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Defining performance expectations: A critical review of teaching standards and guidelines

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Abstract

The escalating focus on teacher performance has increased the reliance on teaching standards, accreditation processes and other forms of teacher review. With the focus on building a stronger recognition of teacher excellence, the pressure to measure and acknowledge teaching quality has commensurately grown. But do we really measure what we should? And are our performance standards sufficiently explicit to assist in differentiating teacher achievements? This paper reports on a research project undertaken on behalf of Scotch College in which a teaching quality rubric was developed to assist teachers participating in a teaching enhancement programme. The study critiqued existing standards and set out to refine and improve on those which currently operate. The paper will examine the weaknesses and issues evident in existing teacher performance standards, describe the process which was followed in developing a more effective framework and explore some of the factors which other educators may wish to consider when evaluating or adapting existing systems for use in their own educational communities.

The notion of evaluating teachers is, for many in the profession, anathema (Down, Chadbourne & Hogan, 2000). This aversion is well documented and not without foundation. Reasons cited for apprehension amongst some sectors of the teaching community regarding teaching evaluation include how the evaluation is to be conducted and whether it is representative of the teacher's overall performance. (Down, Chadbourne & Hogan, 2000). The debate over what constitutes good teaching practice, the feeling that teachers' efforts and current practice are neither respected nor acknowledged, that their years of experience automatically equips them with the expertise to perform at their best and that performance evaluation is intrusive also arise. (Down, Chadbourne & Hogan, 2000).

Such antipathy provides challenges for the successful implementation of any process of teacher review or standards setting. Notwithstanding the hurdles and negative arguments, there are substantial and logical benefits associated with measuring teacher performance.

Why Evaluate Teaching?

It is clear that, evaluation, assessment, review, however it is described and implemented, should represent the first step in a proactive process of charting a course to improve professional practice. At the same time, it serves to identify lagging teaching performance and assist with developmental strategies.

Teaching is indisputably recognised as a challenging, complex, ever-changing and evolving profession that places context-specific demands on its practitioners. Across the world teacher attraction and retention is challenging the sector (Crosswell, 2006; Thornton, 2004). It is not sufficient or practical to rely on initial teacher training to equip teachers to meet the many and varied demands placed on them. Apart from "teaching", teachers are expected to be administrators, counsellors, negotiators, mentors, social scientists, police, and the list goes on. They are expected to be up-to-date, not only with the latest developments within their disciplines, but also with the current pedagogical trends and methods of behaviour and classroom management. In addition, teachers are increasingly expected to be *au fait* with rapidly changing technological advances, using ICT proficiently to support student learning outcomes. Even if it was possible to equip teachers entering the profession with the appropriate skills to meet these demands, the context-specific nature of teaching means that the strategies employed in one school may well differ from those required in another. Numerous variables impact on the manner in which teaching is practiced including: whether the school is a single-sex or coeducational learning environment; the socio-economic status of the students and their families; the ethos of the school; the cultural and religious priorities; the resources available; the number of students in a class; and the intellectual and behavioural characteristics of the students.

The different stakeholders display different expectations of teachers. Students and their families anticipate a comprehensive education that will set them up for life. This onerous expectation can only begin to be fulfilled when the best teachers are involved in the process. Quality teaching has repeatedly been demonstrated to be the factor which most

influences student academic and social outcomes, eclipsing the substantial effects of innate intelligence and social background (Darling-Hammond, 1999). Within the private school system, there is an additional economic imperative driving the development and retention of excellent teachers, which in turn places expectations on the teacher to maintain a high level of professional development. Since the student body within these schools is potentially mobile, with the ability and propensity to seek out the best educational experience available, schools must be seen to be offering “the best product”.

Apart from the need to remain current, accountable and demonstrably capable, there are also personal benefits that result from engaging in processes to enhance teacher performance (Down et al, 2000). In a recent study, Brownhill, Wilhelm and Watson (2006) reported that teachers who were highly satisfied with their work cited as contributing factors, positive feedback from students, a feeling that their teaching was making a difference, the opportunity to work with others, the enjoyment of working in a particular curriculum area and the capacity to focus on professional growth as an ongoing priority. All of these aspects are outcomes that might be expected from engagement in teacher professional development. By contrast and in support of this, teachers who leave the profession have cited the causes of their dissatisfaction to include poor relationships with their peers, negative interactions with students and limited professional progress. Further, early career teachers benefit from clear guidance and the standards of teaching they should emulate (McCormack, Gore & Thomas, 2006; Howe, 2006).

