methodologies
- Core research and analytical methods that apply in teaching, including with regard to student assessment:
  - Research methodologies and related analytical skills that can be applied to new learning
  - Principles and practices of effective student assessment

### Teachers' practice consistently demonstrates:

- Planning and preparation to meet the learning objectives held for students:
  - Identifying specific learning objectives for students
  - Researching, organising and scheduling lessons to meet those objectives
- An appropriate range of teaching activity that reflects and aligns with both the nature of the content matter being taught, and the learning, support and development needs of the students:
  - Practice of teaching processes and structuring of learning activities that align with the requirements of the subject content
  - Variations in teaching and learning that facilitate engagement of students
- Organisation and facilitation of student activity so that students are able to participate constructively, in a safe and cooperative manner:
  - A safe and secure environment



- Effective classroom management having regard to the needs of all individuals and the class as a whole
- Assessment and analysis of student learning that informs the further preparation for, and implementation of, teaching and learning activity required:
  - Consistent fair, valid and reliable assessment of student work using an appropriate range of methods
  - Analysis of information to adjusting planning and practice of lessons toward achieving learning objectives.

### **Teachers' professional relations include active participate in:**

- Cooperative and collaborative professional processes that contribute to collegial development, and support student learning and development:
  - Collaborative processes with regard to lesson planning, teaching activity and student welfare, that support students
  - Cooperative processes that support teacher professional learning and welfare
- Communications with parents, caregivers and members of the community as appropriate to support the learning objectives of students, including formal and informal reporting:
  - Formal and informal reporting to parents, caregivers and the community on student learning and welfare
  - Presentation of the range of professional issues including with regard to the expertise and status of the profession
- Continuous professional development to maintain currency of their professional knowledge and practice:
  - Participation in formal professional learning
  - Ongoing analysis and reflection on practice to develop professional practice.

## **5.4 Differentiating the Elaborations of the Standards at Different Levels**

The organising point for this framework and therefore for the Elaboration of the Standards is the Practising Teacher Standards. Valid and reliable application of the Standards would require that the Standards be Elaborated for each of the Levels. These may vary according to the purpose to which the Standards are being applied.



Where a jurisdiction seeks to apply the Standards differentially to the Graduate Level, for example to evaluate initial teacher education courses against the Standards framework, it would do so through Elaborations, and would therefore employ the appropriate wording of the Elaborations for that purpose. At the Practicing Teacher Level, the Elaborations seek to reflect full professional practice. The Elaboration for specific purpose such as Registering a teacher as Practicing, would likely use wording such as: the teacher consistently demonstrates whichever aspect (Elaboration) of the Standard. At Graduate Level the Elaboration of the Standard should emphasise that the graduate teacher can demonstrate that they understand and have shown the capacity to consistently demonstrate each aspect of the Standard listed in the Elaboration.

At Highly Accomplished, the teacher consistently demonstrates outstanding practice in each aspect of the Standards listed in the Elaborations. As noted, Highly Accomplished can only ever be voluntary. Recognition processes may be included in any adoption of the framework by a jurisdiction, or they may not be depending on the policy context in that jurisdiction. It is therefore essential that Highly Accomplished be described in Elaborations as being outstanding practice in that it is not the practice expected of all teachers or that is required by the Principles of Professional Teaching Practice.

Similarly, at Professional Leader, the Elaborations will require demonstrating capacity and practice of providing outstanding leadership in each of the issues listed in the Elaborations for each of the Standards. This means providing formal and informal support and leadership to colleagues.

## 5.5 Elaborations in Subject Areas

In some jurisdictions it will be argued further that demonstration of the achievement of Standards varies substantially between subjects or learning areas. Again, the expression of these differences should be developed through the Elaborations, which can be worded to include expectations with regard to specific subject content.

## 5.6 Further Elaborations to Support the Standards

The Elaborations of the Standards presented are not regarded as comprehensive. There may be specific purposes to which Standards are applied within jurisdictions that require additional Elaborations. As these would go to issue of application of the Standards, they would appropriately be developed by the profession within jurisdictions.

Elaborations of the Practicing Teacher Standards can be used to express expectations of Continuing Professional Learning courses for example, or professional mentoring or any other professionally related activity that benefits from a more explicit expression of expectations than the Standards themselves are intended to provide independently through this Framework of Professional Teaching Standards.



