

## PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education  
Annual Conference, Hobart, Tasmania.  
November 28, 1995.

The focus upon competency frameworks has risen largely from a political microeconomic agenda which has been adopted in the professions generally as well as in teaching. Teachers and teacher educators need to work together to ensure that the definition and use of competency standards facilitate and do not hinder teachers' professional development. This paper draws upon research into teacher development to provide a framework for examining, defining and applying professional standards. The benefits of a professional development framework are emphasised and issues to be addressed in further work on professional standards are to be identified. The complex interaction of the two agenda, professional development and professional standards, is acknowledged showing the need for all parties to work together in mapping the ground, relating professional standards to student contexts and outcomes, and establishing guidelines for use of professional standards in particular types of contexts.

### Professional Standards and Professional Development

Teaching and teacher education are facing challenges arising from the conflicts or tensions between different cultures. In this decade educators are being required to identify and respond to key challenges across different cultural or societal contexts (Maclean, 1995). The increasing emphasis on education as an industry and the public sense of social accountability have contributed to the challenge to the teaching profession of the definition and use of professional standards and competencies. A key challenge in this area is to identify ways in

which the use of professional standards can enhance and not inhibit professional development.

This challenge is being addressed by the focus upon integrated conceptions of competence (Hager & Beckett, 1995; Walker, in press) and attention being given to the roles of competencies in teacher education (Kennedy & Preston, 1995). Much of this discussion has focussed upon the role of teacher competencies in teacher education from the perspectives of curriculum, employment criteria and societal or professional accountability. This paper is intended to provide practical educational knowledge to assist in addressing the challenge that an industrial view of education presents to a developmental perspective on teacher education (Walker, 1995).

The paper will examine the nature of competencies, present a theory of

teacher development in the management domain and examine roles for the use of professional standards in preservice teacher education.

Relationships between the two agendas- professional standards and professional development will also be discussed.

Nature of competency standards

In teacher education, in particular, and the professions, in general, there has been a movement from the early reductionist definitions of competency which incorporated a performance and behaviourist paradigm (Cairns, 1992) to a more holistic or integrated approach (Kennedy & Preston, 1995). This latter approach has acknowledged the complexity of teaching, the importance of teacher decision making and the need for teaching to be viewed within its different contexts (Walker, in press).

Holistic or integrated forms of competencies:

- relate knowledge, skills, and attitudes to actions which can be brought together and displayed in the performance of certain tasks;
- describe types of actions or performances at a suitable level of generality and interrelatedness;
- require a responsiveness to the different contexts in which they are to be displayed. These contexts include subject areas, classroom and school situations, level of schooling and broader societal or cultural contexts

(Hager & Beckett, 1995)

One example of holistic competencies is the "Desirable Attributes of Beginning Teachers" presented by the NSW Ministerial Advisory Council on Teacher Education and Quality of Teaching (1994). These attributes consist of macro level abilities or attributes such as "incorporate the stated principles of anti-bias approaches in their curriculum development and implementation" (1994, p4). The attainment of these attributes requires the learning of specific knowledge and micro-level skills. The attainment of these attributes is a complex process which can be gauged from a study of teacher development in different pedagogical domains.

Nature of teacher development

The following theory of teacher development was constructed from

research into teacher development in the management domain (Butcher, 1995) and is based upon an analysis of teachers' management schemata, their operation in different contexts and factors which influence the development of these schemata. The importance of giving explicit attention to the study of teachers' management schemata was evident in differences observed between novice and expert classroom managers. Expert classroom managers are able to respond sensitively and fully to management events drawing upon a principled and synthesised schema framework which incorporates extensive and clearly differentiated declarative and procedural knowledge. Responding sensitively and fully to situations, experts show a longer-term and realistic focus upon establishing a nurturant environment and enhancing pupils' learning outcomes while responding flexibly when appropriate in the shorter-term to the attainment of order goals. Experts, in what could be seen by novices as an incongruence between management approach and action, are able to consciously use a lower-level instantiated conceptual framework within a higher-level domain conceptualisation when responding to particular situations. Experts' schema actions include established procedural knowledge routines, though when situations require it, experts are able to use more elaborate, concrete and detailed management procedures.

The realism in experts' management responses is also evident in their ability to identify issues which need to be resolved over a longer, rather than a shorter, time period and their level of efficacy with respect to student outcomes and difficult students. Expert managers draw upon their total management schemata as they focus upon the needs of pupils both individually and as a group, with relationships being

integral to the nurturant environment they establish to enhance learning outcomes.

Experts are prepared and able to reflect upon their management schemata and logistically carry beliefs through a procedural knowledge level into actions in the classroom. This process also operates dialectically as experts use their experience of procedural and disciplinary actions in the classroom to evaluate and verify their own actions and confirm or change their schemata. This reflective approach to management enhances their level of schema congruence.

A set of five schema types, two classified as low and three as high, was constructed from the extensive phase data and then used to identify differences between groups of teachers ranging through preservice to expert managers. These schema types are based upon differences in the content, structure and meaning of teachers' management schemata. They are also related to differences in the expression, both in script and action, of their domain conceptualisations and instantiated conceptual frameworks. The types reflect differences in the degree to which teachers' management schemata are operationally separate and independent and the structure and level of abstraction which they use to organise their domain knowledge.

