

Submission from Damian von Samorzewski on the draft National Professional Standards for Teachers

This submission would like to communicate four key points in relation to the Graduate Standards. The other standards were not reviewed, although it could be said that this submission could raise similar concerns in the other Teacher Standard categories.

Summary

1. The draft National Professional Standards for Teachers are non-descriptiveⁱ. That is, they appear to be motherhood statements with little supporting documentation to support the development of a shared understanding for those who will be expected to develop or meet the Standards. This maybe the intent of the Standards, but this will have serious consequences in relation to quality and consistency of graduate teachers.
2. There is a lack of clarity in the standards in relation to the required level of 'performance' that the teacher is expected to work at. Although most Bachelor Degrees are rated according to the AQF standardsⁱⁱ, the draft National Professional Standards for Teachers for Graduate Teachers are inconsistent with the AQF standards. This is because the Standards try to describe what teachers not only know, but can do. According to AQF standards, Bachelor degrees only require
3. Despite the continually growing researchⁱⁱⁱ on the importance of parent involvement in their children's education, these standards do not reflect this critical and growing aspect.
4. It could be said that the Standards continue to treat education as a 'siloed' activity^{iv}. Empathetic teachers have a working knowledge of the various support services that many children and their families need to navigate through life. This capability also demonstrates that teachers really know how students learn, using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs^v to inform their practice.
5. All teachers, no matter their sector, should be required to meet the Nation Teaching Standards. (Childcare, Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary & Post Secondary including TAFE teachers.) Teaching is a complex profession^{vi} and requires effective teachers to make a difference^{vii} in our children's lives. Although it is could be said that primary school teachers need a different set of skills as a TAFE teacher, the core attributes remain the same. This Australian Education Union, amongst others, also believes this.

Elaboration

1. The draft National Professional Standards for Teachers are non-descriptive

The intent of the Standards may be to provide an overarching framework, but this is fraught with danger. Pre-service education facilities seek to maintain their autonomy (power) and therefore lack of accountability. This non-descriptive approach will lead to a wide and varied quality of Graduate teachers, as pre-service training organisations interpret the Standards to suit their own ends^{viii}.

Taken at face value, the Graduate Standards themselves are appropriate and reasonable reflect the knowledge and skills a graduate teacher requires in their early years (except for points 3&4).^{ix} I believe the issue relates to what they really look like in practice. The Standards DO NOT support the reader to develop this practical understanding.

To highlight this complex but important area, I have included in this submission a 'rough' mapping of the draft National Professional Standards for Teachers to the Certificate III in Education, Teacher Aide / Assistant Accredited Course. (blue paper) I wish to highlight that, due to a lack of descriptive indicators in the draft Standards, a Tasmanian teacher aide with a Certificate III in Education, Teacher Aide / Assistant qualification could meet 95% of the requirements of the draft Graduate Standard. I can justify this position with a descriptive Evidence Guide (included in this submission as an A3 document, column 2) This leads me to point 2.

2 Lack of clarity in the standards in relation to the required level of 'performance'

Continuing from point 1, the Standards fail to differentiate the performance the Graduate teacher is expected to be 'performing' at. As I alluded to in point 1, if I can demonstrate a teacher aide has the same skills and knowledge, as per the draft Graduate standards, what is the difference between a graduate teacher and Certificate III Teacher Aide and how do the Standards provide this differentiation?

The Australian Qualification Framework^x provides an indicator to the required performances, although I contest that these cannot be solely used, due to the generic nature of the descriptors. I'll elaborate.

