InSights

Evaluation of the Implementation of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

Interim Report 3
2014 Case Studies – Lessons from Practice

May 2016

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Acknowledgements

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and the Evaluation team from the University of Melbourne would like to thank all participants in the 2014 activities – The Case Studies – who have contributed so willingly and thus made this report possible.

AITSL would also like to thank and acknowledge the Evaluation team from the University of Melbourne Graduate School of Education (MGSE) Centre for Program Evaluation (CPE) for the and the independent researchers involved in data collection, analysis and reporting of the 2014 Evaluation activities. We would also like to thank Professor Robert Lingard from the Australian College of Educators for his support and expertise throughout the project.

The Evaluation team

Associate Professor Janet Clinton	CPE	Chief Investigator
Professor Stephen Dinham	MGSE	Academic Expert
Dr Amy Gullickson	CPE	Principal Investigator
Dr Glenn Savage	MGSE	Investigator
Dr Gerard Calnin	CPE	Investigator
Ruth Aston	CPE	Investigator
Anna Dabrowski	CPE	Investigator
Dr Ghislain Arbour	CPE	Investigator

AITSL and the University of Melbourne would also like to thank the other members of the Evaluation team from the Centre for Program Evaluation at the University of Melbourne, and partners from the Australian College of Educators (ACE); your support and contribution during the Evaluation has been greatly appreciated.

The Centre for Program Evaluation

Elisabeth Betz
Caterina Ho
Sarah Brcan

Australian College of Educators

Catherine Pickett

Key findings from Case Studies

The *Evaluation of the Implementation of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (the Evaluation) explored the usefulness, effectiveness and impact of the implementation of *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers* (The Standards). This report presents the findings from 53 Case Studies undertaken as part of the Evaluation. The case study data was collected to **explore how** the the Standards are being implemented across Australia.

A   Evidence of implementation practice

There is evidence of Australia-wide implementation of the Standards:

1. By the education sector:

- through national policy agreements and AITSL initiatives

- at the system level, where education jurisdictions are using the Standards as a basis for frameworks that support development and improvement in teaching practice

- at the school/community level, where the Standards are utilised in ways that are adapted to the context of each school

- at the individual level, where there is evidence of the Standards being utilised by teachers for goal setting and self-reflection

2. By educational organisations[1] to drive collaborative reform to improve teaching quality:

- informing performance and development frameworks

- guiding teaching career progression at all stages, including initial teacher education and achieving full registration

- supporting change to improve teaching practice

3. By schools and teachers:

- as a shared language for professional development and collaboration

- to inform schools' processes for performance and development

- to support reflection and evaluation of teaching practice

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[1] See glossary for definition

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B   Factors that support implementation

4. Enabling factors include:

- effective leadership

- appropriate resources and time

- using the Standards as a common language to drive professional development

- a supportive culture

- positive attitude and experiences using the Standards

- adapting the Standards to suit individual/school contexts

C   Early impacts of implementation

5. Perceived impacts at this stage include:

- contributing to professionalisation of teaching

- providing a common language to articulate what quality teaching is and how to achieve it

- use of the Standards to promote improved support for pre-service teachers and beginning teachers

- use of the Standards to provide a positive shift in learning cultures: through new forms of partnership and collaborative engagement

- promotion of improved professional development

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Introduction – Lessons from practice

Evaluating the implementation of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (The Standards)

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) commissioned a three-year evaluation of the implementation of the Standards in recognition of the significance of this major educational reform. In collaboration with the Centre for Program Evaluation at The University of Melbourne and their partner, the Australian College of Educators, the Evaluation was designed to assess the **usefulness, effectiveness and impact** of the implementation of the Standards in practice. There were four major data collection components to the Evaluation overall and each of these has now been completed. These are outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Progress of the Evaluation

National Forum	National Survey 1	Case Studies – Lessons from practice	National Survey 2
Workshops and group interviews with 174 key stakeholders in each State and Territory	Online surveys with a total of 6,002 respondents in the teaching profession	In-depth Case Studies of 53 schools and organisations	Online surveys with a total of 8,374 respondents in the teaching profession

This is the third interim report of the *Evaluation of the Implementation of the Standards*. Two previous reports have focused on the initial findings from the National Forum and National Surveys 1 & 2 (AITSL 2014, 2015).

