

Models of professional standards for beginning practitioners and their applicability to initial professional education

Barbara Preston

21 Boobialla Street O'Connor ACT 2601 Ph: (06) 247 8919 Fax:
(06) 247 8779

Kerry Kennedy

Centre for Continuing Education ANU Acton ACT 2601 Ph: (06) 249
3875 Fax: (06) 257 3421

A paper presented at the conference of the
Australian Association for Research in Education
Newcastle, 27 November to 1 December 1994

The development of competency approaches in Australia

The development and application of competency standards in Australia have their recent origins in attempts to solve particular economic, industrial relations, labour market, and vocational education and training problems which became apparent during the mid 1980s. In response to falling commodity prices and the need to restructure the Australian economy, the Commonwealth, the union movement and employers took up a broad strategy which included increasing productivity through increased skill utilisation in the workplace. The strategy involved improved and more widespread education and training, recognition of the skills held by workers, changes in work organisation, and changes in career structures to support skill development and utilisation. These elements were brought together in the industrial relations strategy of 'award restructuring'. While increased productivity provided the overarching goal, and award restructuring the industrial relations mechanism, there was lacking a simple and comprehensive way of understanding, organising and integrating the different areas of skill development, recognition and utilisation.

A framework based on competency standards was seen to meet that need. TAFE was set for reform and expansion, and thus was open to a new approach. The competencies movement developed rapidly after its introduction in the late 1980s. In occupations up to professional level, and in vocational education and training

outside universities, there are now general requirements that competency standards be developed and utilised, and that it be done according to specified formats and procedures - detailed in the National Training Board's National Competency Standards: Policy and Guidelines, Second Edition (NTB 1992) and the Board's Technical Guidance (NTB 1993).

There is no such requirement for the professions and higher education. The Commonwealth Government's position was made clear by the then Minister for Higher Education, Peter Baldwin, when he said in an address to the Australian Council of Professions in November 1992 that 'there is no Government policy stipulating that competency standards must be adopted by professions or

incorporated into higher education programs preparing students for the professions' (Baldwin 1992).

The development of competency standards in about twenty professions has been auspiced by the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR) in the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training, and several professions have developed standards independently of NOOSR. NOOSR has produced publications and carried out supportive activities which promote consistency with the National Training Board (NTB) framework, format and procedures. Professions are free to develop or not develop standards, may present standards in a way which they believe is most appropriate, and are free to use them as they see fit.

Competency standards are thus for professions (and universities providing professional education) a tool to be used if and when appropriate. Other tools might be a better alternative in particular circumstances, and competency standards may be insufficient alone to do a particular job. Competency standards are no panacea, nor are they an unavoidable imposition.

The development of competency standards for teaching

The draft competency framework for beginning teaching was developed under the auspices of the National Project on the Quality of Teaching and Learning (NPQTL) in 1992 and 1993. The NPQTL was a three year tripartite project which arose out of award restructuring negotiations in 1989 and 1990. It was established early in 1991 with a governing board composed of representatives of the government and nongovernment school authorities and teacher unions, the Commonwealth, and the ACTU. Its charter covered the complex professional issues associated with award restructuring - teachers' work organisation, professional education and career development, and recognition of

qualifications. As in a number of other professions, initial impetus for the development of competency standards for teaching came in part from the 'mutual recognition' discussions among Australian Heads of Government meeting at Special Premiers' Conferences which became a formal agreement in May 1992 (Phillips 1994, page 11).

The governing board of the NPQTL believed that, if properly and appropriately used, national competency standards could

- assist teachers to improve their work organisation and their workplace performance by encouraging them to reflect critically on their own practice, individually and collaboratively
- inform professional development to support improvements to teaching
- boost teachers' self esteem and their commitment to teaching by enhancing their awareness of the nature of their teaching competence
- underpin a national approach to improving teacher education programs, including curriculum and pedagogy
- underpin a national approach to improving induction programs in schools and systems
- possibly form the basis for a nationally consistent approach to registration and probation
- provide a basis for communication about the nature of teachers' work and the quality of teaching and learning within the education community and among education interest groups.

(Peacock 1993, page 8)

The NPQTL commissioned three consultancies to work on the development of a set of competencies. The September 1993 edition of Unicorn includes articles written by the three consortiums which carried out the consultancies (Louden 1993, Eltis and Turney 1993, and Joan Abbott-Chapman et al 1993), as well as an introduction by the director of the NPQTL (Peacock 1993), and responses from a researcher, a teacher educator, a teacher, and a teacher unionist (Batten, Deer, Paull and Richards 1993). The results of these projects were distilled and field tested, and published in the Draft Competency Framework for Beginning Teaching (NPQTL 1994).

The framework is generally consistent with the 'integrated' (nonbehaviourist) approach to competency standards, and with the format developed under the auspices of the National Training Board and NOOSR. However, it remains a 'framework', rather than a comprehensive set of 'standards' with appropriately specified core, options and specialisations; 'range indicators'; and 'levels'. The ways competencies can be conceptualised and the

NTB format will now be outlined. Then possible relationships between competency standards and initial professional education will be discussed in more detail.

Conceptualisation of competencies and competency standards

There have been historical tensions between models of competency standards and their use based on two quite different understandings of learning and action, education and work.

The first has its origins in the efficiency movement of the 1920s, in particular the work of Frederick Taylor, with theoretical support from B F Skinner, which has developed into the widespread and influential 'behaviourist' approach to education and management. This was the basis of the Competency Based Teacher Education (CBTE) initiatives in the US in the 1960s and 1970s, and many of the competency-related initiatives in vocational education and training around the world over recent decades. It also informed the thinking of some of the early work which evolved into the current competency-based systems in Australia. The seductive simplicity of a behaviourist approach means that it continues to be a powerful force.

The alternative to behaviourism draws from the progressive education movement, in particular the work of John Dewey in his 1915 book, *Democracy and Education* (Dewey 1966), and is informed by more recent developments in cognitive psychology, learning theory, and related understandings of purposeful action, and is consistent with participative work organisation. It takes into account the attributes of individuals (such as their knowledge, physical and social skills, values and dispositions), the performance of tasks (which can be very broadly defined and can involve professional judgement), and the context of practice (which can be complex and unpredictable). Competencies are the combination of personal attributes (such as knowledge; personal, physical and social capabilities; attitudes and dispositions) which enable competent performance in particular contexts.

This 'integrated' approach is becoming established as the theoretical basis of more recent developments in Australia. It is generally consistent with the conceptualisation, format, framework, application and assessment of competencies and competency standards developed and auspiced by the NTB (see NTB 1992), though behaviourism appears to continue to influence some of the material and practices. Characteristics of behaviourist and integrated approaches to competencies are indicated in Table

1, which is based on work by Preston and Walker (1993) where the term 'holistic' is used instead of 'integrated'.

There are thus important distinctions between competencies (described in units and elements - see below), the attributes which constitute them, and performance.

Competency standards are the link between personal attributes and the actual tasks to be carried out in a workplace (or in other arenas of life). Competence is thus a relation linking the quite different sorts of things of 'abilities or capabilities of people and the satisfactory completion of appropriate tasks' (Hager and Beckett 1994, page 2). It is a slippery notion, and, as Bowden and Masters found in their investigation of the implications for higher education of a competency-based approach to education and training (Bowden and Masters 1993), there is often a tendency to focus on the tasks (which may involve a tendency to behaviourism), or to focus on the attributes (a traditional

'academic' approach to vocational education).