Finally, in addition to the external drivers of stakeholder expectations and increased accountability, and the personal benefits that may accrue, there appears to be an inevitability about why teachers should be evaluated and engage in professional development designed to enhance their professionalism as a whole and, more specifically, their classroom practice. Firstly, teacher professional standards are being established as a mechanism to assess candidates for professional accreditation. The last decade has seen an international trend in requirements for teachers to meet minimum standards before they can legally be employed as teachers (Owen, 2005). Likewise, ongoing assessment is becoming the norm to secure major steps in promotion and career advancement. Secondly, more recently, moves have been made to tie teachers pay to the level of their performance in both the United Kingdom (Marsden & Belfield (20005) and the United States (Centre for Teaching Quality, 2007). Notwithstanding

considerable debate in the education community, it is also being muted for introduction in Australia: (Of course better teachers create smarter students”, 2007).

Once the arguments in favour of reviewing teacher performance are accepted, the question becomes not “why evaluate teachers?” but “against what standards should teachers be evaluated? what do effective teaching performance standards look like?”

Current Approaches to Teacher Performance Evaluation

There are numerous examples of teacher performance standards. They are being increasingly employed internationally in a range of applications aimed, ultimately, at enhancing teacher professionalism. Teacher performance standards from all Australian states and those from a single overseas jurisdiction were examined and compared. A critique of the generic and specific aspects of these models was carried out with particular reference to a series of principles, namely: the main purpose of the standards, its level of conformity or integration with other models; the user-friendliness of the language utilised; the demonstrable nature of the competencies; the measurability of performance standards in terms of the validity and reliability; whether the model offered any developmental aspects; and whether it was generic or context-specific.

The North American Experience

Ontario Education

As part of a larger initiative known as *The New Teacher Induction Program*, the Ontario Ministry of Education has developed a framework against which new teachers are assessed. (Ministry of Education, 2006) Typically, teachers are reviewed by their principal twice in their first year of employment. To complete the Induction Program, new teachers must receive two overall “satisfactory” ratings in these performance appraisals.

The framework of criteria to be met in these assessments consists of eight basic competencies stretched across three domains of teachers’ work: *Commitment to Pupils and Pupil Learning*; *Professional Knowledge*; and *Professional Practice*. For each of these competencies the teacher’s level of performance is assessed as either “satisfactory” or “development needed”. On subsequent appraisals, any criteria which previously received a “development needed” ratings must be assessed as either “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory”.

Having completed the Induction Program teachers are referred to as “experienced” and participate in the *Teacher Appraisal System for Experienced Teachers* (Ministry of Education, 2002). Two additional domains of teacher competencies, *Leadership in Learning Communities* and *Ongoing Professional Practice* are added to those in the *New Teacher Induction Program* to constitute the standards of the *Teacher Appraisal System for Experienced Teachers*.

Recently changes have been made to this process which arguably has reduced the level of rigour involved in the appraisal process and the encouragement to work constructively towards improving practice. The rating of teachers against competency criteria has been “simplified” from a four point scale (“exemplary”, “good”, “satisfactory” and “unsatisfactory”) to a two point scale (“satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory”). Further, instead of two appraisals in a year every three years, teachers are now required to undergo the process only once every five years.

In relation to the overall usefulness that these frameworks afford, there is concern, particularly regarding the rating scale and frequency of appraisal. The tendency surely exists to a ‘tick-the-box’ approach in order to fulfil the review requirements. The lack of discrimination in the measure of teacher performance is likely to discourage the desire to improve since “satisfactory” does little to indicate areas of potential improvement.

The Australian Experience

In 2003, The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), with input from the Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership Taskforce (TQELT) formulated a *National Framework for Professional Teaching Standards* (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 2003). The purpose of this initiative was to establish a national consensus on what constituted expected entry level standards to the teaching profession. The call was made for “national collaboration” in this endeavour. Some states, namely Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia, had already begun work on their own teacher standards and so it became the challenge of the national framework to “acknowledge and reflect commonalities between initiatives” but at the same time “to achieve national consistency and a common approach to recognising quality”.

