
TEACHERS TEACHING — TEACHERS LEADING: Professional Standards for Australian Educators

Report on the
Teacher Professional Standards Workshop
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Prepared by:

Jan Althorp (ASTA)

Carol Cockburn (ALEA)

Terry Hayes (AATE)

Will Morony (AAMT)

Contents

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|---|----|
| Contents..... | 1 |
| Executive summary | 2 |
| The workshop..... | 4 |
| The three projects..... | 6 |
| Commonalities and differences between the projects..... | 9 |
| Moving forward — the issues | 11 |
| Moving forward — the future for teacher professional standards..... | 14 |
| Appendix 1. List of attendees | 18 |
| Appendix 2. Program..... | 19 |
| Appendix 3. Summary of process for the three projects..... | 23 |

Executive summary

Under its Quality Teacher Initiative *Teachers for the 21st Century*, the Commonwealth government established a project to conduct and report on a workshop of teacher representatives of four national teacher professional associations¹ currently involved in projects to develop professional standards in the teaching of English literacy, science and mathematics. The three projects individually provide examples of teacher professional standards by Australian teachers that benefit Australian education. Collectively, the projects provide a platform for the further development of such standards.

Consensus

— two sets of ‘touchstones’ for others to consider and adopt

At the end of the workshop the participants developed and agreed the following statement of commitments that underpin their work to develop teacher professional standards.

As professionals we are committed to:

- the recognition of quality teaching;
- teachers being central to the process of developing, implementing and renewing professional standards;
- a professional development process that is informed by the standards;
- professional Associations developing nationally agreed, discipline specific standards;
- our disciplines being essential to a quality and inclusive education;
- collaborative partnerships between all professional teaching associations;
- working with other stakeholders towards strengthening the profession.

Further, participants noted and agreed the following core characteristics of ‘quality teachers’.

Quality teachers:

- engage all students in purposeful and successful learning;
- are enthusiastic and reflective professionals;
- have a deep understanding of their subject and how to teach it;
- are committed to extending their knowledge and improving their practice;
- are committed to working creatively and constructively within a range of school and professional communities;
- are professionally accountable.

¹ The Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE); the Australian Literacy Educators’ Association (ALEA); the Australian Science Teachers Association (ASTA); the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers (AAMT).

Issues to address

Participants considered and began to develop strategies to address three key practical issues that will be central to ensuring that teacher professional associations take leading roles in the development of standards and recognition of teachers' high quality work:

- Engaging and enthusing all teachers in these disciplines — teachers as champions of the achievements of these projects as examples of what teachers can achieve.
- Informing and garnering support from the wider educational community — ensuring that the next collective steps are taken and owned by the profession.
- Winning support from employers, unions and others to create a non-adversarial approach that produces outcomes of such high quality that they are universally accepted.

There will be a myriad of issues that arise as the movement to develop and implement professional standards progresses. Participants have developed initial advice on some of these:

- Standards and teachers developing professionally throughout their careers — connection with professional teaching standards should be addressed within all professional development programs.
- Student outcomes are an appropriate measure of the quality of teaching if and only if the student outcomes that are valued reflect the range of intended outcomes for quality teaching and learning.
- Standards and their use must reflect the inextricable connection between teaching and context.
- Assessment and credentialing against professional standards must be voluntary, be characterised by a number of features including fairness, affordability and appropriate career recognition.

The workshop

Background

Three projects to undertake work in the area of teacher professional standards were funded under the Australian Research Council *Strategic Partnerships with Industry for Research and Training* (SPIRT) for the triennium 1999–2001. The teaching areas involved are English literacy (the *Standards for Teaching English Language and Literacy in Australia*, STELLA), mathematics (*Excellence in Teaching Mathematics: Professional Standards Project*) and science (*ASTA Professional Standards for Highly Accomplished Teachers of Science Project*).

Each of these projects involves national professional teacher associations as ‘industry partners’. In the SPIRT framework, industry partners are required to commit matching resources to the project. In this case, the four associations — the Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE) and the Australian Literacy Educators’ Association (ALEA); the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers (AAMT); the Australian Science Teachers Association (ASTA) have committed time and money in excess of \$500,000 to the projects.