Hager and Beckett indicate the practical importance of recognising the relational nature of competence:

Only by taking proper account of the essentially relational nature of the concept of competence can the holistic richness of work be captured in competency standards (Hager and Beckett 1994, page 2).

Table 1: Characteristics of Behaviourist and Integrated approaches to Competencies

Nature of competencies and relations between competencies

Behaviourist Approach

Individual, specific, discrete, and defined in terms of behaviour only

Integrated Approach

Competencies are complex combinations of personal attributes, enabling the performance of a variety of tasks. They are the nexus between attributes and performance in particular contexts. They form coherent 'structures of competence'.

Evidence of competencies

Behaviorist Approach

Direct observation of performance of relevant activities - which are assumed to give direct and clear indication of whether or not the competency is held.

Integrated Approach

A range of evidence may be sought, in general none can give certainty

that relevant competencies are held. What evidence to use and what to make of it would be indicated by relevant theories and determined by the judgement of the assessor.

Relation between knowledge and competencies

Behaviourist Approach

Required knowledge is inferred directly from behaviourally defined competencies.

Integrated Approach

Knowledge exists and can be understood separately from the exercise of competencies. Knowledge can be understood as having a complex and coherent structure.

Relation between competency statements and the education or training program

Behaviourist Approach

Competency statements indicate directly the content, structure and assessment criteria of education and training programs. There can be little diversity, local flexibility, experimentation and development.

Integrated Approach

There can be broad coherence between structures of competence and education and training programs, and programs will generally have overall coherence. Programs can, however, be diverse in their structure and curriculum, be flexible, and involve experimentation and research.

Variation in specification of competency-based standards according to purpose

Behaviourist Approach

There can be little variation in the way standards are specified.

Integrated Approach

The way standards are specified can vary significantly according to

purpose. In particular, for 'summative' purposes standards can be explicit and public, and assessment procedures rigorous, valid and reliable; for 'formative' purposes a more flexible and open approach is possible.

The 'format' for structuring competencies into units and elements

The National Training Board has developed a standard format for the structure and content of competency standards.

Competency standards are built from a collection of broad 'units' or areas of competence (such as the following example from the competency framework

for teaching: 'Using and developing knowledge and values') which are subdivided into 'elements' (such as 'The teacher engages the students actively in developing knowledge'). For each element there will be a number of 'performance criteria' which are 'evaluative statements which specify the required level of performance' (NTB 1993, page 31). There are also 'range indicators' which indicate contexts in which the performance criteria are expected to apply. There may also be 'evidence guides' or 'cues' to assist with interpretation and assessment.

The simple tree structure of discrete units of competency composed of several discrete elements could inhibit an understanding of competency as involving a more complex structure, especially incorporating knowledge. This has been recognised by the NTB:

provision is needed for including and/or linking broader areas of knowledge which underpin a particular group of units or the whole group of units at the ASF level in a standard (NTB 1992, page 35)

The matter can also be addressed if the substantive content of units reflects a recognition that several different 'tasks', which may be of varying levels of generality, can be carried out at the same time. This is done in the teacher competencies, and is discussed further below.

There are a variety of ways of 'packaging' units using various combinations of core, options and specialisations. The Draft Competency Framework for Beginning Teaching is all core - that is, all of the elements are considered essential for all beginning school teachers.

The Australian Standards Framework developed by the NTB provides broad descriptors for competency levels from 1 (initial 'unskilled' entry to employment) to 8 (highest level of competency and responsibility in employment). Professional entry after a course of initial professional education at university level (and perhaps after an induction or clinical period) is generally at level 7. The alignment of the units of competency to levels in the Framework is an important component in the overall competency approach auspiced by the NTB. It is relevant to matters such as industrial/salary classifications, the depth of understanding involved in courses, levels of credentials awarded, the structure of workplaces and work organisation, and the matching of individuals to positions or courses. The descriptions of competency levels 4, 7 and 8 provided by the NTB (NTB 1992, page 18-19) are shown in Table 2.

The Draft Competency Framework for Beginning Teaching, like many other sets of standards for professions, does not specify levels, and level seven could be assumed.

Table 2: Competency Levels 4, 7 and 8 in the Australian Standards Framework

Level 4

Work is likely to be without supervision with general guidance on progress and outcomes sought. The work of others may be supervised or teams guided or facilitated. Responsibility for and limited organisation of the work of others may be involved.

Competency at this level involves the application of knowledge with depth in some areas and a broad range of skills. There is a wide range of tasks and roles in a variety of contexts, with complexity in the range and choice of actions required.

Competencies are normally used within routines, methods and procedures where discretion and judgement are required, for both self and others, in planning and selection of equipment, work organisation, services, actions, and achieving outcomes within time constraints.

Level 7

Work is likely to be in accordance with a broad plan, budget or strategy. Responsibility and broad ranging accountability for the structure, management and output of the work or others and/or functions may be involved.

Competency at this level involves the self-directed development and mastery of broad and/or specialised areas of knowledge with a range of skills. Application is to major, broad or specialised functions in highly varied and/or highly specialised contexts.

Competencies are normally used independently and are non-routine. Significant high level judgement is required in planning, design, operational, technical and/or management functions.

Level 8

Work is likely to involve full responsibility and accountability for all aspects of the work of others and functions including planning, budgeting and strategy where required.

Competency at this level involves self-directed development and a range of knowledge and skills. Application is to major functions both broad and/or specialised within highly varied and/or specialised contexts.

Competencies are normally used with full independence and in contexts and combinations of great variability. The highest level of complex judgement is applied in planning, design, technical and/or management functions.

Assessment of competence

Competencies held by individuals cannot be absolutely known, and

competence cannot be directly observed. Rather, there may be evidence which more or less strongly indicates the presence (or absence) of competencies (which might be of varying strength, depth or complexity). Appropriate evidence may include performance of real or simulated tasks, supplemented by justifications of actions and explanations of the underlying knowledge and theoretical understandings. Other methods of assessment include records of achievement and prior performance or portfolios, and traditional ways of assessing knowledge and understanding. Assessors make judgements about the adequacy and appropriateness of particular forms of evidence on a case by

case basis (Hager et al 1994, and Gonczi et al 1993).

Assessment involving performance in complex real life (or well-simulated) situations can provide evidence for competencies involving values, attitudes, personal dispositions, and social and personal capabilities (such as sensitivity to the emotional states of others, or perseverance). Unlike simple propositional knowledge, for example, such attributes are well-nigh impossible to assess out of the context of application. All such measures would be quite indirect, and they are often easy to fake. However, the complex combination of such attributes with other attributes into competencies which are exercised in realistic situations can be more readily assessed - even if that assessment is still a matter of the assessor's judgement. Hager and Bennett note that 'Empathising with the patient' is not difficult to assess in real holistic work contexts where it is an important part of overall performance. What is difficult is assessing 'empathy' in the abstract. (Hager and Bennett 1994, page 17)

Models of substantive content of competency standards

There are many different ways in which the substantive content of a set of standards can be structured. It is the units which indicate that structure. Units 'describe a broad area of professional performance' (Heywood et al 1992, page 32), based on a notion of competency which, according to the NTB Guidelines, 'embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments. . . (and) encompasses

- the requirement to perform individual tasks (task skills);
- the requirement to manage a number of different tasks within the job (task management skills);
- the requirement to respond to irregularities and breakdowns in routine (contingency management skills);
- the requirement to deal with the responsibilities and expectations of work environment (job/role environment skills), including working with others.' (NTB 1992, page 29)

'Broad area of performance' can be understood across many different dimensions. A common approach is to focus on performance itself,

considering the overall functions of an occupation as well as some specific tasks, and to sort the evidence from such consideration into, say, roughly ten units.