Four years later, the result is a disjointed approach which indicates little of any consistent approach to the monitoring of teacher standards. Today, all the major educational communities in Australia have a set of teacher performance standards designed to be used for teachers entering the profession. Each of these has a different name and is constructed differently as illustrated in Table 1. Some have their origin in, and links to, the *National Framework for Professional Teaching Standards*, while others, predominantly those which were already developed in 2003, remain distinctly different.

Only the New South Wales model (NSW Institute of Teachers, n.d.) overtly reflects the developmental, albeit non-linear nature of teacher professionalism, listing the “Career Dimensions” as *Graduate; Competent; Accomplished; and Leadership*. As such this document might usefully be employed by teachers at any stage of their career as a useful tool in the enhancement of their professional practice. Indeed, the strength of this framework is the acknowledgement of the ‘stages’ of a teacher’s professional development together with and the provision of descriptors of practice at each developmental level. Like NSW, the other states which chose to continue with their own development of standards provide more detailed examples of frameworks of teacher professionalism.

Like the Canadian example, three states, South Australia, Queensland and Western Australia, have two sets of standards, the already mentioned ones which are predominantly used for purposes of teacher accreditation by the individual state bodies responsible for the registration of new teachers, and a second set of standards intended for all teachers. Unlike the Canadian situation, where the “experienced” teacher standards were merely an expanded version of the “new” teacher standards, the Australian pairs of standards show less connection between the entry-level and established teacher standards. In each case, one document has been produced by the teacher registration organisation and the other by the relevant state department of education. The absence of synergy between the two documents may be attributed to the fact that, while one organisation represents and services all teachers within the state, the other is concerned only with teachers within the public system. Regardless, this mismatch hampers the usefulness of both documents, creating unnecessary confusion and added impost for teachers attempting to comply with the regulatory and professional requirements.

Table 1:
Sample of the structure and content of Australian state teacher standards frameworks and their relationship to the National Framework

Ministerial Council on Education, Employment Training and Youth Affairs	Western Australian College of Teaching	Teacher Registration Board of South Australia	Teacher Registration Board of the Northern Territory	Victorian Institute of Teaching	New South Wales Institute of Teachers	Queensland College of Teachers
National Framework for Professional Teaching Standards	Western Australian Framework for Teaching	Professional Teaching Standards for Registration in South Australia	Northern Territory Standards of Professional Practice for Teachers	Standards of Professional Practice for Full Registration	Professional Teaching Standards	Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers
Professional Elements	Themes	Core Principles	Standards	Standards	Domains	Standards
Professional Knowledge	Professional Knowledge	Professional Knowledge	Professional Knowledge	Professional Knowledge	Professional Knowledge	10 separate standards are specified in this model.
Professional Practice	Professional Practice	Professional Practice	Professional Practice	Professional Practice	Professional Practice	7 relate to classroom practice, 2 relate to professional relationships & 1 relates professional development
Professional Values	Professional Values		Professional Engagement	Professional Engagement	Professional Commitment	
Professional Relationships	Professional Relationships	Professional Relationships	Professional Engagement	Professional Engagement	Professional Commitment	

The South Australian documents (Teachers Registration Board of South Australia, 2006; Department of Education & Child Services, 2006) afford the closest synergy between its two sets of teaching standards. Both the Teacher Registration Board of South Australia's document, *Professional Teaching Standards for Registration in South Australia*, and the SA Department of Education and Children's Services' *Professional Standards for Teachers*, follow more closely than any other states, the model of the National Framework. The four professional elements articulated in the National Framework form the basis of both documents. The 'Standards for Registration' however omits one of the four, *professional values*. The logic of this is not clear since arguably these values should be a precursor to the other elements of a teacher's professionalism. Notwithstanding this, the synergy between the two documents makes them more attractive and liable to be better received by teachers. Further the *Professional Standards for Teachers* document is clearly laid out with an acknowledgement of 'development across a career'. Some good behavioural exemplars are offered as an indicator of how the descriptors might be further elaborated.