The Commonwealth Government Quality Teacher Initiative, *Teachers for the 21st Century*, has recognised the identification of teacher professional standards as one of the strands leading to the provision of quality teachers. Under this strand there was a commitment to fund the teacher professional associations involved with the development of teacher standards to come together share the findings of their projects and to identify areas for further development. As a consequence, late in 2000, DETYA met representatives of the four professional associations involved with the SPIRT projects to reach agreement as to how this would best be achieved. The outcome of the meeting was that DETYA issued a Request for Tender to conduct a *Teacher Professional Standards Workshop* to involve teacher representatives from the three projects. The four professional associations formed a collaborative committee to develop plans and subsequently conduct the workshop. Members of this committee were:

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| AATE | Mr Terry Hayes (President) |
| ALEA | Ms Anne McNamara (President), then Ms Carol Cockburn (Secretary) |
| ASTA | Ms Jan Althorp (Executive Director) |
| AAMT | Mr Will Morony (Professional Officer) |

It was also agreed that the AAMT would be the signatory to the contract, and undertake a significant administrative role in the project. The contract was signed in January 2001, and the workshop conducted on the weekend of 24–25 March 2001 in Adelaide.

Purposes of the workshop

The purposes of the workshop were to:

- give members of the teacher professional associations participating in the three SPIRT projects relating to advanced teacher standards and certification the opportunity to meet together to share the insights and experiences gained from participation and to identify areas for further development; and

- produce a report that will be of assistance to other professional associations or organisations wishing to develop professional standards for teachers.

To meet these purposes, the workshop provided the opportunity, from teachers' perspectives, for the professional associations to:

- share experiences and insights and discuss issues relating to the development of professional standards;
- identify strategies to promote interest in and support for the development of professional standards both among their own members and the broader education community; and
- identify areas for further development.

Attendees and process

It was agreed that each project group could send up to 13 people to the workshop. For each of these only one attendee was, by agreement, a researcher from the University partners. Other attendees were, in all but a few cases, classroom teachers. This ensured that the workshop could be, and be clearly seen to be, representative of teachers' views. Mr Brian Pearson and Ms Susan Gurr attended on behalf of DETYA.

All states and territories were represented in all three groups. There was an even split between men and women in each group and overall (21 men; 20 women). There were people from all education sectors and levels of schooling. Most attendees were drawn from metropolitan centres, although there were some people from rural areas, and one from a remote location. A full list of attendees is included in Appendix 1.

The program for the workshop is Appendix 2. In summary, the processes for the workshop were designed to inform attendees, stimulate discussion and identify areas of consensus. The speakers in the program were identified by the three groups.

The three projects²

English literacy

The STELLA Project (*Standards for the Teaching of Language and Literacy in Australia*) is a joint project of the Australian Association for the Teaching of English (AATE), and the Australian Literacy Educators' Association (ALEA). The two other groups involved in the project are university Education faculties and 'standards' bodies in Victoria, Western Australia and Queensland. The universities involved are Monash University, Edith Cowan University and the Queensland University of Technology. The standards bodies are the Ministerial Advisory Committee on the Victorian Institute of Teaching (MACVIT — replaces the Standards Council for the Teaching Profession), The Centre for Teaching Excellence (Queensland) and The Education Department of Western Australia. The consortium reflects the fact that the project has its 'research' base in teacher panels in three states — Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia. Each state has a steering committee drawn from the three partners, and there is a national reference group which involves representation from stakeholders in other states and territories. The national structure of both AATE and ALEA ensures input from states and territories which are not directly involved in the research.

The aims of the STELLA project are to:

- develop an approach to the identification of standards that English language and literacy teachers recognise as grounded in their own professional knowledge, experience and values;
- distinguish between the level of performance expected of beginning teachers (P–12) and the level of performance expected of teachers seeking advanced standing at a later stage of their teaching career; and
- provide a comprehensive set of standards-based materials including a professional performance standards framework, a set of contextualised case study narratives exemplifying the standards and a standards-based assessment portfolio.