Most professions appear to have thought it necessary to also get under the surface of performance, and at the level of units (or elements) to indicate more general competencies which underlie the overt areas of practice which may be covered by other units. Such units usually refer to matters such as the application of the broad 'knowledge base' and ethical principles of the profession, and the development of the individual professional and the profession as a whole. This approach has the potential of recognising within the standards the important aspect of so much professional (and other) practice that a range of tasks or intentional actions are often being performed at the same time - from the apparently simple and obvious to the more subtle formation of the occupation and its role in society and the development of the individuals as they reflect on their practice.

An analysis of sets of standards from a number of professions (see Australian Association of Occupational Therapists 1994; Australian Nursing Council 1994; Scheeres et al 1993; NPQTL 1994) indicates units and elements in several general areas (not all of which are included in each set of standards):

- the application of the knowledge base and ethical principles of the

profession;

- the processes of central practice - needs identification, program planning, implementation and evaluation;
- management of practice and related functions - including formal accountability, administration, supervision, teamwork and communication;
- reflective practice - including own professional development and research contribution;
- contribution to the profession through, for example, involvement in training and mentoring of others, participation in professional associations to improve the work of the profession and the industry, communicating the work of the profession to the wider community.

It is quite possible that competencies from each of these five areas may be simultaneously involved in the work of an individual (or team) at a particular time.

Competency standards and initial professional education

More than two years ago Bowden and Masters (1993) surveyed and held discussion groups with university academics in a range of professional education fields (including Education) and found that university academics were generally negative about the implications of a competency-based approach for higher education. In contrast, a NOOSR study (1994) which has just been released found that academics involved in or aware of competency

projects in the professions with which they are associated were very positive about the potential of the application of competency standards to professional education.

Competency standards can provide a useful general framework for education planning, curriculum development, and/or course accreditation or classification. Educational programs, and usually the curriculum documents on which they are based, will contain much more specific detail than is appropriate in competency standards. The structure of the educational program may be quite different from the structure of the standards.

Competency standards are not curriculum documents. Entry-level competency standards specify what new graduates should be able to do in the workplace, but say nothing about how that state is to be achieved. Hence for providers of professional education there is as much flexibility as ever to decide what material to teach, how to teach it and how to assess it. . . (However) because the competency standards are a powerful guide to providers of professional education, without being a curriculum document, they provide common ground for discussion between providers, registering authorities and the profession which does not exist now. (Heywood et al 1992, page 46)

Competency standards (or a general competency approach) can provide a powerful tool for the improvement of professional education courses in at least two particular areas.

First, they provide a framework for integration of different units or aspects of courses - especially theoretical or knowledge-based units and practical or clinical units. Traditional courses often lack coherence, and are no more than the aggregation of the various parts. A competency approach focuses on the bringing together and practical integration of attributes (such as knowledge gained in different subjects or units, and personal and social skills developed in other units) to enable effective performance (in practical and clinical units). Not only should the course ensure that appropriate attributes are gained (the student knows certain things, for example), but also that those attributes can be appropriately combined and put into practice. This has implications for the role and

status of university staff and practitioners involved in the practicum - what is expected of them, how they are trained, how they collaborate with other staff involved in the course. It has implications for the curriculum and assessment of the practicum, including students' understandings of what is expected of them and their self assessment.

Second, a competencies approach can focus serious attention on pedagogy, and on the different learning outcomes resulting from different pedagogies. To consider a simple example: a unit covering some aspect of chemistry could be taught by lecture and individual library research or by group activities. The latter may also develop competencies related to working in

teams, sensitivity to others, and so on, in addition to the knowledge of chemistry. Such competencies are of vital importance in effective professional practice (whether it is in the health field, agriculture extension service, or science education), and professional education should see them as important course objectives - to be appropriately developed and assessed.

An assessment of workforce needs using a set of competency standards with a range of levels and core, option and specialisation units, can be very useful in course planning. Such planning would involve determining the substantive content of the curriculum in broad terms; the levels of difficulty or depth of the material and the level of award appropriate to the successful completion of the course; decisions about course structure and core requirements and options; planning student numbers in particular courses and optional subjects, and determining student recruitment and selection strategies. Competency standards can be utilised for educational planning purposes from the level of individual courses to the over-all national endeavour.

It would be possible to classify existing and new undergraduate and graduate courses according to their general alignment with units in the standards in terms of content and levels. Such a classification may be necessary, but not sufficient, for accreditation of a course. In addition to the broad classification of the course, accreditation requires an assessment of educational quality, and accreditation processes can involve valuable collegial interaction, subtle critical analysis of courses and their delivery, and support in the improvement and further development of courses. Competency standards could only play a small part in such processes.

Competency standards can be a useful tool for recognising prior learning (RPL) for purposes such as selecting students for entry into the course, for advanced standing (credit transfer), and to assist student choice of options by giving them a clearer understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses in relation to what the standards indicate are appropriate for beginning practitioners.

At a simple level a set of competency standards may indicate areas of content which are currently not in courses which perhaps should be. Such areas are often of a 'generic' nature such as communication, working with others, task management, and so on. Others may involve the ethical and legal aspects of practice, and others seemingly mundane aspects like maintaining financial records and general business management for self-employed professionals. There is often a legitimate argument that not all that is covered in a set of standards for beginning practitioners is appropriate for a formal initial professional education course.

Finally, courses in initial professional education are often developed with a great deal of considered contributions by a number of professional educators and practitioners in the relevant field, and may have input from

students, recent graduates, and academics in other fields. They are often

reviewed and updated or otherwise modified in response to feedback from the field and new developments. Sets of competency standards are developed by particular people at particular times - while care might be taken to ensure diverse, informed involvement, and the careful integration of input, the standards remain social constructs and are not absolute. Thus a consideration of the relationships between a set of competency standards and initial professional education may indicate gaps, biases or inappropriate structure, levels or packaging in the set of standards. This could lead to significant improvement of the set of standards and make them more useful for a range of other tasks.

Competency standards for teaching

There are a number of sets of competency standards or attributes for (beginning) teaching and related occupations which can be compared with the Draft Competency Framework for Beginning Teaching [1]. These sets of standards, in full or in part, are provided in Appendix 1 to this paper - the number after each reference refers to the number given the set in the Appendix. The other sets include those currently being used in Australia for school teachers such as the Victorian key selection criteria (Victorian Department of School Education 1994) [2] and the NSW 'Desirable Attributes of Beginning Teachers' (Boston 1993) [3]; other Australian standards for teachers/trainers such as those for adult basic education teachers (Scheeres et al 1993) [4] and those for workplace trainers (Competency Standards Body - Workplace Trainers 1992) [5]; and overseas standards for teachers such as the 'expectations for beginning teachers' synthesised from the literature by Anne Reynolds of the Educational Testing Service in the USA (Reynolds 1992) [6], and, though not presented as 'competencies', the categories of the knowledge base for teachers developed by Lee Shulman in the mid 1980s (Shulman 1987) [7], the standards developed in the US by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (McFarlane 1994) [8], and those developed as part of the review of initial teacher training in Northern Ireland (Department of Education, Northern Ireland 1993) [9]. Some of these sets of standards also include 'performance criteria', 'cues', or 'indicators of effective practice' which add substantial detail to what appears in the Appendix.