The first two (low) schema types have a low structure and reflect

incongruences or low levels of incongruence amongst different schema elements and between schemata and actions. In the lower schema types, Type 1 reflects a concern for pupil learning, a lack of attention in beliefs to classroom management while there is a vicarious awareness of the need for order at the level of advice. Type 2 has an explicit belief in the need to be directive, with a particular focus upon orderliness. The higher level schema types show a high level of schema congruence and emphasise learning outcomes while maintaining a directive approach (Type 3), or giving more attention to a facilitative approach especially in script responses (Type 4) while Type 5 focusses upon a nurturant approach and group environment conducive to pupil learning.

The schema types are characterised by differences in teacher efficacy with Type 1 being associated with a medium level of individual teaching efficacy and Type 2 with a medium to high, and unrealistic, level of contextual efficacy and medium levels of difficult student and individual teaching efficacy. The higher schema types have a more realistic level of individual teaching efficacy. Type 3 is also associated with a medium level of difficult student efficacy and Type 5 with a medium to high level. These classroom managers see themselves as being able to address difficult students or situations within a longer timeframe.

Development involves patterns of movements within or across the high/low levels of schema types rather than an orderly sequential movement through an invariant set of schema types. The study of change or lack of change in student teachers' schema type in longitudinal data showed four development path patterns, named as: plateau low, vacillating plateau low, induction low/high and decline low/high.

Development path patterns provide a two-dimensional view of development, indicating both the overall direction of movement and the schema type level(s) involved in that movement. An analysis of these patterns in both intensive and extensive phase data shows how development in this domain is non-linear, holistic and complex.

Schema development involves the formation of an operationally separate and independent management schema. This requires student teachers addressing both personal and professional issues related to management and relationships, the resolution of schema incongruences, and the reconciliation and subsequent integration of the different management aspects.

Movement across schema types is also complex involving the interaction of schema, personal and situational factors or influences. Teacher

education interventions for schema development need to address the personal and professional aspects of this development.

Changes in schema types and transitions across the low/high schema type threshold involve many processes which reflect the interdependence of the total set of schema, personal and situational factors involved in development. The integral nature of the interdependence of these factors and processes in development is seen in the dialectical

relationships that are found between them. The myth of a single variant development path across the low/high schema types was often associated with a single focus upon logistical relationships in schema change and development. A responsiveness to the complexity of schema development and its processes needs to be a primary principle for teacher education interventions.

Professional standards and professional development

This theory of development in the management domain provides teacher educators with a framework for their interventions to facilitate student teachers' development towards high schema types and higher levels of management competence. In these interventions they need to assist students in developing a separate and operationally independent management schema which involves reconciling/prioritising different management aspects. Attention needs to be given to the consolidation of students' knowledge bases and their use of higher or more abstract levels of thinking. The personal aspects of development and their relation to changes in the management schemata also require explicit attention. This can occur within the context of the professional support offered to the students by cooperating teachers and university staff. Some of the roles of professional standards in these interventions is presented below (Table 1).

Table 1 Teacher education interventions and professional standards

Focus Emphasis Role of professional standards

Pedagogical domain Domain operational independence Explicit attention to be given to management competencies at both macro and micro-levels of skills and knowledge

Knowledge base Development and consolidation of declarative and procedural knowledge Identification of knowledge base which can assist in the attainment of the competencies

Abstract thinking Explicit attention to more abstract organisation of and consequential logic in knowledge base Understanding of the complexity of competencies and their application

Management situations Able to maintain longer term goals while addressing immediate issues Understand need for responsiveness in application of competencies to different situations

Teacher efficacy Develop realistic sense of contextual and difficult student efficacy Realism in use of competencies by teacher educators and cooperating teachers

Professional support and discourse Role models of competencies and explicit discussion of their attainment and application Prepare cooperating teachers for incorporating competencies in professional discourse and discussion of own practice.

Professional standards provide a valuable framework for assisting student teachers in their professional development. To facilitate this development explicit attention needs to be given to the different pedagogical domains in the statement of competencies and the teacher education curriculum. In the implementation of this knowledge base teacher educators and cooperating teachers need to realise that a linear task analysis model does not necessarily match student teachers' development path patterns, for example where they need to revisit the

management knowledge base to consolidate and extend their procedural knowledge and become more confident in responding to difficult management situations.

The knowledge base for the competencies needs to be presented in more detail so that student teachers can be assisted in gaining appropriate

declarative and procedural knowledge. This knowledge needs to be validated and field tested at various levels including the teaching profession, research community and the individual teacher. Teacher educators, teachers and the profession in general need to be sensitive, in the application of professional standards, to student teachers' professional development and the teaching situations in which they are involved. If competencies become primarily yardsticks for assessment teacher educators and the teaching profession can inhibit student teacher development. Such an emphasis, if not preoccupation, would not be responsive to non-linear changes in development path patterns nor would it acknowledge the importance of student teacher efficacy in development. Teacher educators and teachers require the professional competency needed for acknowledging and responding to the complex nature of professional development if the application of professional competencies is to meet a professional development as well as a professional standards agenda.

#### Conclusion

Professional standards can assist the teaching profession in both being accountable to the public for the quality of teaching and as a means of assisting student teachers in their professional development. A holistic statement of competencies is to be taken further with the explication of knowledge bases needed for attaining these competencies.

Attention to the competencies and the different pedagogical domains in the teacher education curriculum has to be built upon an understanding of the nature of teacher development in these domains. This requires a responsiveness to the development path pattern of the individual student teacher and to the teacher education and teaching contexts in which she/he is involved. The teaching profession needs to define the professional standards needed by teacher educators, cooperating teachers and others involved in professional development. These standards would have to acknowledge the importance and complexity of teacher education, address the substantial knowledge in this field and indicate the resourcing needed to prepare people for their roles in facilitating teacher development

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