Both of the Queensland documents, the professional body's *Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers* (Queensland College of Teachers, 2006), and the Education department's similarly named *Professional Standards for Teachers* (Education Queensland, 2005) seek to define teachers' work in the context of Queensland schools. The standards of Education Queensland claim to be "generic in nature...to apply to all teachers (across all sectors, developmental levels and sites)" but at the same time, acknowledging the context-specific characteristic of teachers' work, "[i]n working with the standards, teachers are encouraged to collectively examine the culture active in their profession, system and work sites". This one-size-fits-all approach, leaving the users to make the alterations, seems a characteristic of convenience. The two sets of 'Standards' vary in number and partially in content. As indicated in Table 1, The College of Queensland Teachers document lists 10 standards, while the Education Queensland document has 12 standards. Where the content is the same, the wording has been altered slightly which makes comparison between the documents awkward. Each document is well laid out with exemplars of good practice provided, however, unlike the NSW model, these documents do not constructively assist teachers in developing their practice. They state competencies but do not acknowledge that these are acquired over time, nor what

might be expected of teachers at different stages of their career, consequently as a tool to guide and encourage ongoing professional development.

The Western Australian Department of Education and Training (DET) *Competency Framework for Teachers* (Department of Education & Training, 2004), is similar in some aspects of its layout to the Queensland model in that it divides teachers' work into statements, which it calls 'dimensions'. The document has five dimensions (compared to Queensland's 12 statements), two of which relate to classroom practice, one to professional development, one to professional team work and one to partnerships within the school community. Each dimension is then divide into 'critical elements', comparable with the Queensland document's 'statements', and indicators are offered as examples of effective practice of each 'critical element'. Unlike the Queensland model, the *Competency Framework* acknowledges teachers' work along a continuum of practice which represents teachers' levels of proficiency at different 'phases' of their careers from beginning and developing through to experienced and competent teachers. As such the *Framework* is actually three separate frameworks, each presenting a different phase of teacher development. The critical elements for each dimension are different, both in content and number, from one phase to the next which makes it difficult to appreciate any type of continuum or developmental process. For instance, for the Dimension: "Facilitating Student Learning", in phase one there are six critical elements, in phase two there are four critical elements and in phase three there are also four critical elements. There is no obvious continuity between the critical elements of each phase. While indicators are provided to clarify the how each critical element might be demonstrated, the language remains frustratingly ambiguous and non-explicit. The expectations of teachers in phase one of their professional development might be assessed as statements of the obvious. Platitudes such as "Undertake planning to support student learning", "Apply a professional knowledge to the design of learning experiences" and "Promote student learning" do little to assist in the review of teacher competence or in guiding teachers in the enhancement of their professional practice.

The second standards document in Western Australia is that of the Western Australian College of Teaching (WACOT), the body responsible for teacher registration in WA. This document claims to bridge the gap between the *National Framework* and the DET framework (WA College of Teaching, 2007, p.7). On examination it is seen to be

closely aligned to the *National Framework* with little similarity to the state government based (DET) framework. This disparity between the two standards operating within the state makes the functional transition from one to the other as teachers move through their career problematic.

In summary, reviewing these documents for purposes of comparison and contrast becomes daunting, mostly because of the sometimes subtle and other times overt, yet questionable variations that exist between them. An overview of the standards discussed is offered in Table 2. It is difficult to see what justification exists for the changes made, other than for each state authority to make them identifiably their own. There is little difference in the substance of each of these documents, each has strengths and weaknesses, and yet for the most part, no obvious improvement is evident in any of the adjustments carried out. As a whole, they fail to offer any kind of consensus of approach to the establishment of teacher standards, despite the original call to do so with the development of the *National Framework for Professional Teaching Standards*.

With occasional exceptions, some general comments can be made regarding the standards reviewed. Mostly, the standards did not demonstrate a recognition of the developmental nature of teacher professionalism (Owen, 2005). The states that had two sets of standards, to some degree acknowledged the difference between the early career and established teacher, however the lack of connection between the two standards meant that a developmental continuum was not represented. Often the standards are presented as statements which, at times, are non-explicit and are likely to lead to subjective interpretation. Without behavioural exemplars these diminished the practicality of the standards. Some standards gave lip-service to the contextual nature of teachers' work, which is a product of their development and the teachers they have been designed to serve. At best these standards can only be system-specific, leaving it the individual schools to determine the influences of context-specific aspects of their teachers' work.