There are a lot of similarities between some of the sets of standards, but there are also significant differences. Some of those differences reflect different purposes. For example, the NSW and Victorian sets are concerned with selection for recruitment, while the ABE set has wider purposes such as promoting best practice, the clarification of the field and the development of practitioners throughout their careers. Standards strictly oriented to beginning practice may (but do not need to) exclude competencies and attributes relevant to long term development in a career. Initial professional education is concerned with preparation for a career,

not just the early period of practice, thus such limited sets of standards are clearly not a sufficient guide to curriculum development and assessment in initial courses.

The differences among all the sets in the Appendix make obvious the fact that each set is a social construct, developed by particular people at a particular time, and could be quite different. They are thus always open to contest and refinement.

In this paper we are concerned with the differences which have particular relevance to initial teacher education. Some major criteria or issues include:

- Whether the set of standards refers to superficial (overt) tasks or to complex (deep) tasks which clearly imply complex attributes
- Whether attributes (such as knowledge) and tasks are separated or

integrated

- Whether the set or key units or elements imply an 'uncritical' view of the work of the profession, and if so, what is that view (all sets of standards will, to a greater or lesser extent, imply a particular view of the work of the profession)
- Whether the set or key units or elements have (or emphasise) an individual or collective view of the work of the profession
- Whether the set or key units or elements have (or emphasise) a narrow or wide view of professionals' work.

These first and second of these will be looked at with reference to the sets of standards in Appendix 1. The other three are important issues for the review of standards, but will not be considered here.

Sets of standards which are only concerned with discrete, overt tasks have limited application to professional education - their major uses are related to work organisation and specific training, where more complex sets of standards would probably be confusing and be less useful. The workplace trainers standards [5] would fall into this category.

Sets which indicate complex, multi-layered tasks and clearly imply complex attributes are likely to be particularly valuable for initial professional education. It is generally important that the tasks and attributes are integrated (in the way discussed earlier in the paper). The Northern Ireland set [9], while covering many vitally important aspects of valuable knowledge, capabilities and tasks of teachers, maintains a separation between 'professional characteristics', 'professional knowledge' and professional skills'. The report provides a general model of how these are integrated (concentric circles with 'professional characteristics in the core, then 'professional knowledge', then an outer ring of 'professional skills' leading to actual practice (DENI page 6). This has some similarities with the 'relational model' developed by Bowden and Masters (1993, page 156) where 'generic capacities' would be at the core,

then 'discipline based capacities' such as knowledge skills and attitudes, then observable practice. Valuable (and necessary) as such models are, an important challenge is to link specific 'core' attributes with practice. This certainly cannot be done in any comprehensive way, but it is, perhaps, where a great value of a competencies approach (based on an 'integrated' model of competencies) to initial professional education lies. Consider the place of 'foundation' studies in a course. The history, philosophy and sociology (including social role) of a profession and its work may be considered outside the reach of a set of standards - and thus considered unnecessary in a course of professional preparation. This has been the experience with the application of some sets of standards developed on a behaviourist model. Yet a nonbehaviourist, integrated conceptualisation of competence, which is based on an appreciation of the rich and complex nature of effective professional work, would have incorporated in their standards (implicitly if not explicitly) the understandings and dispositions developed in such foundation studies. Perhaps a challenge for the educators of the profession is to integrate such understandings in a more substantial way with the more direct preparation for professional practice. It is such areas of 'theory' which many beginning (and experienced) professionals feel were irrelevant and unnecessary parts of their initial professional education. 'Traditional' initial professional education courses are based on discrete disciplines/subjects, each with separate assessment processes and little if any concern about how the learning in one area fits with another - there is silence about 'how the whole curriculum relates to the sum of its parts' (Heywood 1994, page 3). Foundation subjects (and general studies) tend to be among the most removed from the practical/clinical parts of the course. Sets of standards which can assist with appropriate underlying course coherence and the strategic integration of student learning (competency formation) may be most

valuable. It is necessary, but not sufficient, for, say, students to have 'awareness that there are differing views about the aims of education' (Northern Ireland set, 1.4.1), they also need to be able to incorporate that awareness into their practice. Thus the practicum must be more thoroughly integrated into the course as a whole (for a detailed discussion of such integration see Evans 1991).

The Draft Competency Framework, like competency standards in other professions, has the potential for significantly affecting the nature and role of the practicum.

There are several problems for initial teacher education which particularly affect the practicum:

- frequently a 'distance' and a lack of common understandings (and even antagonism and lack of mutual respect) between university based teacher educators and practicing teachers;
- frequently a lack of appropriate resourcing for the practicum - from both universities and school authorities (for example, even when universities have resources and programs for the inservicing of supervising

teachers the teachers many not have the time to participate; or when teachers want to and are able to participate in such activities the universities may not be able to provide them; or the universities may not be able to give staff the time to spend in schools for effective collaboration to be worked through between the university staff, the school staff and the student teachers);

- a low status for the practicum, and an lack of adequate integration between the practicum and the rest of the initial teacher education program.

On this context, the Competency Framework has the potential to be useful in the following ways:

- as a common framework for collaboration between university staff, school staff and student teachers - facilitates common understandings of intended outcomes and appropriate activities/tasks/processes; may provide a framework for the inservicing of school staff;
- as a guide for the organisation of school experience: for example, ensuring activities involving team work with teachers and non-teaching staff; communication with parents; monitoring students (over time); using a range of strategies for teaching and assessing; planning in relation to school goals; reflection for improvement; and so on;
- as a framework for student teacher reflection, self-assessment and planning;
- as a framework for the assessment (formative and/or summative) of student teachers;
- generally - to help make the practice of teaching 'explicit'.

Most importantly, a 'competencies approach' can powerfully change the place of the practicum in initial professional education. As a general model, other elements of the course are about the development of attributes - the knowledge, values, dispositions etc which are necessary but not sufficient for effective practice. The difficult task is to so develop such attributes, and to combine them (or create the conditions for effective combination) so that the competencies for effective practice are developed. To often practicing teachers (especially beginning teachers) have difficulty drawing on the 'theoretical' aspects of their course in their everyday practice - often leading to expressions of dissatisfaction with their preservice course and a wariness of anything which smacks too much of 'theory'. A competencies approach makes it clear that knowledge ('theory') on its own is not enough, and (equally important) practice must draw from that knowledge (and other attributes) to be truly effective. An implication of such an approach is that the practicum must be powerfully integrated with the rest of the course - not only with the curriculum/method subjects,

but with the foundation and discipline subjects. A competencies approach can thus be a powerful tool for developing coherence and focus in the course as a whole.

The application of this Framework, or of any competencies approach, may not

be the only way to facilitate the course coherence and focus; the effective and efficient collaboration between the parties; the clarification and elevation of the role of the practicum; the assistance with development of reflective practitioners; the effectiveness and appropriateness of assessment, and so on, noted above. However, it is a tool which is out in the public arena, with an increasing level of understanding and acceptance among the teaching profession, school authorities, and university-based teacher educators. For some time, at least, application generally needs to be tentative and open for review. And, of course, the Framework itself will be open to periodic review.