The AQF characteristics for a Bachelor Degree^{xi} are;

3.2 Characteristics

Characteristics of learning outcomes at this level include:

- *the acquisition of a systematic and coherent body of knowledge, the underlying principles and concepts, and the associated communication and problem-solving skills;*
 - **development of the academic skills and attributes** necessary to undertake research, comprehend and evaluate new information, concepts and evidence from a range of sources;
 - *development of the ability to review, consolidate, extend and apply the knowledge and techniques learnt, including in a professional context;*
 - *a foundation for self-directed and lifelong learning; and*
 - *interpersonal and teamwork skills appropriate to employment and/or further study.*
- A course leading to this qualification also usually involves major studies in which a significant literature is available. Course content is taken to a significant depth and progressively developed to a high level which provides a basis for postgraduate study and professional careers.*

A part from “**development of the academic skills and attributes**”, I believe all other characteristics could be demonstrated by an effective and qualified teacher aide / assistant. This I believe causes an impasse due to the very practical nature of the draft National Professional Standards for Teachers.

Let me highlight the complexity of the issue.

Draft Graduate Standard 7.2 is “*Understand and comply with authority policies regulations and statutes relating to teachers’ and students’ rights and responsibilities, including OH&S, diversity, child protection, risk management, and industrial agreements.*”

This an interesting Standard because most, if not all pre-service education courses do not provide this type of ‘practical’ training. They believe it is an employer responsibility.

So what does Standard 7.2 looks like? I am not sure, but I can provide you with the requirements a Tasmanian teacher aide is expected to know that looks similar.

- [Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Act](#) (1998) (Tas)
- [Disability Discrimination Act](#) (1992) (Cth)
- [Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Act Amended 2001](#) (Tas)
- [Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act](#) (1986) (Cth)
- [Racial Discrimination Act](#) (1975) (Cth)
- [Sex Discrimination Act](#) (1994) (Cth)
- [Tasmanian State Service Act](#) (2000) if appropriate
- [Disability Standards for Education](#) (2005) [C'wealth website](#)
- [Tasmanian Education Act 1994](#) (Tas)
- [Youth Participation in Education and Training \(Guaranteeing Futures\) Act 2005](#) (Tas)
- [Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997](#) (Tas) (mandatory reporting)
- Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (Dec 2008)
- [Tasmanian State Service Act](#) *(if applicable)*

- *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995*
- Equity in Schooling Systemic Policies
- [Supportive School Communities Policy Framework 2003-2007](#)
- [Anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policy](#)
- [Gifted Education Policy](#)
- [Equity In Schooling Policy](#)
- [Gender Equity Policy](#)
- [Policy on the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Regular Schools](#)
- [Guidelines on the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Regular Schools](#)
- *Review of the Policy on Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Regular Schools*

United Nations - Rights of the Child

Tasmanian Workplace Health and Safety

Duty of Care

Mandatory Reporting

Bullying & Harassment (including National Safe School Framework)

Workplace Hazards

Workplace Hazard Identification

Risk Analysis

Chemicals & Substances (including MSDS)

Personal Protective Equipment

Manual Handling Policy (including manutention)

Hidden Hazards

Critical Incident or Accident

Emergency procedures

Safety Signage

Hazard Reporting

Hazards could also occur through Student Health and Safety Issues

Policies and Procedures for Student Health & Safety

School First Aid

Student Medication Procedures

Health & Safety Issues for High Needs Students

Reporting Incident/ Accidents

Statement of Duties

State Service Act

Awards (State, Catholic, Independent schools)

As you can appreciate, this is a rather comprehensive list that a Certificate III level person is required to know and use, as required. How does draft Standard 7.2 attempt to ensure all Graduate teachers are not only are aware of this comprehensive list (State specific if required) but also how to use them to a 'professional' standard?

What is the difference between a Certificate III and Bachelor Degree and how does the draft Standards differentiate this?

3 Parent involvement

How do the draft standards acknowledge what is now recognised as a critical aspect of child achievement? The Standards need to be proactive in supporting Graduate teachers develop the capability to work collaboratively with not only parents and carers, but the wider school community. As financial and capability pressures are being placed on schools, teachers need to be able to draw on their community to support them develop our children. The Schools First^{xii} initiative supports this position.