# 6. Applications of Standards

## 6.1 The Principles of Professional Teaching Practice as a Common Base

The Principles of Professional Teaching Practice set out in the framework are proposed as a common and agreed foundation for interpreting and applying all aspects of the Standards framework. The effect of this is to ensure that the Standards can only be legitimately applied to support the integrity of the teaching profession.

The Principles can be understood as the core professional Standard. Jurisdictions that commit to the principles, are participating in the Framework of Professional Teaching Standards. Application of other aspects of the framework can grow over time through the Principles. This should allow the broadest possible endorsement of the framework.

In any discussion of potential processes or mechanism for applying professional teaching Standards, the role of professional judgment must be recognised as key to the integrity of that application. In this framework this is recognised in: The Principles of Professional Teaching Practice; the holistic wording of the Standards; the unspecific wording of the Elaborations of the Standards.

## 6.2 The Domains as Common Reference for Organising the Standards

Two of the proposed Standards Domains in this framework - Knowledge and Understanding, and Teaching Practice are common inclusions across existing Standards frameworks, even if by slightly different wording. These are more easily directly mapped to existing approaches or applied at face meaning.

The Domain of Teaching Relations is expressed in different ways in different jurisdictions, explicitly or by implication. Often these expressions overlap with activity that apply Standards but might not be understood in all circumstances as the core activity of teaching as such. For example, Standards for Continued Professional Learning (CPL) courses are often designed specifically to assist in evaluating CPL courses rather than to generically describe teaching as such.

This framework uses the Standards in the in the Teaching Relations Domain to include the full range of professional engagements, but does not set Standards for, or use wording that can be applied to specific purposes. A commitment to this framework might entail mapping existing Standards that are used to apply specific types of professional relations or engagements to the appropriate Standard of this framework. This might mean mapping to multiple points. So, an existing application of Professional Standards that is used to support the professional growth



of a practicing teacher, for example, might map to the appropriate Standard in Teaching Relations Domain as well as the Teaching Practice Domain of this framework.

Jurisdictions might choose to develop additional Domains to augment the Framework of Professional Teaching Standards where specific issues are prioritised. These might include, for example a Domain related to Ethics, which are not specifically addressed in this Framework except in the broad or by implication. It is also not inconsistent with the application of this framework that a jurisdiction might develop a specific and more detailed set of Standards for continuing CPL, for example, that could have presented as an additional Domain. Many jurisdictions that implement a Standards framework include Standards for CPL courses within their broader framework. In this framework, which is intended to help establish commonality across the profession, specific Standards for CPL is an option left to jurisdictions. Standards for CPL generally describe the expectations of courses or processes, rather than the specific and more common classroom practice of teaching. The considerations for developing such CPL Standards raise a range of issues that are not addressed in this paper. These include questions of the relationship between CPL and student learning, the site and nature of CPL (for example, in class, off-site, expert input etc). These issues are best addressed in specific jurisdictional context, and with regard to Elaborations of the Standards as developed within the jurisdictions.

### 6.3 Applying the Levels of Standards

In many jurisdictions, the attainment of Graduate Level Standards might be implied in the attainment of a credible formal tertiary or higher education qualification. In others, specific approval processes might assure the alignment of identified qualifications with the Standards. A key issue is the point of entry into the profession. That is, at what point might an individual be regarded as a teacher or be Registered as a teacher in jurisdictions that have such systems in place.

This framework separates Graduate from Practicing in order to highlight the critical nature of tertiary qualifications and higher learning, as well as of actual effective practice. The Practicing Teacher Standards imply the knowledge and understandings, capacities and dispositions that can be specified by the Graduate Elaborations.

It is possible for a jurisdiction to require meeting the Standards at the point of Graduate (through specific Elaboration of the Standards for that Level) as the mandatory point of entry to the profession. This can be done through locally determined processes for recognising tertiary or higher education qualifications against the Standards.

Equally it is possible and appropriate for jurisdictions to set the Practicing Teacher Standards Level as the mandatory point of entry to the profession, following achievement of recognised qualifications. This would parallel 'Provisional and Full Registration' requirements of jurisdictions such as Australia and Scotland.