Table 2: Comparison of Australian and Ontario Teacher Standards Frameworks

Standards Document	Origin	Main purpose	Conformity integration	Language Ease of interpretation	Measurable demonstrable		Developmental approach	Generic or context-specific	Overall usability
					reliability	validity			
<i>Western Australian Framework for Teaching</i>	WA	summative	✗	✓			✗	generic	adequate
<i>Professional Teaching Standards for Registration in South Australia</i>	SA	summative	✗	✓			✗	generic	adequate
<i>Northern Territory Standards of Professional Practice for Teachers</i>	NT	summative formative	✗	✓			✗	generic	adequate
<i>Standards of Professional Practice for Full Registration</i>	VIC	summative formative	✗	✓	The lack of specific indicators, ambiguity of language, lack of discrimination in judgement and failure to acknowledge developmental nature of teacher professionalism means that assessment is highly subjective		✗	generic	adequate
<i>Professional Teaching Standards</i>	NSW	summative formative	✗	✓			✓	generic	good
<i>Professional Standards for Queensland Teachers</i>	QLD	summative	✗	✓			✗	state-based	good
<i>Professional Standards for Teachers</i>	QLD	formative	✗	✓			✓	state-based	good
<i>Professional Standards for Teachers</i>	SA	formative	✗	✓			✓	Public school-based	good
<i>Competency Framework for Teachers</i>	WA	formative	✗	Non-specific			✓	Public school-based	adequate
<i>The New Teacher Induction Program</i>	Ontario	summative	✓	Non-specific			✗	Public school-based	good
<i>Teacher Appraisal System for Experienced Teachers</i>	Ontario	summative	✓	Non-specific			✓	System-specific	adequate

The Scotch College Approach

The development of a standards framework at Scotch College, Perth was part of a bigger change process being undertaken at the school. Focusing specifically on enhancing classroom practice, the school decided to introduce a teaching development programme known as *Instructional Intelligence* (Bennett and Rolheiser, 2001). This programme promotes the development of professional learning communities through the introduction of a peer learning strategy in which teachers review and redevelop their classroom practices to improve the student learning experience (Daniels, 2006; Mullens, 2005). The programme employs a resource teacher who facilitates the peer learning, offers guidance on instructional strategies and coaches individuals in new modes of learning. Fundamental to the school's organisational renewal strategy was the encouragement of teachers to focus more intensively on their classroom practice. Scotch College has championed a stronger engagement with boys' educational needs and focused on the impact teachers have on their students' school experience (Martin, 2003). The *Instructional Intelligence* programme has been sponsored to act as the focal process in promoting a strong professional learning community that is engaged with quality improvement of teaching.

In support of this process, Scotch College had a strong desire to build a more rigorous review tool to assist teachers in their discussions of classroom practice and to guide their setting of development goals. It was also believed that a reflective tool would promote a more sustained consideration of standards and how they are enacted in the school community more generally – beyond the participating teachers. Such an instrument was identified as a valuable means of describing desirable classroom practice and defining what is meant by excellent teaching. This instrument was also expected to assist in the peer-learning processes of the *Instructional Intelligence* programme and to operate across a number of associated systems within the school (including the review of probationary teachers and those seeking confirmation as senior teachers.) It was noted that the College could further employ the framework in a number of different ways, including the provision of student feedback to parallel the teachers' own self-assessment, and guide the construction of professional development goals.

The College identified six priorities that should be achieved by its performance framework:

1. The framework should be context-specific, reflecting and incorporating aspects of the school's culture, ethos and mission statement and the specific needs of its students. Aspects and attention to principles of boys' education should be integral to the design of the framework.
2. The framework should articulate with and complement the existing external regulatory frameworks in the state that teachers already must engage with. In Western Australia they are the Western Australian Framework for Teaching (WA College of Teachers, 2005) and the Competency Framework for Teachers (WA Department of Education and Training, 2005)
3. The language and principles documented in the framework should be clear and readily interpreted by all staff. That is, the terminology and concepts should be jargon-free and very explicit. Exemplars should be provided to better illustrate the detail of the standards.
4. There should be effective guidance though the use of a rubric to assist teachers in identifying best practice to which they could aspire. This would recognise the varying stages of development through which a person might progress.
5. The matrix should be in a form that allowed input from staff with respect to its content and provide an opportunity for all members to share associated strategies and resources.
6. The matrix should provide the platform which could encourage stronger consideration of performance standards, assist with student feedback and work effectively with the *Instructional Intelligence* programme. This meant it would operate as an overarching framework from which other elements of the school's system might stem. Figure 1 depicts this approach.