The methodology of the project contextualises the standards in teachers' narratives of what they consider significant moments in their teaching. It is intended that the standards will offer an appropriate blueprint for professional development pathways for teachers of English literacy.

The recent collaborative publication, STELLA, makes the work-in-progress of the project available to AATE and ALEA members. A number of important articles set the project in the context of the development of professional standards for teachers, both in Australia and internationally. Primary and secondary teachers involved in STELLA have written stories in an effort to describe 'good' English literacy teaching, and this publication presents a selection from the corpus of narratives they have produced so far.

Work in 2001 will reflect the commitment to developing assessment rich tasks, particularly portfolios, which will offer evidence of the ways in which teachers might meet professional standards.

² Appendix 3 contains more detailed information about each of the projects.

Mathematics

The Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers (AAMT) began considering the issue of teacher professional standards in the mid 1990s. The AAMT's equivalent in the USA — the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics — released its *Professional Standards for teaching mathematics* in 1991. In addition, the work of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) in the USA, which in mathematics drew heavily on this NCTM resource, was beginning to be known in this country. In formulating its intention to work on professional standards, the AAMT was keen to build on this work in the Australian context in order to address what it saw as a national and international issue. For the Association the teaching of mathematics is a specialist activity that needs to be articulated in order to inform colleagues and the community what teachers of mathematics believe is important. The work is also linked to efforts to enhance the status of teachers.

The *Excellence in Teaching Mathematics: Professional Development Project* is engaged in research and development, with adoption and implementation of its results in the hands of the AAMT Council. Staff from Monash University are leading the research work. The project will publish standards describing excellence in the teaching of mathematics, and assessment processes for certifying teachers as 'highly accomplished' against these standards. The research is grounded in the input of teachers in four states (New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia) who work as Teacher Focus Groups. Materials are validated through widespread consultative processes involving members. Advice is sought from a Steering Committee consisting of representatives of all government education authorities, the national organisation of non-government, non-Catholic schools, the state and territory mathematics teacher associations, national principals' groups, national unions and various other interested groups including the Mathematics Education Group of Australasia (MERGA), the Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE) and the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA).

The components of the project's final publication will be:

- descriptors;
- elaboration, consisting of examples, narratives and further explanation to clarify the standards and make them live for teachers;
- assessment information and examples; and
- background information about the project and associated publications.

The material will be published electronically to allow easy connection between the components. The material will grow and develop after the completion of the project to reflect the view of the standards as dynamic and flexible — able to change and adapt, when necessary, over time — and to maintain its status as a vibrant, relevant professional resource for teachers.

Developing and trialling assessment processes are the focus activities in the project in 2001. Three modes of assessment are being explored and evaluated. These are portfolios, assessment centres where candidates sit a test, and interviews. It is anticipated that evidence that a candidate meets the criteria will be sought from multiple sources and, where possible, in different modes.

Science

The Australian Science Teachers Association (ASTA) has embarked on a three year collaborative research project with Monash University to develop standards for highly accomplished science teaching and methods for assessing whether teachers have attained

those standards. The long term goal of the project is to lay the groundwork for a national voluntary system for giving professional certification to highly accomplished teachers of science.

The ASTA/ Monash science professional teaching standards project is the latest stage in a process that began back in the early 1990s, when ASTA Federal Council first discussed whether the Association should get involved in developing teaching standards. There was no doubt in the minds of ASTA Council members then, that the primary responsibility for developing standards for good science teaching should rest with the teaching profession itself.

The main research aims of the project are to;

- develop and validate standards for highly accomplished teaching *of science* in primary and secondary schools;
- develop and validate methods for assessing the performance of highly accomplished teachers of science; and
- build understanding and support nationally for the project among education and school authorities who will determine whether national certification is recognised by states and school systems.