## 6.4 The Potential to Judge the Attainment of Standards

The potential to judge attainment or achievement of Standards is related to both the wording of the Standards and the application of the Standards. The Standards as organised and as worded in this framework mitigate the potential for specific measurement processes because of their breadth or generality. The potential to judge attainment of these Standards will depend on the wording of the Elaborations of the Standards, which can be considered within jurisdictions.

Most educators would consider that the Elaborations for each Standard should be understood holistically. In any process of judgment or assessment against the Standard, a wholistic or integrated judgment needs to be made, as it is the holistic Standard that is being judged rather than any particular action or activity.

## 6.5 Types of Standards and their Usefulness for Measurement

The Standards as described in this framework can generally be understood as Content standards, in that they seek to describe teachers' work. They are not Measurement Standards, which would be designed to measure the extent of achievement of any aspect of teachers' work. It is possible that the issues set out by the Elaborations in the framework, when they are fully worded as intended within jurisdictions and for different purposes, might be worded as Measurement Standards. That is, as well as describing specific aspects of the 10 Standards, they might also describe the level of expected attainment of the intended Standard.

In this framework the word Standards, and the type of wording that can be described as a Standard, is applied only to the Principles of Professional Teaching Practice and the 10 general descriptors of teachers' work. This assures the centrality of describing teachers work rather than any measurement of level of practice.

It is arguable that any Elaborations developed for the Highly Accomplished Level, go toward being Measurement Standards, in that they distinguish the level of practice from those of Practicing Teacher. In this case however the breadth of the category of Highly Accomplished Teacher Level embeds a qualitative and recognisable difference in practice that aligns with informal recognition.

## 6.6 The Wording of the Elaborations and Validity of Judgment

A key issue with regard to judging achievement or Standards is validity. For a measure to be valid, it must be measuring the meaning or intention of the Standard. Validity inherently requires a relative specificity of meaning in the Standard, as it addresses the surety that the actual intention of the Standard is being assessed.



The 10 Standards in this framework are worded generally, though with enough specificity to allow for interjurisdictional coherence to protect and build the profession. As noted, a more specific meaning of each Standard, which is worded to allow for measurement, might be established in the Elaborations.

## 6.7 Reliability in Judging the Standards

While validity goes to the specific integrity of the relationship between the Standard and any judgment process, reliability goes to the level of confidence in that judgment.

Educators would consider that the Elaborations for each Standard should be understood as part of a wholistic understanding of effective practice across the Standards and their Elaborations. That is the Elaborations cannot be valid indicators of effective teaching or of achievement of the Standards when they are considered independently. In any process of judgment or assessment against the Standard, a wholistic or integrated judgment needs to be made, as it is the whole Standard and in fact the whole level of practice that is being assessed rather than any more detailed demarcation.

The sources of evidence, or indicators of achievement, that judging achievement of Standards might require are determined by the process and purpose established by a jurisdiction.

There are questions about the amount of evidence that a process might seek, for example, how many times should a student teacher be observed in order to establish that student's capacity to manage a class. There are also questions of the range of indicators of achievement of a Standard. For example, effective planning for a lesson might entail both a documented plan and observation of the effectiveness of the plan. These issues are not fully explored here as they are issues of application and only arise where appropriate in jurisdictional context.

The application of this Framework of Professional Teaching Standards with integrity always requires application of teachers' professional judgment, the fundamental expectation of which is stated in the Principles of Professional Teaching Practice.

# 7. Conclusion

## 7.1 An Overview of the Framework of Professional Teaching Standards

### Principles of Professional Teaching Practice Standard

- Quality school education is a universal right of children and young people, in the interests of individuals, communities and societies.



- Quality school education is predicated on high quality teaching, for all students, in all circumstances Teachers' work is focussed on student learning and welfare.
- Teachers are defined as individuals holding formally recognised tertiary teaching qualifications and who meet standards of practice that are defined, judged and recognised through the teaching profession.
- The teaching profession is constituted by teachers so defined, and in alignment with teacher representative organisations.
- It is in the interest of the community generally and children particularly, that only members of the teaching profession be engaged to undertake teachers' work.
- Effective and ethical school organisational practice is built on teachers' professional judgment and standards of practice defined by the teaching profession.
- Members of the teaching profession with administrative responsibilities in schools support teachers at all levels from Graduate teacher to achieve, maintain and defend professional standards.
- Professional teaching standards address and actively support universal access and opportunity for quality schooling for all.
- The teaching profession as a whole, and its individual members, are ethically and actively committed to supporting the principles, precepts and standards of teachers' professional practice in the interests of all students, teachers and the community, globally.