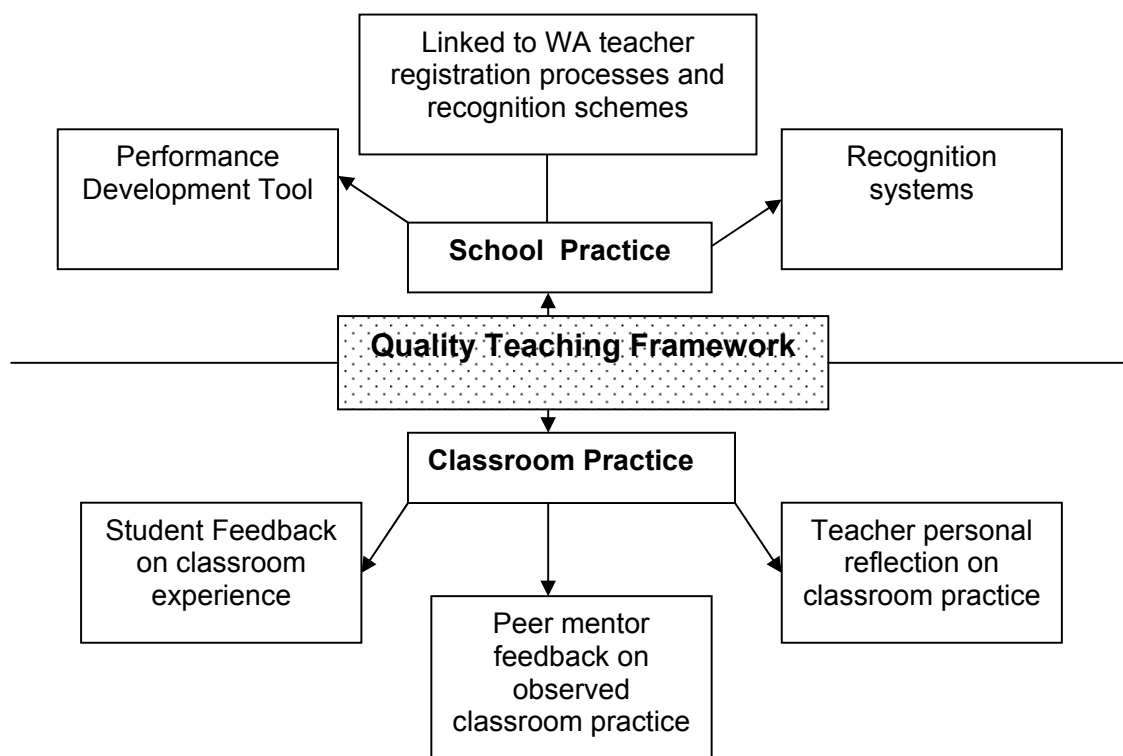



Figure 1: Scotch College Quality Teaching Framework Potential Applications

With these priorities in mind, the scanning of both Australian and international models was undertaken. As the previous section in the paper outlines, this proved to be a challenging and frustrating task, with the standards demonstrating many problems with respect to their clarity and usefulness. In particular, they demonstrated inconsistency in their articulation of classroom practice and in many cases, the definition of satisfactory, good and excellent performance was difficult to interpret or measure.

As a consequence, it was decided that the College should draw from existing frameworks to construct a College specific rubric which still supported the recognition and accreditation of teachers within the state-based system. However, as with most standards, the process of developing the rubric resulted in some strong discussions and redefinitions as to what was required. Table 3 provides a sample of the format of the final instrument.