ASTA has recently conducted an extensive consultation process, seeking feedback on the draft professional standards for highly accomplished teachers of science. The development of the draft standards was undertaken by the National Science Standards Committee (NSSC). In order to select this appropriately qualified group of people, expressions of interest were called for, drawing a substantial response. The criteria for the merit-based selection of the NSSC were evidence of rich professional lives and a commitment to the task at hand. Members were also selected in the light of effective representation of all levels and sectors of schooling.

The ASTA project approaches science teaching standards as holistic yet observable descriptions of teaching. These descriptions developed are founded on a vision *of the kind of science learning we value* as well as relevant research on learning and teaching science. The standards provide a framework describing *the knowledge skills and attitudes that teachers need to produce successful learning*. They aim to capture the essence of effective performance in teaching science.

One of the core purposes of the science SPIRT project is to develop processes for assessing the performance of highly accomplished *science* teachers: processes that probe the *subject-specific nature* of what good science teachers know and do; processes that call for the kind of *judgement* that only expert science teachers can make; and processes that promote teachers' professional development as a *direct result of undertaking them*.

The development and evaluation of assessment items is currently under way.

Commonalities and differences between the projects

The processes of the workshop were carefully designed to foster understanding of the three projects, and to develop shared views about the ways in which the projects are similar, and how they are different from each other.

Commonalities

The major commonalities between the three projects are in the areas of purpose, underlying ways of working and emerging views of professional teaching standards.

The broad *purposes* of the three projects include the enhancement of the status of the teaching profession through the articulation of professional standards for teaching within specific disciplines. The intention is to develop standards that teachers and the whole community accept are accurate and true reflections of good practice to which all teachers might aspire. The standards are seen to be professionally supportive. They enable celebration of good teaching. They will be important guides for teachers' professional growth during their careers, and this, along with the capacity to recognise and celebrate achievement of good teaching in relation to the standards, is a key beneficial outcome for the projects.

Given that the projects involve national teacher professional associations it is not surprising that teacher input and ownership characterise the projects' *ways of working*. Each project is based on the work of a relatively small group of teachers being shared with others, refined, shared again and so on in an iterative process. Important to each project has been the conduct of a survey of all members in relation to emerging materials and directions. The projects are working independently of each other to ensure that results meet the needs of the professional communities involved. Increasingly, personnel involved in the projects are creating opportunities to share results and learn from each other. The richness of the outcomes from this workshop reflect the value of the projects being separate yet connected.

Although there have been substantial differences in methodology between the three projects (below), some clear commonalities in the *emerging views of professional teaching standards* are evident. The broad frameworks for the three sets of professional standards are very similar in terms of the domains seen as important. All have a strong commitment to teachers as reflective practitioners and expect teachers to work positively in professional communities. Narratives, vignettes and other examples from individual teachers' work are seen to be important precursors to describing the standards. There is a common commitment that the standards be relevant for teachers from K–12, and that they be accessible and useful for teachers in the wide variety of teaching contexts present in Australian schools and other settings in which teaching and learning take place. As a result, consideration of context and how to ensure that professional standards 'speak to' all teachers is a major focus for the projects — the standards have to be able to be realised within different contexts. Further, this focus on context is designed to ensure that the professional standards do not lead to 'standardisation' of teaching practice, something that the three projects are determined to avoid.

Differences

The major differences between the projects relate to the methodologies being used, audiences, and intentions in relation to assessment of teachers against the professional standards being developed.

The purpose of collecting narratives and other examples is a marked example of the differences in the *methodologies* of the three projects. For the English literacy project the teacher narratives were used to generate the standards. In the mathematics project, narratives and examples are part of setting and making the standards 'live' in the eyes of teachers. For science, this sort of material will be derived from trialling assessment and will serve to illustrate the standards. There are also differences in the extent and means for validating the work with stakeholders other than the particular professional groups. The English literacy project has built a relationship with some systems' 'standards' bodies into the structure of the STELLA project. For mathematics it has involved keeping stakeholders informed through the project's Steering Committee, while the science project has been more active in seeking commentary from potentially critical professional societies.