This report focuses on the research findings from the *Case Studies – Lessons from practice* conducted between May-October, 2014 in 53 case study sites across Australia. This aspect of the Evaluation was designed to provide insight into the factors that drive, influence and affect implementation in different contexts.

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What Case Studies tell us about the implementation of the Standards

Data from the National Survey and Forum offered important insights into the knowledge, attitude and numbers of stakeholders using the Standards since their implementation. The Case Studies component of the Evaluation is able to provide a clearer picture about how that implementation is taking place by profiling the ways in which the Standards are being used in practice.

This report aims to highlight:

- **how** the Standards are being utilised in practice, including examples of implementation strategies.

- factors that **enable** implementation as well as challenges that have been experienced along the way

- evidence of **impact** of implementation of the Standards so far.

> **The focus of the Case Studies component of the Evaluation of the Standards is on how organisations, schools and teachers are implementing the Standards and showcasing examples of the impressive work being done. Through the Case Studies, we are able to explore the diversity of implementation practices in different contexts and at different system levels and draw valuable lessons *from* and *for* practice.**

A case study approach

In early 2014, expressions of interest were sought from schools, employers, sectoral bodies, education organisations and initial teacher education providers to participate in the Case Studies. Case sites were selected using purposeful and strategic sampling based on the quality of the submission, representation across states and territories, as well as the type and setting of the case site. The sites were able to participate either as 'individual' or 'consortia' sites to showcase implementation of the Standards within sites and partnerships across settings.

Organisations and schools

For the purposes of the Case Studies data analysis, educational organisations that were not schools were considered separately to schools because of the different functions, roles and activities that each would carry out in implementing the Standards. Organisations profiled in the Case Studies included, for example, education departments, professional associations and professional learning providers.

The sample included 53 case sites:

- **28 schools**
- **25 organisations**

Site visits were conducted between May-September 2014, at the case sites, by the Evaluation team and a team of locally-based researchers. The data collection involved a range of activities including:

- individual interview with school leader/senior staff member
- focus groups with teachers/staff members involved in implementation
- collection of relevant documents to illustrate implementation practices
- observation of relevant meetings or workshops.

A full qualitative data analysis was conducted, including thematic analysis and a national cross-case analysis to examine implementation practices, initial impacts and enabling factors, taking into account the diversity across different sites and contexts.

Research questions for case study participants

The interviews and focus groups sought to address the following questions:

1. What is the level of knowledge and use of the Standards?

2. What practices do schools and organisations engage in to implement the Standards?

3. Which support initiatives do participants draw on to implement the Standards and how do they use them?

4. What kind of partnerships and collaborations do stakeholders engage in to implement the Standard and how do they work?

5. What are enablers and barriers for the implementation of the Standards?

6. What changes have occurred as a result of the implementation of the Standards?

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About the Standards

Education research indicates that teachers are the single most important in-school factor to impact student learning (Hattie, 2003). The Standards provide a framework for defining what quality teaching looks like, reflecting the consistent national and international evidence that identifies what comprises quality teaching.

The Standards (AITSL, 2011) provide a description and use a common language to describe teacher knowledge and capabilities at four career stages across the teacher development life span.

Domains	Standards	
Professional Knowledge	1	**Know students and how they learn**
	2	**Know the content and how to teach it**
Professional Practice	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**
Professional Engagement	6	**Engage in professional learning**
	7	**Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community**

Implementation context

Implementation of the Standards takes place in a complex and changing context. Success will require that all stakeholders support implementation of the Standards in ways that improve teaching and increase teacher impact on student learning. Implementation of the Standards is a reform that requires action from stakeholders at a national level, a jurisdictional level, a school and community level and an individual teacher level.