Table 3: A section of the *Scotch College Quality Teaching Framework*

THEME: CLASSROOM PRACTICE

Domain: Planning <i>This domain of classroom practice is pivotal to the attainment and maintenance of a productive learning environment. It impacts on all other domains of classroom practice.</i>				
ELEMENTS				
	PROFESSIONAL FOUNDATIONS Knowledge/ Comprehension	PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE Application	PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT Analysis/Synthesis	PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP Evaluation/ Dissemination
• Learning goals	Demonstrates the capacity to identify and articulate clear and appropriate learning goals/student outcomes in lesson preparation	Identifies and articulates clear learning goals that reflect the students' attainment of key conceptual understandings and important processes in the concept/discipline taught	Considers individuals' learning styles in planning differentiated lessons. Creates challenging and engaging learning experiences for individuals and groups of students	Uses high level practical and theoretical knowledge to establish challenging learning goals. Assists other teachers to develop clear and valuable learning goals which positively inform teaching and learning programmes of all students.
• Lesson sequence	Plans coherent lessons and lesson sequences that are designed to engage students and address learning outcomes	Implements coherent, well-structured lessons and lesson sequences that are supported by good lesson plans designed to engage students and address learning outcomes	Develops and implements effective teaching and learning sequences that consider and address the learning needs of specific students and enhance learning outcomes through innovative, engaging learning opportunities	Promotes processes to develop exemplary teaching and learning programmes which result in demonstrable learning outcome improvements in the wider school community
• Content selection	Demonstrates in lesson planning an awareness of the need for the selection of relevant content to support the attainment of student learning outcomes	Demonstrates sound knowledge of the discipline area by the selection and logical and structured use of relevant content to support student learning outcomes	Uses high level theoretical and practical knowledge to critically select the most appropriate content to support student learning outcomes	Leads and advises colleagues in the selection and organisation of subject content which support the attainment of student learning outcomes.
• Resource selection	Demonstrates in lesson planning knowledge of the importance of including a range of appropriate and engaging resources to support students' learning	Uses a variety of appropriate teaching resources to engage students and support their learning.	Develops new resources which extend learning opportunities and which are specific to the learning needs of their students	Initiates and leads colleagues in the identification, development, acquisition and allocation of teaching resources which maximise student learning
• Strategy selection	Incorporates in lesson planning a variety of teaching strategies	Planning includes a variety of teaching strategies which address differing learning styles	Selects, adapts and develops strategies that accommodate individual student's learning needs and styles and which promote desired learning outcomes. Particular consideration of boys' learning preferences is evident	Disseminates information to colleagues regarding new and effective teaching strategies which have been shown to enhance student learning outcomes. An awareness of contemporary trends in boys' education is shared with colleagues
• Reflective practice	Reflects on strengths and weaknesses of planned learning experiences	Reflects on strengths and weaknesses of planned learning experiences, and proposes changes to enhance future learning experiences.	Reflects on strengths and weaknesses of planned learning experiences, proposes changes to enhance future learning experiences, and refers to these to modify planning of future lessons accordingly	Self-evaluates and critiques own learning experiences and those of peers in order to support, in a collegial way, the development and enhancement of quality teaching throughout the school

The framework documents the performance standards that might be illustrated by teachers operating at different levels of proficiency. Table 4 provides a brief definition of each category.

Table 4: Teacher Professional Proficiency Development Framework

PROFESSIONAL FOUNDATIONS Knowledge/comprehension	The teacher demonstrates a sound grounding in the processes and principles related to the practice area. This would be developed through commencing qualifications or ongoing professional development.
PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE Application	The teacher is competent in applying the principles and processes into the classroom setting. The educational practices are consistent with the theories of effective classroom teaching.
PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT Analysis/Synthesis	The teacher applies the principles and processes of good classroom practice but also adapts and customizes them to suit the student needs and the learning context.
PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP Evaluation/Dissemination	The teacher critically evaluates the outcomes and the impact of the classroom practice to identify new and improved processes that might be applied. Peers are supported in their ongoing professional learning and good practice / insights are shared with colleagues.

The decision to focus on a development continuum was deliberate. This is an instrument designed to encourage professional development and renewal. While it can also be used to review a teacher’s current stage of development, the intention was to clearly state the desired behaviours which it is hoped that every teacher will ultimately demonstrate. Using this approach, it can be anticipated that all experienced teachers are capable of achieving the highest levels of performance – particularly if supported through peer mentoring and additional sources of development infrastructure.

The framework incorporates five domains of classroom practice: planning, environment, classroom processes, ICT strategies and assessment. While it was initially hoped that these domains would be able to draw on existing frameworks, the process of mapping what was pertinent to Scotch College quickly demonstrated the need to customize most of the items. The College was particularly keen to emphasise boys’ educational needs, with these being strongly tested in the emergent framework. As

teachers and senior members of the leadership teaching team scrutinized the matrix, there was also considerable discussion as to what the items meant and how they might be illustrated in the classroom setting. As a consequence, the framework was increasingly refined. It is hoped that the instrument will continue to focus teachers' reflections and consequently, be reviewed regularly to ensure it matches the Scotch College Quality Teaching priorities. The capacity to adapt and refine in-house has made the system very responsive to the College's needs. This is a particular advantage over adopting other frameworks which are regionally focused.

The contextualization of classroom practice to reflect the real context in which teaching operates is an advantage of the process. Similarly, the capacity of teachers to critique, test and model those depicted behaviours promotes common expectations and definitions that can be translated into any area of the College.