4 Education as a 'siloes' activity

Charles Leadbeater^{xiii} continually uses the word 'siloes' to describe the way government and NGOs provide their services. Siloes is meant to describe the way organisations are structured to operate (ie stand alone). Students, their families and communities in greatest need, need a collaborative approach to help them improve their future. Education is the key to generational poverty and for many, a whole of community approach is needed. Once basic human needs have been met or supported, education can then help them move forward^{xiv}. Teachers need to develop the skills and knowledge to guide their students and families to where support can be found. Removing the siloes will allow easier access.

5 All teachers, no matter their sector, should be required to meet the Nation Teaching Standards.

The teachers and leaders who work in Australia's schools and educate young people are of fundamental importance to achieving these educational goals for young Australians. Excellent teachers have the capacity to transform the lives of students and to inspire and nurture their development as learners, individuals and citizens. They provide an additional source of encouragement, advice and support for students outside the home, shaping teaching around the ways different students learn and nurturing the unique talents of every student.

*Australian governments commit to working with **all school sectors** to attract, develop, support and retain a high-quality teaching and school leadership workforce in Australian schools. Page 10^{xv}*

Given that many Australian 16 year old students attend TAFE type education (traineeships, apprenticeships, pre-vocational courses, early drop outs that re-engage in learning with a vocational focus etc), even before the end of the compulsory education^{xvi} years, you would think these students would be afforded the same standard of teaching as those attending a school. Currently this could possibly be the case. The pending retirement of thousands of TAFE teachers would provide the opportunity to refresh this sector's qualifications. There

are many organisations that believe the current teacher qualifications for the VET sector are irrelevant. Currently it is possible for someone without any type of teacher training to 'teach' a VET subject. This is possible under AQTF 2007^{xvii} standard 1.4, as long as they are 'indirectly' supervised (including a written mentor plan) by someone that holds the 'appropriate' training and assessment qualification (Currently this is a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment –TAA^{xviii}). In practice, 'indirectly' has meant sink or swim.....

Linda Simon, Federal President of the TAFE Division of the Australian Education Union^{xix}.
*"Whatever sort of regulation is in force, it must surely also do other things, such as set standards for qualifications of teachers, standards a **lot higher than a current Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.**"*

The Spring 2009 edition of The Australian TAFE Teacher features an article "TAFE teaching qualifications at the crossroads^{xx} (page 11 -12). This **article clearly articulates that the Certificate IV in TAA "has lost the trust of both profession and industry."** *"The importance of workplace assessment and delivery has increased the need for high level knowledge and skills amongst teachers. An effective teaching qualification gives teachers the capacity to operate in a range of different learning environments and contexts. A teaching qualification provides access to knowledge and theories of learning, techniques of teaching. Qualified teachers are able to adapt their skills when they encounter new, different and challenging students and environments. A teaching qualification provides teachers with the opportunity to incorporate the disciplinary knowledge of their industry occupation into the teaching which occurs in the VET environment."*

New Zealand researchers on investigating the quality and relevance in preparing Australian VET trainers and assessors found that

*There are dilemmas about what kind of training assessors need. An Australian study of the **certificates IV in Assessment and Workplace Training** and (the revised version) Training and Assessment described the way the certificate course focused on learning as a solely practical activity and **made little reference to theoretical explorations of learning, especially emerging ones.** The researchers found that in the revised version of that certificate, Training and Assessment, there is even less attention to processes of teaching and learning (Simons & Smith,2008). Page 15^{xxi}*

Others have also found.....