While each project intends for their work to be useful in providing a professional development framework for an *audience* that includes teachers at all stages of their career, both the mathematics and science projects describe the knowledge, abilities and attributes of teaching at an 'excellent' or 'highly accomplished' standard, reflecting a focus on teachers with some years of experience. This is reflected in the titles of the projects and materials — *Excellence in Teaching Mathematics: Professional Standards Project* and *Professional Standards for Highly Accomplished Teachers of Science* — and the language of the documentation. The English literacy project, on the other hand, is explicitly involved with professional standards for teachers throughout their careers.

Moving forward — the issues

Common issues for the three projects

Some issues were identified as facing the projects:

- Ensuring that all aspects of professional standards, from their descriptions to any assessments that may occur are owned and controlled by teachers.
- Maintaining the subject specificity of the work — the goal is to capture what is unique to practice in the different disciplines. This is seen to be important in the light of the perception that some other groups in Australian education see generic teaching standards as the only viable way forward.
- Ensuring that the narratives, stories, vignettes and examples are seen as illustrative, not prescriptive.
- The extent to which areas emerging as important in descriptions of good practice (e.g. ‘passion’ for the subject and its learning) can or should be expressed in the standards.
- Establishing professional development programs (of systems, universities and professional associations) that are guided by the standards in English literacy, mathematics and science.
- The capacity for the standards being developed to be able to adapt and incorporate what is learnt from any trial/pilot phase involving assessments of teachers.
- The need for the standards to be able to change and adapt progressively over the longer term, through processes that respond to developments in educational knowledge and practice.
- Ensuring that the professional standards can guide the ongoing discipline-renewal of teachers in the context of any processes for registration and, particularly, the renewal of registration through demonstrating a sustained level of competence .
- Bringing on board those who are ‘outsiders’ to the current processes, whether they are involved in these teaching areas or not (including teachers in other discipline areas, principals, parents and students, employers and unions). Developing appropriate strategies for communicating and collaborating with all these groups is an essential and important development.
- Although the projects individually and collectively have made substantial progress, the continued scarcity of funding may compromise quality and even the capability to complete the work.

Standards and developing professionally³

The importance of this issue resulted in each discipline group presenting a perspective. The three perspectives dealt with the issue at different scales. From the individual teacher’s perspective the emphasis on reflective practice, the identification of goals for professional

³ In the planning for the workshop, a number of issues relating to work on professional teaching standards was identified. These were reduced to four and each was addressed through plenary input and discussion.

growth and the recognition of oneself as a valued member of a collaborative professional community were seen as empowering elements. At the level of design and control of the professional development agenda, current system-driven arrangements were contrasted with a professional development system that is driven by teaching standards. The contribution to the development of the teaching profession as a whole that comes from individuals and groups developing their professional knowledge and skills provided the third and most global frame of reference.

The centrality of developing professionally to the projects' work meant that it was a recurring theme in many of the discussions throughout the workshop.

Standards and student outcomes

Accountability in education has resulted in a focus on measuring and reporting student outcomes. Given the strong connection between the quality of teaching and the quality of student learning it would seem logical for student outcomes to be a measure of the quality of teaching. A major issue in this is the nature of the assessment of student learning that is used. The professional standards paint a very rich picture of teaching and of what is important learning in the various disciplines. Teachers need to assert their professionalism (as demonstrated in their willingness to be held accountable to complex standards for teaching) to insist on rich assessment processes for measuring student learning.

Not surprisingly, the connection between the quality of teaching and student outcomes was strongly endorsed in discussion. However, there is a need for careful research that investigates the effects of the components of good teaching (as in the standards) on students' outcomes. For example, the standards highlight the importance of good relationships with students. Linking these with student outcomes is important, although rigorous research in this area is yet to be done.

The professional teaching standards being developed in these projects are explicitly designed to promote contemporary views of good learning in these discipline areas. Hence the valued student outcomes go well beyond those measured in current systemic standardised assessments. These outcomes, such as 'processes', attitudes and confidence should also be measured, not just improvements of easily measured external outcomes assessed in time-limited procedures.