The Australian Council of Deans of Education policy on competency standards is as follows:

The ACDE believes that standards of occupational competence have a valuable role in the articulation between education and work (and other activities), and in work organisation and career structures, contingent upon them being informed by an integrated, holistic, developmental, elaborative and future-oriented approach to competence, and if standards are a 'backdrop' rather than a direct prescription of curriculum and assessment'. (ACDE 1994, page 9)

Other organisations such as the teacher unions have similar qualified positions. The emphasis is on value of competency standards for helping achieve worthwhile purposes. That can only be assessed by careful application and evaluation.

The outcome of such assessments might include suggestions regarding how the framework might be most effectively used (in the form of guidelines and protocols, or less formal suggestions and case studies), and suggestions about how the framework itself might be modified. It is possible that modifications of the standards may be useful for some purposes, but not for others.

The history of competency standards and teacher education in the 1960s and 1970s makes many in teacher education reluctant to be involved in what they believe may at best be a waste of valuable time. However, the different conceptualisation of competencies, and the over-riding focus on the effective use of any competency standards for worthwhile purposes, makes involvement now potentially very rewarding.

Note

This paper draws significantly from an unpublished paper by Barbara Preston, 'Competency standards and initial professional education: the case of school teaching' (dated October 1994).

References

Abbott-Chapman, Joan; et al (1993) 'Researching Teacher Competencies: Research Project 3 - Teacher Competencies, a developmental model' Unicorn,

Vol 19, No 3, September, pp 37-48

Ash, Susan; Gonczi, Andrew; and Hager, Paul (1992) Combining Research Methodologies to Develop Competency-Based Standards for Dietitians: A Case Study for the Professions. National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition Research Paper No 6. Canberra: AGPS

Australian Association of Occupational Therapists (1994) Competency Standards for Entry-level Occupational Therapists: Draft. Fitzroy, Vic: AAOT

Australian Council of Deans of Education (1994) Statement of Principles and General Policy. Magill, SA: ACDE

Australian Nursing Council (1993) National Competencies for the Registered and Enrolled Nurse in Recommended Domains. Canberra: ANC

Batten, Margaret; Deer, Christine; Paull, Yvonne, and Richards, Rosemary (1993) 'Researching Teacher Competencies: Four Forum Responses' Unicorn, Vol 19, No 3, September, pp 49-58

Boston, Ken (Chair) (1993) Desirable Attributes of Beginning Teachers: Report of the Ministerial Advisory Council on Teacher Education and Quality of Teaching to Virginia Chadwick, Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs. Sydney: NSW Department of School Education

Bowden, John A; and Masters, Geofferey N (1993) Implications for Higher Education of a Competency-Based Approach to Education and Training. Canberra: AGPS

Dewey, J (1966) Democracy and Education. New York: Free Press (originally 1915)

Eltis, Ken; and Turney, Cliff (1993) 'Researching Teacher Competencies: Research Project 3 - Defining generic competencies for beginning teachers' Unicorn, Vol 19, No 3, September, pp 24-36

Emery, Cathy (1993) Developing National Competency Standards in the Community Services Industry: A Guide. Report of the Community Services Industry Competency Methodology Project. Hawthorn, Vic: Social and Community Services Industry Training Board Ltd

Evans, Glen (1991) 'Judging approaches to preservice teacher education by using models of knowledge and skill development', in Improving the Quality of the Teaching Profession: International Yearbook on Teacher Education 1990. Singapore: Institute of Education for the International Council on Education for Teaching

Gonczi, Andrew; Hager, Paul; and Oliver, Liz (1990) Establishing

Competency-Based Standards in the Professions. National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition Research Paper No 1. Canberra: AGPS

Gonczi, Andrew; Hager, Paul; and Athanasou, James (1993) The Development of Competency-Based Assessment Strategies for the Professions. National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition Research Paper No 8. Canberra: AGPS

Hager, Paul; and Beckett, David (1994) 'Philosophical underpinnings of the integrated conception of competence'. Forthcoming in Educational Philosophy and Theory

Hager, Paul; Athanasou, James; and Gonczi, Andrew (1994) Assessment Technical Manual. Canberra: AGPS

Heywood, Lindsay (1994) 'How competency standards could guide curriculum development'. A paper presented at the Professional Education and Development Conference (IIR), Sydney, 14 - 15 Septembers

Heywood, Lindsay; Gonczi, Andrew; and Hager, Paul (1992) A Guide to Development of Competency Standards for Professions. National Office of

Overseas Skills Recognition Research Paper No 7. Canberra: AGPS

Louden, William (1993) 'Researching Teacher Competencies: Research Project 1 - Portraying competent teaching - can competency-based standards help?' Unicorn, Vol 19, No 3, September, pp 13-23

Masters, Geofferey N; and McCurry, Doug (1990) Competency-Based Assessment in the Professions. National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition Research Paper No 2. Canberra: AGPS

McFarlane, Lesley (1994) Report to the Queensland Teachers' Union on investigation in the USA of the certification processes of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; accreditation of teacher education courses by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education; and establishment of standards for beginning teachers by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium. Brisbane: QTU

National Community Services and Health Industry Training Advisory Board (1993) Draft National Competency Standards for the Youth Sector. Sydney: NCS & HITAB

National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition (NOOSR) (1994) The Implications of the Implementation of National Competency Standards in the Professions: Draft Report. Canberra: NOOSR, DEET, September

National Project on the Quality of Teaching and Learning (1994) Draft Competency Framework for Beginning Teaching as Developed by the National Project on the Quality of Teaching and Learning. Canberra: DEET

(unpublished)

National Training Board (1992) National Competency Standards: Policy and Guidelines. Second Edition. Canberra: NTB

National Training Board (1993) Technical Guidance. Canberra: NTB

Peacock, Dianne (1993) 'Researching Teacher Competencies: The Development of National Competency Standards for Teaching', Unicorn, Vol 19, No 3, September, pp 7-12

Preston, Barbara; and Walker, Jim (1993) 'Competency-Based Standards in the Professions and Higher Education' in Cherry Collins (ed) Competencies: The Competencies Debate in Australian Education and Training. Canberra: Australian College of Education

Reynolds, Anne (1992) 'What is Competent Beginning Teaching? A Review of the Literature', Review of Educational Research, Vol 62, No 62, Spring, pp 1 - 35

Scheeres, Hermine; Gonczi, Andrew; Hager, Paul; and Morley-Warner, Terri (1993) The Adult Basic Education Profession and Competence: Promoting best Practice. Final Report. Sydney: University of Technology, Sydney

Shulman, Lee S (1987) 'Knowledge and Teaching: Foundations of the New Reform' Harvard Educational Review. Vol 57, No 1 February, pp 1 - 22

Victorian Department of School Education (1994) Teaching Service ACT 1981: Teaching Service Order 1994: Order No. 148. Published in Education News Supplement, 10 November, page 9