Figure 2 represents the various government bodies and other influencers that impact on teacher behaviour and practice, and ultimately, outcomes for students.
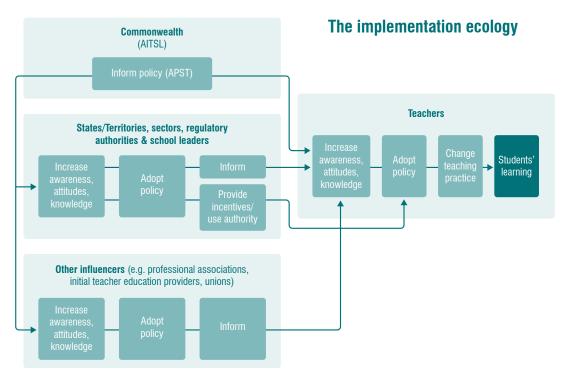

Figure 2: Implementation ecology (adapted from Schneider and Ingram, 1990)

National implementation activity

At a national level, Ministerial endorsement was gained for five major national policies. All of these were based on the Standards and therefore drove the implementation of the Standards:

1. Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia

2. A nationally consistent approach to teacher registration in Australia

3. National certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead teachers in Australia

4. The Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework

5. The Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders

Following this endorsement, AITSL has worked to develop a range of support materials to implement these specific initiatives, and the Standards more generally.

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Findings from the Case Studies

A   Evidence of Implementation

Case Studies of organisations

How are organisations supporting implementation of the Standards?

Case study sites included a range of organisations (other than schools) that have important roles in supporting schools and teachers as they implement the Standards. These included, for example, education departments, Catholic education offices, teacher regulatory authorities, initial teacher education providers and professional associations.

The major role for these organisations has been to put in place the structures, policies and professional learning to support implementation. In many cases, this has meant redesigning frameworks, in accordance with the Standards.

The Case Studies indicated that three major uses of the Standards are evident in educational organisations:

1. Informing performance and development frameworks

2. Guiding career progression

3. Supporting change to improve teaching practice

> **The Case Studies of organisations showed that, overall, they were pursuing both regulatory and developmental uses of the Standards, but with a greater focus on developmental uses.**

1. Informing performance and development frameworks

The Case Studies indicated that, across Australia, organisations are using the Standards to inform performance and development frameworks and provide professional development and learning opportunities mapped against the Standards.

An evident strength of the Standards has been their potential to be used in a variety of ways by education organisations. In particular, to assess teacher performance, for example in regulatory or performance reviews, and to develop and improve teaching practice, for example in planning professional learning or providing a framework for reflection and feedback on teaching.

The first step in aligning performance and development frameworks to the Standards was often changing terminology to use the language of the Standards. For many organisations, this stage involved relatively straightforward changes to documentation, for example in replacing existing jurisdictional standards. This provided the foundation to facilitate further change.

A major focus for Case Study organisations was to use the Standards to drive professional learning. This included mapping the provision of professional learning to the Standards, and introducing performance and development frameworks that align to the Standards.

A number of education systems have significantly reformed their performance and development policies, for example, to increase the use of observation and to ensure feedback is focussed on teaching practice. The definition of effective teaching contained within the Standards has provided a basis for this.

Change has been more far-reaching for providers of initial teacher education, who have been required to ensure that their programs reflect the Standards and graduates are assessed against the graduate career level of the Standards in order to maintain their accreditation. The next step for these organisations is to ensure that their staff and partner schools are well informed about the Standards and their implications.
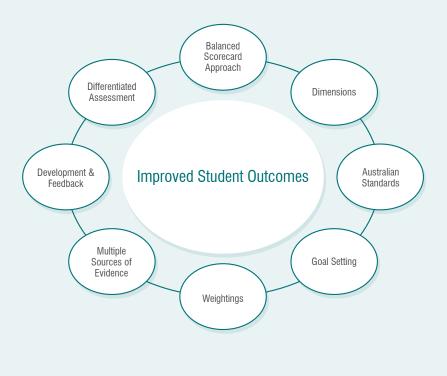
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CASE STUDY 1

System approach to performance and development: Department for Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), Victoria

The Victorian Department for Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) is embedding the Standards in Victoria through their new performance and development framework.