*[Sharon Stewart](#) 23:42, 19 October 2008 (UTC)LCN provides a consultancy service to many RTOs and focuses on the development of TAA assessment tools and delivering TAA to specific client groups. After delivery of many sessions it **is evident that TAA40104 in its current state has missed the mark for Industry Trainers and Assessors** and lets face it, isn't that who it was supposed to be designed for....Many of the performance criteria don't reflect the actual depth and breadth of skill and knowledge required.^{xxii}*

*“given the rise 5-day TAA courses”, “In summary, (and perhaps our agreed best practice) **Cert IV TAA is not fit for purpose**^{xxiii}”,*

*Gonczi (2000) and others (ANTA 2002) have noted the controversy over the minimum standards in educational background now required of those teaching and training in VET. **It has been suggested that both the current and former Certificate IV are inadequate.** In addition, casual staff have not had sufficient access to the development they need to help them teach more effectively, and make the best use of the training and organisational resources at their disposal. This is partly due to the difficulty involved in helping them to be part of the shared culture within a provider or teaching team, but some providers and work teams do this better than others. Perhaps it is time to revisit the nature and level of training (and qualifications) required to be a VET professional, and to better acknowledge the complexity of the work these professionals do. page 28*

*Guthrie Perkins and Nguyen (2006) also suggest that **VET practitioners would need to become highly skilled professionals** who:*

- *have a sophisticated pedagogical repertoire*
- *use more learner-centred, work-centred and attribute-focused approaches, rather than traditional pedagogies*
- *can work with a variety of clients, in multiple contexts and across a range of learning sites*
- *understand that the integration of learning and work is a major feature of the contemporary work environment.*

*Mitchell et al. (2006) note that many VET practitioners still need skills in implementing training packages, as well as being able to support workplace learning and take advantage of new learning technologies. **The new demand-driven and outcomes-oriented VET system requires a ‘new’ professional who is better able to meet the expectations of industry clients and individual learners.** page 29.”^{xxiv}*

Clayton reports that IBSA is reaffirming the view that the Certificate IV is appropriate as an entry level qualification, and that it cannot be expected to:

“provide a VET trainer and assessor with everything they need to know and be able to do. What it should do is provide both the essential elements of what is needed and a firm foundation on which to build further knowledge and skills, whether that comes from on-the-job-experience, or further learning or both.” (IBSA, cited in Clayton 2009: 17)^{xxv}

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Questions to consider when making your submission

1. Does the preamble to the Standards give a clear picture of the context for the reason, use and purpose of the Standards?

Reasonable

2. Do the draft Standards describe a realistic and developmental teacher professional standards continuum?

NO. See points 1 to 5 above. The draft Standards provide **implicitly descriptors**. I believe many pre-service education faculties will draw a long bow between their courses and the implicit requirements of the Standards. This can be minimised by the draft Standards having **explicit descriptors** or indicators.

3. Do the draft Standards reflect what you would expect teachers to know and be able to do for each of the four levels (graduate/proficient/highly accomplished and lead teachers)?

This is difficult to examine due to the **lack of explicit indicators** for the draft Standards.

4. Are there other descriptors the draft Standards should include?

Yes.

Ability to draw on expertise found in the community to extend or support students learning.

Ability to engage parents and carers in their primary role as the first and foremost educators of their children.

Ability to link / access service providers, to support families in time of need. (housing, health, disability support, speech pathology, etc)

5. Remembering that there will be substantial support materials, will it be possible for educators to use the standards to evaluate teacher practice?

This depends on the format. Although a shopping list approach is a starting point, holistic assessment should be the norm. A holistic assessments should then be able to identify gaps in skills or knowledge. See enclosed Teacher Aide Evidence Guide in A3 format. Also note assessments enclosed to demonstrate approaches to holistic assessment. Portfolios can be also uses, but professional observations /

conversations should be the norm. Using a principal's judgement needs to be validated and moderated to ensure for consistency.

It should be also noted the importance of the draft Standards in being used by teachers as a formative assessment process. This therefore helps potential teachers with their goal setting. This process will implicitly model effective assessment processes.

6. Any additional comments?

No

End Note

I believe the standards are an important beginning, but there is much work to do to make these Standards useful to their community. Hopefully this submission will help these Standards become a practical document, rather than a grand collection of motherhood statements.

Thank you for this opportunity.