APPENDIX 1

Competency standards for teaching and related professions

1. Draft national competency framework for beginning teaching (NPQTL 1994) *

1. USING AND DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND VALUES

1.1 Knows content and its relationship to educational goals

1.2 Understands the relationship between processes of inquiry and content knowledge

1.3 Understands how students develop and learn

1.4 Active in developing and applying professional knowledge

1.5 Operates from an appropriate ethical position

1.6 Operates within the framework of law and regulation

1.7 Values diversity, all students have right to learn

2. COMMUNICATING, INTERACTING AND WORKING WITH STUDENTS AND OTHERS
 - 2.1 Communicates effectively with students
 - 2.2 Develops positive relationships with students
 - 2.3 Recognises and responds to individual differences
 - 2.4 encourages positive student behaviour
 - 2.5 Responds to role in the team responsible for students' education
 - 2.6 Works effectively with parents and others responsible for the care of students
 - 2.8 Communicates with school support staff, the profession and the wider community

3. PLANNING AND MANAGING THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS
 - 3.1 Plans purposeful programs to achieve specific student learning outcomes
 - 3.2 Matches content, teaching approaches and student development and learning in planning
 - 3.3 Designs teaching programs to motivate and engage students
 - 3.4 Structures learning tasks effectively
 - 3.5 Demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness
 - 3.6 Establishes clear, challenging and achievable expectations for students
 - 3.7 Fosters independent and co-operative learning
 - 3.8 Engages the students actively in developing knowledge

4. MONITORING AND ASSESSING STUDENT PROGRESS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES
 - 4.1 Knows the educational basis and role of assessment in teaching
 - 4.2 Uses assessment strategies that take account of relationships between teaching, learning and assessment
 - 4.3 Monitors student progress and provides feedback on progress
 - 4.4 Maintains records of student progress
 - 4.5 Reports on student progress to parents and others responsible for the care of students

5. REFLECTING, EVALUATING AND PLANNING FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
 - 5.1 Critically reflects on own practice to improve the quality of teaching and learning
 - 5.2 Evaluates teaching and learning programs
 - 5.3 Plans to meet longer term personal and school goals
 - 5.4 Develops professional skills and capacity.

* Note: These sets of standards also include 'performance criteria', 'cues', or 'indicators of effective practice' which add substantial detail to what appears above.

2. Victorian key selection criteria (Victorian Department of School Education 1994)

1. Demonstrated high quality classroom teaching skills which enable all students to achieve their full potential
2. Demonstrated high level of knowledge of the relevant key learning areas and the way students learn
3. Ability to incorporate the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills as an integral part of the key learning area or age group which is being taught.
4. Ability to assess and monitor student achievement and to provide reports to parents which keep them regularly and fully informed of their children's progress.
5. Ability to develop constructive relationships with students which engender positive attitudes to learning.
6. Ability to successfully implement and evaluate curriculum initiatives in accordance with the Curriculum and Standards Framework.
7. Ability to contribute to the identification of student learning needs and a commitment to the development and implementation of programs in accordance with the key goals and priorities established by a school in the development of its charter.
8. Capacity to respond at the school level to emerging educational needs and priorities, eg learning technologies, LOTE, science and technology, sport and physical education.
9. Demonstrated capacity to reflect upon their professional practice to continually improve the quality of their teaching and capacity to enhance students learning through the application of skills, insights and expertise derived from professional development activities.
10. Demonstrated high level communication and interpersonal skills when relating to students, parents and other teachers.
11. Demonstrated exemplary values and attitudes appropriate to responsible professional practice and the intellectual, physical and social development of students.

3. NSW Desirable Attributes of Beginning Teachers (Boston 1993)

1. ETHICS OF TEACHING

All beginning teachers should be able to demonstrate that they::

- 1.1 act to foster each student's positive self-esteem, well-being, competence and unique potential;
- 1.2 recognise and appreciate the values held by individual students, by families, by groups of students and by the school's community; including how those values vary and how they relate to teachers' values and the work of the school;
- 1.3 are alert to the consequences of their own behaviour and encourage students to develop the same awareness;
- 1.4 believe that all their students have the capacity to learn and should be treated justly and equitably;
- 1.5 understand the responsibilities and obligations of belonging to the profession of teaching.

2. THE CONTENT OF TEACHING

All beginning teachers should be able to demonstrate that they:

2.1 have an understanding of how students develop and how they learn;
2.2 have a strong and developing knowledge and understanding of what they have to teach and how the subject matter changes over time;
2.3 have an understanding of learning and teaching as preparation of students for lifelong learning and for developing and upgrading skills areas in a range of occupational categories including vocational employment opportunities;

2.4 show developing skills in adapting their teaching to suit the individual learning needs of all their students in the context in which they are teaching, noting the special needs of:

- girls
- gifted and talented students
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- students with disabilities, learning difficulties or behaviour disorders
- students from low socio-economic backgrounds
- students from background languages other than English
- students living in isolated areas
- students from a range of cultural backgrounds
- students in crisis;

2.5 are able to incorporate the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills regardless of the subject or age group being taught;

2.6 have developed knowledge about the purpose, nature and uses of a wide variety of assessment strategies;

2.7 have developing knowledge and understanding of the nature, sources and application of learning and information resources;

2.8 are aware of and show developing capacity in the use of new information technologies in educational contexts;

2.9 have developing competencies in recognising and valuing the experiences students bring from their lives outside the classroom, such as linguistic and cultural differences.

3. THE PRACTICE OF TEACHING

All beginning teachers should be able to demonstrate that they:

3.1 use the English language to communicate clearly and effectively, both orally and in writing, in the range of roles and contexts occurring within the classroom and the school community;

3.2 are aware that their own use of language is a model for bilingual and multilingual students which may not be available in other domains in students' lives;

3.3 are developing competences in the recognition, appreciation and acceptance of variants of English;

3.4 incorporate the stated principles of anti-bias approaches in their

curriculum development and implementation'

3.5 can establish and maintain a learning environment which is:

- interesting and challenging
- orderly and purposeful
- safe and supportive
- positive and enjoyable
- fostering independence, responsibility and creativity
- open to effective resolution of conflict;

3.6 are able to improve learning outcomes for all students by implementing an increasingly wide range of teaching approaches and strategies that provide alternatives to transmission teaching, and reflect contemporary, mainstream theory and practice. The following are examples of practice and do not constitute a definitive list:

- developmentally appropriate practice
- varying patterns of classroom interaction
- collaborative and cooperative learning
- communicative approaches to language learning
- differentiated curriculum materials
- drama method (enactments, role plays, simulation gaming)
- negotiated learning and peer assessment
- teaching practices that cater for different learning styles

- techniques of integration to bring areas of the curriculum together
- activity based methods including play;

. . . . cont over page

NSW Desirable Attributes of Beginning Teachers - cont.

3.7 are developing increasing competence in the following fundamental instructional elements and processes:

- motivating and engaging students
- effective structuring of learning tasks
- establishing expectations for students that are clear, challenging and achievable
- monitoring and assessing students consistently
- providing genuine feedback to students and families on progress
- increasing learners' own sense of responsibility for learning and monitoring of learning
- evaluating the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of their teaching programs
- using and evaluating appropriate resources;

resource person

3.8 can undertake classroom roles additional to that of the teacher as transmitter of information such as facilitator, director, conferencer, organiser, writer and resource person

3.9 are working as part of a community team and with appropriate support and guidance, developing the necessary skills to work effectively in the team with their colleagues and communicate clearly

with students and their families:

- the broad intentions of unit or segment of learning;
- an outline of the content of that unit or segment;
- what work is expected of the student and what activities promote learning
- how the progress/development of students is to be assessed and the relationship between assessment and the teaching/learning program
- students' progress
- the relevance of resources;

3.10 reflect critically on their teaching practices and seek feedback

3.11 believe in and are able to justify the value of what they teach;

3.12 show developing competencies in program planning and maintenance of adequate records;

3.13 base programs on observation and assessment of individual students' competencies and progress.