Incorporating a Standards-based balanced scorecard approach, the framework takes schools and teachers through a cycle of goal-setting, evidence collection and feedback.

Four key principles of student outcomes, professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement guide this process. The DEECD ensures that principals and teachers engage in training to implement the Performance & Development Framework practices effectively. An implementation cycle was introduced for schools to familiarise themselves with the Standards first before they become established as daily practice.

Figure 3: Professional Practice and Performance for Improved Learning: Performance and Development Model (DEECD, 2014)

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CASE STUDY 2

Supporting teaching and teachers: NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC)

In New South Wales, the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) developed strategies to ensure accessibility of the Standards so that schools are supported through the transition process.

State-based policies and practices related to teaching and teachers' work (particularly the *Great Teaching, Inspired Learning Blueprint for Action*) are aligned with the national policies related to the use of the Standards. The Standards are also used as the basis for selection and recruitment of teaching staff as part of the selection criteria used in the application and interview process.

The Standards are used for performance review as part of the new *Teacher Assessment and Review Schedule* (TARS) process. Online resources are being developed and training for supervisors provided. As part of this, all professional learning offered by DEC is mapped against the Standards, including for high level accreditation.

2. Guiding career progression

Organisations in the Case Studies indicated that they were using the Standards to guide teacher career progression, commencing in initial teacher education (ITE). Organisations were aiming to highlight the professional learning that occurs throughout a teaching career to support progress through each career stage.

The Standards are used across Australia as the foundation for registration of Initial Teacher Education graduates from *Graduate* to *Proficient*. Additionally, teachers aspiring to become 'nationally certified' must demonstrate practice aligned to the *Highly Accomplished* or Lead career stages of the Standards.

Regulatory processes have played a particular role in defining career progression. The national approach to accreditation of initial teacher education requires that programs are designed around the Standards, and require that pre-service teachers are assessed against the Standards and consequently become familiar with them at an early stage of their career. Organisational case study participants reported a belief that the knowledge gained by pre-service teachers would be a strong factor in increasing the uptake of the Standards as they moved into schools.

The Case Studies showed that regulatory authorities, in particular, are providing resources to early career teachers to support gaining full registration, by achieving the *Proficient* career stage of the Standards. In some jurisdictions where it is offered, certification at the *Highly Accomplished* and *Lead* career stages was also supported by regulatory authorities. It was evident that regulatory authorities have played a major role in promoting awareness and use of the Standards.

The processes of registration and certification have enabled the introduction of mentoring/coaching programs focussed on the Standards and promoted the use of the Standards as a common language to sharpen focus on a teacher's specific strengths and weaknesses. Collecting evidence for registration and certification has encouraged teachers to reflect on their own practice, and promoted awareness of the Standards as a tool for supporting changes to teaching practice.

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CASE STUDY 3

Collaboration for consistency in assessment: Queensland College of Teachers and Queensland Deans of Education Forum, Queensland

The *Queensland College of Teachers* (QCT) and *Queensland Deans of Education Forum* have collaborated to ensure that staff within Higher Education Institutions and schools have strong understanding of the Standards.

One explicit partnership activity was a forum for initial teacher education providers to share student assessment with one another and make judgements around moderation for assessment together. The final stage of this collaboration prompts universities to submit work samples and explanation around how the Standards are taught and assessed in the teacher education course. QCT has also conducted its own stakeholder review to evaluate the effectiveness of implementation of the Standards.

3. Supporting change in teaching practice

Organisations participating in the Case Studies had a clear view of their role in supporting schools to utilise the Standards. Organisations focussed heavily on how to support teachers and school leaders in a range of contexts to improve teaching practice by utilising the Standards.

Organisations identified that supporting school leaders was a critical implementation strategy and created resources designed specifically to support school leaders in leading change.

Most organisations paid particular attention to contexts where there were specific challenges to implementation of the Standards, for example, schools in remote areas and low SES schools. Many professional associations devoted their efforts to giving meaning to the Standards for particular groups of teachers, such as those in early childhood settings, or teacher librarians. This often included providing professional learning.