### **Domains of Professional Teaching Standards:**

- Teaching Knowledge and Understanding
- Teaching Practice
- Teaching Relations

### **Levels of Professional Teaching Standards:**

- Graduate Teacher
- Practicing Teacher

### **Voluntary Levels of Outstanding Teaching Standards**

- Highly Accomplished Teacher
- Professional Leader

### **The Standards**

Teaching Knowledge and Understanding Teachers know and understand:



- How students learn, and the particular learning, support and development needs of their students
- The content and related methodologies of the subject matter or content that they are teaching
- Core research and analytical methods that apply in teaching, including with regard to student assessment

### **Teaching Practice**

Teachers' practice consistently demonstrates:

- Planning and preparation to meet the learning, support and development objectives held for students
- An appropriate range of teaching activity that reflects and aligns with both the nature of the content matter being taught, and the learning, support and development needs of the students
- Organisation and facilitation of student activity so that students are able to participate constructively, in a safe and cooperative manner
- Assessment and analysis of student learning that informs the further preparation for, and implementation of, the teaching and learning activity required
- Teaching Relations

Teachers actively participate in:

- Cooperative and collaborative professional processes that contribute to collegial development, and support student learning and development
- Communications with parents, caregivers and members of the community as appropriate to support the learning objectives of students, including formal and informal reporting
- Continuous professional development to maintain currency of their professional knowledge and practice.

### **Elaborations of the Standards**

Practicing teachers know and understand:

- How students learn, and the particular learning, social and development needs of their students:
  - Implications of students' physical, social and intellectual development



- Implications of social, cultural and economic diversity, and related circumstances of students and their learning environment
- The content and related methodologies of the subject matter or content being taught:
  - Core content knowledge and skills
  - Implications of the content knowledge for teaching methodologies
- Core research and analytical methods that apply in teaching, including with regard to student assessment:
  - Research methodologies and related analytical skills that can be applied to new learning
  - Principles and practices of effective student assessment

Teachers' practice consistently demonstrates:

- Planning and preparation to meet the learning objectives held for students
  - Identifying specific learning objectives for students
  - Researching, organising and scheduling lessons to meet those objectives
- An appropriate range of teaching activity that reflects and aligns with both the nature of the content matter being taught, and the learning, support and development needs of the students
  - Practice of teaching processes and structuring of learning activities that align with the requirements of the subject content
  - Variations in teaching and learning that facilitate engagement of students
- Organisation and facilitation of student activity so that students are able to participate constructively, in a safe and cooperative manner
  - A safe and secure environment
  - Effective classroom management having regard to the needs of all individuals and the class as a whole
- Assessment and analysis of student learning that informs the further preparation for, and implementation of, teaching and learning activity required
  - Consistent fair, valid and reliable assessment of student work using an appropriate range of methods



- Analysis of information to adjusting planning and practice of lessons toward achieving learning objectives.

Teachers' professional relations include active participate in:

- Cooperative and collaborative professional processes that contribute to collegial development and support student learning and development:
  - Collaborative processes with regard to lesson planning, teaching activity and student welfare, that support students
  - Cooperative processes that support teacher professional learning and welfare
- Communications with parents, caregivers and members of the community as appropriate to support the learning objectives of students, including formal and informal reporting:
  - Formal and informal reporting to parents, caregivers and the community on student learning and welfare
  - Presentation of the range of professional issues including with regard to the expertise and status of the profession
- Continuous professional development to maintain currency of their professional knowledge and practice
  - Participation in formal professional learning
  - Ongoing analysis and reflection on practice to develop professional practice.

# References

This paper draws on an enormous range of inputs and references accumulated in various jurisdictions over time, only some of which can usefully be recognised here. Each of the items listed below, including in particular, established Standards frameworks have themselves drawn on extensive research and mapping of practice around the world.

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