4. INTERACTION WITH FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY

All beginning teachers should be able to demonstrate that they:

4.1 recognise the home as the foundation of learning and its continuing significance in students' development;

4.2 consult appropriately with other professionals and families concerning the academic, social, emotional and physical needs of their students;

4.3 recognise their part in the collective responsibility for the ongoing development of the school and its relationship with the wider community.

5. PROFESSIONALISM AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

All beginning teachers should be able to demonstrate that they:

5.1 participate in a range of professional development activities as part of their continuing professional development;

5.2 appreciate the collegial nature of teachers' work by being able to work effectively as members of a team'

5.3 understand the roles of specialist teachers in the school'

5.4 have a developing knowledge of the framework of law, regulations and policies that affect teachers' work;

5.5 have knowledge of current education, social and environmental issues that affect teachers' work.

4. Practitioner Competencies for Adult Basic Education (Australia) (Scheeres et al 1993) * (selected elements only)

1. ADULT LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES AND PRACTICES

.

1.4 Uses a variety of learning and teaching strategies to pursue literacy and numeracy goals for personal, social, educational and vocational goals

2. SELECTION AND PLACEMENT OF STUDENTS

.

2.2 In selecting students, requirements of government and organisation policies are balanced with learning needs of individuals

.

3. MANAGING LEARNING SITUATIONS

3.1 Uses knowledge of curriculum theories and curriculum documents to develop and implement a program/curriculum compatible with individual, group and program needs

3.2 Manages time, space and resources to maximise learning outcomes

3.3 Adapts curriculum in the light of changing circumstances and changing student needs

4. MONITORING LEARNING

.

4.2 Modifies students' programs as a result of continual monitoring

4.3 Documents students' progress in ways meaningful to students' supervisors and those to whom there is a reporting requirement

4.4 Continually reflects on and adjusts own practice

5. EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS

5.1 Examines existing models of evaluation to adopt and incorporate appropriate evaluation strategies, and uses the evaluation of courses for revision, planning and development

.

6. COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

6.1 Raises awareness, consults and negotiates with a range of government/industrial/community organisations on issues relevant to ABE provision

6.2 Represents ABE both within the teachers' workplace and the wider community

.

7. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

7.1 Is informed about current issues, policies and theoretical debates in the field of ABE

7.2 Is actively involved in continuing professional development in the field of ABE

7.3 Makes a contribution to the field of ABE

7.4 Maximises the contribution of volunteers to the field of ABE.

5. Workplace Trainers (CSB - Workplace Trainers 1992) *

1. IDENTIFY THE NEED FOR TRAINING

1.1 Determine if training needs exist

1.2 Identify competencies for specific jobs/roles

- 1.3 Identify competencies held by individuals for specific jobs/roles
- 1.4 Define training requirements

2. DESIGN AND DEVELOP TRAINING

- 2.1 Prepare training plan
- 2.2 Develop training programs
- 2.3 Develop assessment methods

3. ORGANISE TRAINING RESOURCES

- 3.1 Select internal or external training delivery
- 3.2 Arrange for appropriate staff
- 3.3 Arrange location and facilities
- 3.4 Arrange equipment, tools and resources
- 3.5 Identify and arrange external training

4. DELIVER AND EVALUATE TRAINING

- 4.1 Deliver training/learning opportunities
- 4.2 Provide opportunities for practice.
- 4.3 Follow up and support trainees
- 4.4 Evaluate training

5. ASSESS TRAINEES

- 5.1 Assess trainee competence
- 5.2 Review learning progress
- 5.3 Record assessment results

6. PROMOTE TRAINING

- 6.1 Provide training information
- 6.2 Disseminate training information
- 6.3 Publicise training benefits
- 6.4 Evaluate promotional activities

7. MANAGE TRAINING

- 7.1 Maintain training records
- 7.2 Report on training
- 7.3 Plan training expenditure
- 7.4 Procure and maintain training support equipment
- 7.5 Advise on training trends and practices
- 7.6 Maintain training activities within enterprise and legal requirements.

* Note: These sets of standards also include 'performance criteria', 'cues', or 'indicators of effective practice' which add substantial detail to what appears above.

6. 'Expectations for beginning teachers (US)' (Reynolds 1992)
Beginning teachers should enter the first year of teaching with:
1. Knowledge of the subject matter they will teach
 2. The disposition to find out about their student and school, and the ethnographic and analytic skills to do so
 3. Knowledge of strategies, techniques, and tools for creating and sustaining a learning community, and the skills and abilities to employ these strategies, techniques and tools
 4. Knowledge of pedagogy appropriate for the content area they will teach;
 5. The disposition to reflect on their own actions and students' responses in order to improve their teaching, and the strategies and tool for doing so.

At the time of summative evaluation for licensure (after at least half a year of guided, full time teaching) beginning teachers should be able to:

6. Plan lessons that enable students to relate new learning to prior understanding and experiences
7. Develop rapport and personal interactions with students
8. Establish and maintain rules and routines that are fair and appropriate to students
9. Arrange the physical and social conditions in the classroom in ways that are conducive to learning and fit the academic task
10. Represent and present subject matter in ways that enable students to relate new learning to prior understanding and that help students develop metacognitive strategies
11. Assess student learning using a variety of measurement tools and adapt instruction according to the results
12. Reflect on their own actions and students' responses in order to improve their teaching. (pp 25 - 26)

7. Categories of the Knowledge Base for Teaching (US) (Shulman 1987)
1. Content knowledge
 2. General pedagogical knowledge, with special reference to those broad principles and strategies of classroom management and organisation that appear to transcend subject matter;
 3. curriculum knowledge, with particular grasp of the materials and programs that serve as "tools of the trade" for teachers;
 4. pedagogical content knowledge, that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding;
 5. knowledge of learners and their characteristics;
 6. knowledge of educational contexts, ranging from the workings of the group or classroom, the governance and financing of school districts, to the character of communities and cultures; and
 7. knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values, and their

philosophical and historical grounds. (p 8)

8. Principles which underpin draft standards developed by the US Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (McFarlane 1994)

1. The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful to students
2. The teacher understands how students learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development
3. The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners
4. The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills
5. The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behaviour to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation
6. The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom
7. The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals
8. The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment

strategies to evaluate and ensure continuous intellectual, social and physical development of the learner

9. The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally

The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being. (pp 5 - 6)

9. Professional competencies which characterise the successful teacher (Northern Ireland) (DENI 1993)

1. PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE

1.1 KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF CHILDREN AND THEIR LEARNING

Demonstrates:

- 1.1.1 knowledge of child development
- 1.1.2 knowledge of the various ways in which children learn, both generally and in particular subject contexts;
- 1.1.3 understanding of social, psychological, developmental and cultural influences on children's attainment;
- 1.1.4 understanding of the effects on children's learning of teachers' expectations, including those which may arise from stereotyping;
- 1.1.5 knowledge of the role of language in learning;
- 1.1.6 understanding of the learning which can take place through non-verbal means;
- 1.1.7 understanding of the range and importance of play for learning
- 1.1.8 understanding of the ways in which information technology contributes to children's learning;
- 1.1.9 awareness of individual differences among children - the uniqueness of each child - and the needs which arise from these;
- 1.1.10 understanding of the importance of motivation, attitude to schooling and the dynamics of peer group influence in the promotion of effective learning;
- 1.1.11 knowledge of the principles involved in fostering good discipline;
- 1.1.12 understanding of the importance of assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning

1.2 SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE

- 1.2.1 understanding in depth, which goes beyond the immediate demands of the school curriculum for the relevant age-phase, of the knowledge, concepts and skills of his or her specialist subject(s);
- 1.2.2 breadth of knowledge in all the subject(s) forming the content of his or her teaching;
- 1.2.3 knowledge of the relationships between different subjects and their contribution to areas of study.