Support to schools was made concrete through professional learning programs and other resources developed by organisations. Some organisations used the resources on the AITSL website. Others have used the Standards as the basis for the development of their own tools and professional learning programs, ranging from single workshops to ongoing mentoring programs. Promoting effective professional conversations was a particularly popular use of the Standards.

Reflecting on your context, consider:

- **How can the Standards be used to drive improvements in professional learning and performance and development practices?**

- **What support is needed for effective implementation at the school level?**

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Case Studies of schools

How are schools implementing the Standards?

The Case Studies indicated that three major uses of the Standards are evident in schools. These are:

1. the use of a shared language based on the Standards to drive professional development and collaboration

2. to inform schools' processes for performance and development

3. to support reflection and evaluation of teaching practice.

1. Using the Standards to provide a shared language to drive professional development and collaboration

It is clear that the schools profiled in the Case Studies are using the Standards to provide focus to their ongoing efforts to improve teaching.

Across Case Study sites, participants stated that the Standards are used to provide a common language for educators to discuss priorities for professional learning. The Standards provide a framework to understand what quality teaching means and for the development of strategies for improving teaching and learning.

The Standards were used to support a specific set of practices in schools aimed at improving teaching. These were generally implemented across a whole school. In many cases, they built on existing practice, but used the common language provided by the Standards to sharpen focus and drive further change.

> *"When we talk about the Standards we talk about the Standards being the work of teachers, it's what teachers do. It describes their professional knowledge"*
>
> *– Participant, New South Wales*

The Standards prompted collaboration in professional learning communities, which might be across a whole school, or formed around a particular subject area or other interest, especially in larger schools. One benefit of the Standards for small and remote schools in particular was improved opportunities for collaboration across schools.

Mentoring and coaching were popular mechanisms for improving teaching in the Case Study schools. These focussed particularly on supporting early career teachers. Some programs were quite formal, while others grew out of networks of teachers. Again, the Standards provided a common language for these discussions, and sharpened their focus on teaching practice rather than on general support.

2. Informing schools' processes for performance and development

In implementing the Standards, many schools had drawn on existing resources, often adapting them to specific school needs. Some schools had taken resources such as AITSL's *Teacher Self-Assessment Tool* and significantly adapted them. Schools had also used the Standards to prioritise professional learning needs, and in many cases to design their own professional learning activities.

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The socio-geographic context in which Yirrkala operates places emphasis on developing relationships with the community. The school ensures that the Standards are communicated across the wider community and its partner schools as a common framework for teacher performance and development. To achieve this, the school develops professional learning packages that incorporate materials to guide regular workshops and collaborative learning with partner schools. There is also strong support from the Department and the local school council for this process as a way to develop quality teaching.

Establishing workshops using the Standards as a framework for professional conversations was critical for Yirrkala School, whose teachers teach in very remote areas with little or no access to the central school and where the classrooms comprise students from different age groups. These workshops ensure benchmarking of good teaching practices and consistency across school networks. More importantly, team relationships based on the Standards foster professional sharing of good practices and classroom observations to improve teaching and learning.

At the school level, the Standards establish a common understanding of what quality teaching is: Teachers align their practices and goals to the Standards and use them to identify focus areas to tailor professional development.

3. Using the Standards to support self-reflection and evaluation of teaching practice

The Standards have provided a framework to observe, document and analyse classroom practice. They are being used to support teachers to reflect and improve their own practice, but also to allow others to observe, discuss and evaluate teaching practice.

Teachers and schools are using the Standards regularly to reflect on teaching practice. Many schools, either on their own initiative or through system policies, have adapted their performance and development process to align goals to the Standards. Many teachers felt that this process of collecting evidence against the Standards generated insights into their own practice and strategies to improve it. For some, it also motivated them to consider how to reach the advanced career stages, and to apply for certification.

As well as self-reflection, performance and development involves evaluation of teaching practice by others. Many schools had used the Standards, and the *Australian Teacher Performance* and *Development Framework,* to increase the use and effectiveness of classroom observation and feedback in their schools. A major challenge has been balancing the formal evaluation of performance with the need to promote self-reflection and motivation to improve.