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ⁱ “At this stage, the standards are very broad and generic.” opinion article ACER Principal Research Fellow, Dr Lawrence Ingvarson <http://www.acer.edu.au/enews/2010/04/where-is-the-profession-in-the-national-partnership-on-teacher-quality>

ⁱⁱ Bachelor Degree Guideline [24 April 2010]
http://www.aqf.edu.au/Portals/0/Documents/Handbook/AQF_Handbook_51-72.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Final_Parent_Involvement_Fact_Sheet_14732_7.pdf

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/rr433.pdf>

http://www.mindmatters.edu.au/resources_and_downloads/staff_matters/the_school_in_the_community/useful_information/school_models_of_parent_involvement_in_schools.html

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DCSF-00924-2008.pdf>

<http://www.schoolparents.canberra.net.au/Benefits%20of%20PP%20in%20Schooling.pdf>

^{iv} Leadbeater, Charles

^v <http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/maslow.htm>

^{vi} Darling-Hammond, Linda Preparing Teachers for a Changing World: What Teachers Should Learn and Be Able to Do (Editor, with John Bransford, Jossey-Bass, 2005).

^{vii} Hattie, J Teachers Make a Difference What is the research evidence (2003)

http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/Hattie_TeachersMakeADifference.pdf

^{viii} I have been witness to this approach during 2009 - 10, as a member of the Tasmanian Teacher Registration Board’s pre-course approval sub-committee.

^{ix} The author of this submission is a registered teacher in Tasmania and believes he has a reasonable understanding of standards through his past employment at TAFE Tasmania as a teacher of the [Certificate II & III in Education, Teacher Aide / Assistant](#) Accredited Courses.

^x <http://www.aqf.edu.au/>

^{xi} http://www.aqf.edu.au/Portals/0/Documents/Handbook/AQF_Handbook_51-72.pdf

^{xii} Schools First <http://www.schoolsfirst.edu.au/>

Schools First is brought to life by [NAB](#) in partnership with the [Foundation for Young Australians](#) (FYA) and [Australian Council for Educational Research](#) (ACER).

At its heart, Schools First brings together students, teachers, parents and community members to help young people grow. Launched in October 2008 by the Hon. Julia Gillard, MP, Schools First is a national awards program pledging \$15 million over three years.

The program provides:

- financial recognition of success in establishing effective school-community partnerships; and
- financial support to build stronger school-community partnerships

xiii <http://www.charlesleadbeater.net>

xiv <http://www.hcz.org/>

Regents Plan New Route to Master's in Teaching

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/21/education/21regents.html?partner=rss&emc=rss>

xv http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf

xvi School Based Apprenticeships, Northern Vocational School see
<http://www.schools.education.tas.gov.au/northernvocationalschool/about-us.aspx>

xvii <http://www.training.com.au/aqtf2007/>

xviii <http://www.ntis.gov.au/?/trainingpackage/TAA04/qualification/TAA40104/rules>

xix <http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Publications/TATT/Spr09p6-7.pdf>

xx <http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Publications/TATT/Spr09p11-12.pdf>

xxi Vaughan, K and Cameron, M. (2009) Assessment of Learning in the Workplace: A Background Paper. <http://www.nzcer.org.nz/pdfs/assessment-learning-workplace-background-paper.pdf>

xxii http://wiki.ibsa.org.au/TAA_-_Too_VET_heavy_for_industry%3F

xxiii TAA04 Training and Assessment Training Package – Its fitness for purpose - A Discussion Paper
http://wiki.ibsa.org.au/images/IBSA_Discussion_Paper_TAA_Cert_IV.pdf

xxiv Competence and competency-based training: What the literature says HUGH GUTHRIE
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION RESEARCH 2009
<http://www.ncver.edu.au/research/commercial/op04170R.pdf>

xxv http://austcolled.com.au/sites/default/files/Literature_Review_Quality_of_Teaching_in_VET_Project_26_April_2010.pdf