1.3 KNOWLEDGE OF THE CURRICULUM

- 1.3.1 understanding of the arguments in favour of a balanced and broadly based curriculum;
- 1.3.2 awareness of the extent to which learning in schools takes place outside the formal curriculum ("the hidden curriculum:");
- 1.3.3 knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, and in particular of the areas of study and the educational themes embodied in it and of their interdependence
- 1.3.4 understanding of the nature and purposes of the different kinds

of assessment which may be used;

- 1.3.5 knowledge of the range of resources available to support the curriculum
- 1.3.6 awareness of the skills and processes common to a range of subjects.

1.4 KNOWLEDGE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

- 1.4.1 awareness that there are differing views about the aims of education
- 1.4.2 understanding of the relationship between the education system and other aspects of society;
- 1.4.3 general knowledge of the history and context of education in the UK and particularly in Northern Ireland since 1947;
- 1.4.4 understanding of the appropriate provisions of the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 and of other relevant legislation
- 1.4.5 awareness of contemporary debates about education;
- 1.4.6 understanding of schools as institutions and their place within the community;
- 1.4.7 knowledge of the part of the education system in which he or she is working and its relationship to other parts of that system;
- 1.4.8 knowledge of the organisation and management of schools, and the place within these of school policies and development plans.

1.5 KNOWLEDGE OF THE TEACHER'S ROLE

- 1.5.1 awareness of the importance of informed critical reflection in evaluating his or her professional practice
- 1.5.2 understanding of how to draw upon sources of professional help and expertise;
- 1.5.3 knowledge of his or her contractual, legal pastoral and administrative responsibilities
- 1.5.4 awareness of his or her role as a member of a professional team within the school;
- 15.5 awareness of how to respond to current social problems which may manifest themselves in schools.

2. PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

2.1 SUBJECT APPLICATION

- 2.1.1 Plans appropriate lessons within teaching programmes
- 2.1.2 uses appropriate methodologies and procedures necessary for effective teaching of the subject(s) forming the content of his or her teaching.
- 2.1.3 prepares appropriate learning materials for pupils
- 2.1.4. makes appropriate use of the range of available resources
- 2.1.5 responds to areas of learning difficulty within the sub
- 2.1.5 responds to areas of learning difficulty within the subject(s)
- 2.1.6 Plans and employs a variety of teaching strategies appropriate to the respective subject or topic
- 2.1.7 Uses an appropriate combination of thematic and subject approaches

. . . . cont over page

Professional competencies which characterise the successful teacher
(Northern Ireland) - continued

- 2.1.8 Uses information technology to enhance children's

learning

2.1.9 Prepares coherent teaching programmes, taking into account statutory requirements for both the subject(s) and the educational themes and school curriculum policies.

2.1.10 Can justify the selection of material in terms of curricular

principles and child development

2.1.11 Understands how to organise field work and exploit its educational potential

2.1.12 Contributes to ensuring continuity and progression in children's learning within and between classes and subjects

2.1.13 Contributes to the formulation of the school's aims and objectives

2.2 CLASSROOM METHODOLOGY

2.2.1 Can justify the teaching methods being used

2.2.2. Questions pupils effectively, responds and supports discussion

2.2.3 Deploys a range of strategies to create and maintain a purposeful, orderly, safe and appropriate environment for learning

2.2.4 Plans and employs a wide range of teaching strategies appropriate to the age, ability, interests, experiences and attainment level of the pupils and to the objectives of each lesson

2.2.5 Captures and maintains pupils' attention, interest and involvement

2.2.6 Takes account of pupils diversity of talents

2.2.7 Is able to recognise pupils special needs and provides appropriately for these

2.2.8 Takes account of cultural differences among pupils

2.2.9 Encourages pupils to develop powers of observation and inquiry

2.2.10 Creates appropriate problem-solving situations in which pupils can exercise newly acquired skills

2.2.11 Contributes to the development of pupils' language and communication skills

2.2.12 Makes pupils aware of appropriately demanding expectations for their progress

2.2.13 Encourages pupils to take initiatives and become responsible for their own learning

2.3 CLASS MANAGEMENT

2.3.1 Teaches in whole-class, group, pair or individual modes as appropriate for particular learning experiences

2.3.2 Manages play and activity-based learning when appropriate

2.3.3 Maintains pupil motivation

2.3.4 Is able to make a smooth transition between learning activities or lessons

2.3.5 Establishes good classroom rapport by providing a pleasant, psychologically secure and stimulating environment in which each pupil may progress, grow in confidence and develop a positive self image

2.3.6 Establishes clear rules and expectations regarding pupil

behaviour

- 2.3.7 Pre-empt's inappropriate pupil behaviour and confrontation
- 2.3.8 Deals with inappropriate pupil behaviour by an appropriate use, within the policy of the school, of investigation, counselling, academic help, rewards and punishments
- 2.3.9 Manages his or her own time and that of the pupils effectively
- 2.3.10 Manages space effectively through awareness of a variety of classroom layouts
- 2.3.11 Is able to make effective use of non-teaching staff
- 2.3.12 Seeks advice when necessary

2.4 ASSESSMENT AND RECORDING

- 2.4.1 Provides pupils with regular and thorough feed back on their progress in a constructive manner which fosters their self-confidence and self-esteem
- 2.4.2 Uses different methods of assessment as appropriate in order to monitor pupils' performance and progress in a systematic manner, where applicable using attainment targets and statements of attainment
- 2.4.4 Judges pupil performance against appropriate norms, taking due

account of the character of the intake of the school

- 2.4.5 Encourages pupils to play a positive part in their own assessment
- 2.4.6 Participates in moderation procedures within the school
- 2.4.7 Provides helpful reports to parents on their children's progress
- 2.4.8 Demonstrates an awareness of children's extra-curricular achievements
- 2.4.9 Uses the outcomes of assessment, as appropriate, in order to evaluate teaching and plan for the future

2.5 THE WIDER ROLE

- 2.5.1 Accepts and undertakes the pastoral responsibilities of a teacher
- 2.5.2 Contributes to cross-curricular aspects of school work
- 2.5.3 Liases, when appropriate, with members of other professions concerned with the welfare of pupils
- 2.5.4 Contributes to activities with pupils outside the formal curriculum
- 2.5.5 Relates effectively with parents
- 2.5.6 Develops effective working relationships with teachers and other colleagues within the school and, where applicable, in associates schools
- 2.5.7 Takes appropriate responsibility for curriculum leadership
- 2.5.8 Communicates effectively, where appropriate, with representatives of the community of which the school is part..