> *"[The Standards give us]... a good way to evaluate and reflect on what we're already doing, and what we're possibly doing well, and where there's room for improvement."*
>
> *– Teacher, Northern Territory*

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CASE STUDY 5

Evidencing practice: Clyde Fenton Primary School, Northern Territory

Clyde Fenton Primary School's teacher's self-assessment tool – the Class Teaching Online Journaling System – was developed to provide clarity and support for performance and development. The Standards are used as a framework for assessing teachers' performance across the four career stages – Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead.

This online system allows teachers to rate their own teaching and to track their progress. School leaders are able to generate 'profile maps' for identifying quality teaching and to provide relevant support for teachers. Staff highlighted the importance of a team approach in combining self-reflection and goal-setting at both the individual and school level. The gathering of data against the Standards is useful for teachers working towards achieving the Proficient career stage and for certification. Supported by school leaders, the tool ensures that teachers are improving their practice and want to continue to do so.

Reflecting on your context, consider:

- **How could the Standards be used in your school context to promote a common language to inform performance and development?**

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B   Factors enabling implementation

The Case Studies identified six key factors that support implementation of the Standards

Case Study participants identified six key factors that facilitated implementation of the *Standards*. These were consistent across schools but experienced in different priority in different contexts:

1. effective leadership

2. appropriate resources and time

3. using the Standards as the basis for a common language to drive professional development

4. supportive culture

5. positive attitude and experiences using the Standards

6. adapting the Standards to suit individual/school context

1. Effective school leaders play a critical role in supporting Standards implementation

More than any other factor, participants reported that it is important for school leaders to provide a vision for reform and to mobilise staff into action to embed the Standards.

Leadership is a key driver in building an effective professional learning culture. When school leaders use the Standards with a developmental focus, this can bring about a shift in professional learning culture and, in turn, positive impacts on teaching and student learning.

Case Studies identified several factors that support effective school leadership:

- good knowledge and understanding of the Standards

- establishment of clear improvement goals

- aligning the Standards to school and teacher development programs and frameworks

- support for teachers to learn about the Standards and how to apply them in classroom practice

2. Appropriate resources and time

The majority of Case Study participants emphasised the importance of adequate resources and time to support implementation of the Standards and professional learning activities.

Resources included:

- resources that provided practical guidance about how to implement the Standards such as the AITSL *Illustrations of Practice* (http://www.aitsl.edu.au/ australian-professional-standards-for-teachers/illustrations-of-practice/find-by-career-stage)

- examples of implementation from other schools

- adequate time to use, learn about and engage with the Standards

- adequate planning for change.

3. Using the Standards as a common language for development rather than for accountability

Participants observed that using the Standards to develop staff and drive positive change, enabled effective implementation; using the Standards primarily as a means to negatively critique practice did not.

In the Case Studies:

- the schools where the Standards were used as common language to improve practice demonstrated positive attitudes towards the Standards

- some participants felt that where there was potential for teachers to interpret the Standards as primarily a mechanism for negative critique, this could build resistance to implementation.

> *"We incorporate them [The Standards] in performance management, not as a measure to alarm teachers or as a monitoring tool but rather as a guide to where their teaching should go..."*
>
> *– School Leader, Western Australia*

CASE STUDY 6

Induction in School: Kirwan State High School, Qld

Kirwan State High School in Queensland has aligned the Standards with existing pedagogical frameworks. All teachers and students attend a whole-school induction week at the beginning of the year where early career teachers are paired with more experienced teachers to work on an element of the Standards.

The program is explicitly structured to move through through observation of expertise to demonstration and application. Feedback and reflection on practice creates a focus on professional development to promote teacher expertise.

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4. Creating a supportive culture

Teachers from case study schools described the benefits of having a school environment that was conducive to learning about and experimenting with the Standards.

Features of a school culture that was supportive to implementing the Standards included:

- encouragement for staff members to work with the Standards to achieve their goals for improving their teaching

- environments in which all teachers have opportunities to share their personal and professional aspirations aligned to the Standards

- a readiness to engage in conversation about the Standards and embrace collaboration to support implementation

- teamwork and positive conversations about the Standards in schools.