A further advantage of the framework is that it will reflect the *Instructional Intelligence* programme's focus, thereby building strong synergy between the two initiatives. Teachers involved in this programme will use the framework as a reflective tool, and those operating as peer mentors will also have access to the tool to guide their observation of classroom practice. This tool will also be used to frame the sharing of resources and the identification of good teaching strategies. These supplementary supports will enable strong translation of the framework into some clear and visible mechanisms for quality teaching that others can share and emulate.

The challenge of customizing a framework while also operating within an existing regulatory context (in this case, the WACOT and DET teaching processes) can place additional pressure on the development process. As noted earlier, it is important to ensure they are complementary processes which support and assist teachers. Dual systems which are not seeking the same outcomes are confusing, bewildering and frustrating for busy teachers. In the Scotch College process there was a need to refer back and monitor the WACOT and DET criteria to ensure the evolving framework operated sympathetically with the concurrently employed frameworks. At times this has proved challenging!

Some Emergent Principles for Framework Development

Our experience suggests a number of principles that may inform the work of others seeking to develop or contextualize performance standards to suit a specific school setting.

1. *Define what is meant by quality teaching.* At the heart of the process, this is the reason for the development of teaching performance frameworks. The school may have particular needs that should be considered, and these need to be recognised in the framework. On the other hand, the wealth of examples that are currently available offers useful guidance on what is possible. Some of the overseas examples with their associated strategies and exemplars can be particularly useful (e.g. Newport News Public Schools, 2001)
2. *The strategic directions and concerns of the school should be recognised in the framework.* The capacity to integrate generic principles and customized priorities is a particularly valuable element of building a school-based tool. The explicit link to school concerns promotes stronger consideration of the important issues facing that educational community.
3. *Ensure the standards are usable.* Standards should aim to provide measurable, demonstrable and readily interpreted guidance on what should be evident. To achieve a framework that accomplishes this level of rigour, it is recommended that many stakeholders be encouraged to critique and test its application.
4. *Consider the purpose of the framework.* The use of a developmental continuum which guides the progressive capability enhancement of teachers is recommended. This reflects the recognition that teachers, as professionals, should regularly re-engage and up-skill their knowledge and expertise to reflect new educational theory and practice.
5. *Identify how the framework will be used in the school.* A framework that is isolated and used solely as a management tool will have little success in shifting teachers' professional practice. The use of the tool within various professional applications, and its adaptation for different purposes also encourages its strong embedding into the organisational fabric. Stronger integration results in stronger adoption. For example, it might assist with induction of new staff (Howe, 2006), promotion of staff, student

feedback and many other purposes.

6. *Identify how staff will be supported in their enhancement of their teaching skills.*

A framework clearly states the standards teachers should reflect. It is not enough to establish performance expectations and frameworks without providing support for staff to reach those standards (Owen, 2005; Wexley & Latham, 2002). There must be sound support for teachers to identify aspects of their teaching that require renewal and then undertake further development. If the areas are common challenges across the teaching community, it is recommended that in-house support be considered, as it will promote stronger transfer into the teaching practices within the school.

7. *No one is an expert.* As a professional activity, teaching evolves for each individual differently. The development of a common framework to be used by all staff requires widespread consultation and input. The resultant outcome will assist in building more commonality across those different contributors through the discussion and deliberation – which can be quite intense when critical words and phrases are under review!

8. *The framework should be maintained and reviewed regularly.* Educational theory and practice constantly evolves. Professional practice should draw on new principles and understandings as they become more widely accepted. The frameworks will therefore need to be evaluated as an ongoing professional process within the relevant community.

Conclusion

The development of the *Scotch College Quality Teaching Framework* has been an exciting aspect of the school's focus on enhancing its students' experience. The framework construction was made more challenging by the deficiencies in the existing instruments available nationally and internationally. However, the consequent process of designing a specific tool also highlighted the importance of developing a more tailored approach to match the school's own priorities and foci. The resultant instrument is a working document. It is likely to look quite different in five years time to that which currently exists as teachers work with and modify the contents. This would be the ultimate test of effectiveness: that teachers operate from the framework to shape and

remodel their perceptions of professional practice and that they work toward a common understanding of what it means to be a quality teacher at Scotch College. It is believed this tool will contribute in an important way to the College's renewal of its educational focus.

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