

The following are my observations in response to the Focus Questions set out in the Consultation Report:

1. - The second of the eight elements, *Know the content and how to teach it*, needs amendment. My experience is that teachers focus far more on the second part of this statement. Professional learning is often centred on pedagogy, and the neglect of ongoing learning in a subject area is often evident. The assumption of many teachers is that they know the content from their tertiary study, meaning they neglect the development of their subject knowledge. Knowing content and knowing how to teach it should be two separate elements that need to be addressed.
 - The main discernible difference I have noticed in teaching is that teachers are now able to speak about their teaching and practice using common language. This is a good start: without a language to discuss practice, we cannot improve it. I'm yet to see the implementation of the standards improve classroom practice though. I think this is because teachers focus on satisfying external standards out of context rather than using standards to address the needs of students.
 - Having common standards is positive. Assessing them through external bodies is not. The assessment of standards should be completed internally by a school, not by sending off 'evidence' and a report. The benefit of this is that the improvements should be more ongoing and feedback can be targeted to improve teacher performance. At present, the onus is on an assigned mentor to complete a report about the teacher requiring accreditation. Instead, the provision of ongoing teacher training should be part of a leadership position with an appropriate allocation.
2. Nationally consistent standards for Early Childhood should be determined. Again, they should be assessed at a local level, not to an external body.
3. N/A – VET is outside my area of knowledge and experience
4. - The rhetoric coming from the (then) Institute of Teachers in NSW was that the accreditation process was in part designed to support beginning teachers in the development of their practice. My own experience and the observation and mentoring of others shows no experience of this aim being realised. In most cases, the accreditation process takes teachers away from what they deem important (planning, teaching assessing etc) and takes valuable time to jump them through hoops. Induction is certainly important, but so is school context. My solution again is that induction must happen at a school level, to address more specific needs and to embed a culture of consistent evaluation of practice.
 - The accreditation process in NSW, especially where accreditation has been tied to payscale, seems to have created two types of teachers: those who devote their time to improving student learning and those who devote their time to *talking about* improving student learning. The second type are proficient in the language and procedure of accreditation, but this is often at the expense of student learning. I think teachers are quick to discover that they can meet all of the standards without actually meeting all of the standards.
5. N/A -