Many participants described how the school they worked in had developed a school culture that supported educational reforms.

"What I've found, is having a team of people all looking at [the Standards], is that you build capacity within the school to help drive that and keep each other on track."

– School Leader, New South Wales

"[The Standards] are really just a help to me to focus my learning in areas that are important and need to happen. Then when I work with my coach, the coach helps me to develop actions and then I am accountable. So I actually have to go out and work on those things."

– Teacher, South Australia

CASE STUDY 7

Shared responsibility: Unity College, South Australia

The primary focus at Unity College in South Australia has been to personalise professional learning for teachers across all career stages. To reinforce the use of the Standards for self-reflection, the college has developed a new leadership and mentoring /coaching model to support teachers in using the Standards. This includes:

- all-staff participation in mentoring activities
- ongoing participation built on individual teacher development needs
- school leader led, teacher-driven mentoring activities
- a focus on engagement with the Standards
- accessibility of resources

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5. Positive attitudes to and experiences of using the Standards

A positive attitude towards the Standards supported effective implementation, especially where it was reinforced by positive experiences of implementation.

Actions that contributed to building positive attitudes and experiences included:

- modelling successful use of the Standards

- showing teachers the benefits of using the Standards

- capitalising on the experiences of early career teachers who have engaged with the Standards in their initial teacher education to act as role models

"There were opportunities to evaluate where you are up to in regards to your current standard [of practice]; where you were, to get a familiarity with the Standards and to have a comparison as to what this means for you, and how this compares to where you are going."

– Teacher, Victoria

CASE STUDY 8

Setting School Goals: Knox School, New South Wales

The Knox School makes extensive use of the Standards across K-12 at both their school sites with all teachers using the Standards as part of the Reflection, Evaluation, Action Planning process. The process begins by using the Standards to inform goal-setting, then working with an instructional coach to analyse classroom practice and finally, working with cross-faculty teams for instructional rounds and reflection.

Teachers at Knox talked positively about using the Standards as a way to improve teaching practice by capitalising on the structure that the Standards can provide.

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6. Adapting the Standards to suit individualised school context

In order for the Standards to be effectively implemented, there must be alignment to the school context, location and setting.

The data suggests that contextual differences such as existing structures and practices in a particular setting can impact on implementation of the Standards.

For example, participants from schools in rural and remote locations faced specific challenges such as distance from professional learning and development opportunities which meant aligning professional development to the Standards was more challenging.
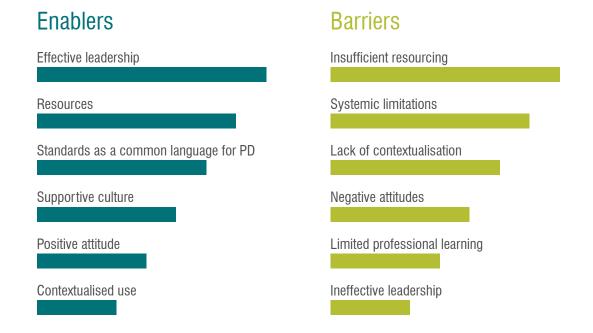
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Factors identified as challenges for implementation.

Barriers to effective implementation of the Standards were, by and large, the absence or opposites of the enabling factors. A major characteristic of poor implementation for school-based participants was when the Standards are experienced as creating an additional workload, rather than improving existing processes. Barriers to implementation identified through the Case Studies included:

- insufficient resourcing – such as lack of time or support
- systemic limitations – such as regulatory requirements and inconsistencies in implementation
- lack of contextualisation – difficulty applying or lack of adaptation of the Standards to a local setting
- negative attitudes or perceptions of the intended use of the Standards
- limited access to professional learning including about the Standards
- ineffective leadership.

Figure 4. Schools' responses on enablers and barriers for implementation

Enablers

Effective leadership

Resources

Standards as a common language for PD

Supportive culture

Positive attitude

Contextualised use

Barriers

Insufficient resourcing

Systemic limitations

Lack of contextualisation

Negative attitudes

Limited professional learning

Ineffective leadership

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C Early impacts of implementing the Standards

Participants in the Case Studies provided insight into perceptions of initial impacts of the implementation of the Standards

The key theme was that the Standards are enhancing the professionalisation of teaching in Australia.

- The Standards are perceived to be having a professionalising impact on teaching.

- The Standards provide a common language to articulate what quality teaching is and how to achieve it.

- The Standards can be used to improve support for pre-service teachers and beginning teachers.

- The Standards are driving new forms of partnership and collaborative engagement.

- The Standards are serving as a driver of improved professional learning.

Some case study participants reported a perception that there is potential for the Standards to be tied to punitive accountability processes but the majority of case studies showed that driving professional development was the primary implementation use.

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Conclusion and considerations

Conclusion

The Case Studies demonstrate a diverse range of practices that are emerging across Australia. in the implementation of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

There is no single "right" way to implement the Standards but at every level of the education sector, some degree of implementation is occurring in ways that are adapted to particular contexts.

Leadership support, professional growth connected to the Standards and supportive cultures promote positive use of the Standards and will enhance the impact this reform can have on Australian education.

A number of policy considerations are apparent that will further drive the implementation and use of the Standards.

- **It continues to be vital to build knowledge of the Standards.**

- **The Standards provide a clear sense of what practice looks like at the various career stages and so outlines a pathway for professional growth.**

- **School leaders play a critical role in building the use of the Standards in ways that impact on teacher practice. They are the 'hinge factor' for supporting or hindering effective implementation within the school.** By establishing and maintaining safe and supportive learning environments for the teachers and through alignment of the Standards with schools processes, goals and priorities, school leaders can positively influence change at their school.

- **A diverse range of practices is emerging that is driving change in schools and education systems.** It is important to note that as implementation increases in scale so does the complexity of implementation.

Considerations for future implementation

Sustainability

While the implementation of the Standards varies across the nation, it appears that implementation is steadily expanding. Sustainability of the reform over the long-term will require continuation of partnerships and the collaborative approach to implementing the Standards that has been described by the case study participants in the complex system of Australian education.

Articulating the link between implementation of the Standards and student outcomes

Articulating the link between implementing the Standards in a particular setting or context and student achievement will need to be addressed as longer term impacts emerge.

Ongoing collaboration

Currently, implementation of the Standards has focused on developing use of the Standards within each state and territory. Although there is little evidence of cross-state collaborations at this stage, participants have indicated that such collaborations are possible given the national consistency of the Standards. This would allow schools and organisations to work together to build on each other's strengths and to drive more sustainable national reform.

Next steps

Final report of the Evaluation and sharing of the findings

The Evaluation has conducted all the data collection activities;

- The National Forum
- The National Survey 2013
- Case Studies – Lessons from Practice
- The National Survey 2015
- Stakeholder Interviews

The final report will assess the usefulness, effectiveness and impact of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and provide recommendations and implications for the Australian education community.

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Glossary

Educators
Used to refer to the four groups asked to respond to the survey – teachers, school leaders, pre-service teachers and teacher educators.

Organisation
For the purposes of the Case Studies data analysis, an organisation in this report refers to any educational organisation that was not a school.

Pre-service Teacher
Students currently enrolled in an initial teacher education program.

Standards
The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (also referred to as the APST).
The Standards were finalised by AITSL and endorsed in December 2010 by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA), now known as the Australian Education Council.

Teacher
School employees who spend the majority of their time in contact with students either in classes or on an individual basis; and are responsible for teaching the school curriculum. This includes registered teachers in early childhood and other settings outside of mainstream schools.

School
Any site dedicated to the learning of children and young people, including early childhood, primary, middle and/or secondary schools or their equivalent.

School Leader
Those in positions of authority within schools such as: Principals, Deputy Principals and Heads of curriculum areas or departments (e.g. Head of English).

Stakeholder
Used in this report to refer to all parties with a role in implementing the Standards.
In addition to educators, as defined above, this would include, for example, education departments, professional associations and teacher regulatory authorities.

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