The discussion also linked this issue back to one of the overall goals for these projects; that of enhancing the professional standing of teachers. Participants believe that the profession should be working towards public status that understands and acknowledges the highly authoritative status of the profession's views on excellent teaching and learning, what the curriculum should cover and how it should be covered, and the valued outcomes for student learning. The standards work is important as it articulates what teachers do and value. An effective communication strategy, particularly aimed at parents and their organisations, is needed.

Standards and teaching context

A core quote from the talk is that 'context is at the heart of the complexity of teaching'. It is therefore not possible to abstract the act of teaching to be independent of context and still retain the essence of good teaching. Hence, these projects must have a commitment to, and carefully search for ways to address context in descriptions of high quality teaching practice.

Each project acknowledges that the impact of teaching context is extremely important in its developmental work, and that the results (professional standards and any subsequent

assessments) must be inclusive of teachers from the range of educational and teaching contexts found in Australia. The approaches to this challenge are different, and continued sharing will be beneficial.

Acknowledgement of attainment against the teaching standards in a particular discipline must be seen to be equally challenging in different contexts. As an example, concerns were expressed in relation to the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). There is no doubt that the standards being developed will set expectations about teachers having knowledge and skills in relation to the classroom and other uses of ICTs. It is also true that there is a wide variation in the access provided to ICTs in our schools. Hence there is the danger that a teacher in a teaching situation that has relatively poor access to ICTs will be disadvantaged in relation to meeting the standards in comparison with a peer in a school that is well equipped. Any assessment of teachers against the standards should account for this variable, particularly in relation to items included in portfolios. The focus will need to be on the quality of the contribution of the use of ICTs to the teaching and learning, not on the sophistication of the tools themselves.

Standards and assessment and credentialling

For some years, systems and employers have been attempting to create career paths for teachers that provide monetary advancements for those who demonstrate high levels of teaching skills. It was argued that these schemes should be more rigorous and financially rewarding. There need to be searching peer assessments and a pay structure that is equivalent and parallel to the current structure for the 'administrative' stream.

Some of the discussion on this issue mirrored the discussion about context. Any assessment and credentialling will need to be fair to teachers in all teaching situations. Much of the rest of the conversation focussed on practicalities to be addressed in any scheme.

Assessment processes were seen to require the following characteristics:

- legally defensible
- economically affordable, especially for the teachers involved
- administratively feasible
- lead to established means for career advancement (salary scales, etc.) for those who are credentialled.

A structure of a national board or other body was suggested. Parents, systems, unions and teachers would be involved, with the overall role being to ensure consistency and coherence. Such an over-arching structure raises the issue of ensuring that standards developed in different areas are of appropriate quality. It was suggested that 'standards for developing professional teaching standards' would be required — this issue would need to be carefully explored. Also, the issue of equivalence between the requirements to achieve certification in different teaching areas would need to be resolved.

Although not explicitly in the record of this conversation, the notion of the assessment process being in some way cumulative was raised at the workshop. It was thought that the process should be able to occur over time, with teachers able to build up their set of evidence. The practice of 'banking' results in the procedures of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) in the USA was highlighted as a model indicative of what might be ideal. This concern reflects the orientation towards teacher development in the approaches of the projects.

Moving forward — the future for teacher professional standards

Comments from an 'outsider' — input from Mr Geoff Spring

Mr Spring, Chief Executive of the South Australian Department of Education, Training and Employment, was the opening speaker on the second day of the workshop. Mr Spring is also the Chair of the MCEETYA Teacher Preparation, Recruitment and Training Task Force. This group has responsibility for recommending to Ministers on the area of teacher professional standards.

Mr Spring was invited to address the question:

If you (i.e. the association members at the workshop) want systems/employers to take this work seriously, what are the things you have to take into account?

By way of preparatory reading, Mr Spring was provided with the background material sent to all participants and a brief summary of the previous day's work.

In his introductory comments, Mr Spring noted the importance of the *Quality Matters. Revitalising teaching: Critical times, critical choices* (Report of the Review of Teacher Education, New South Wales, Ramsey G., November 2000); the Ramsey Report provides what he termed a 'blueprint for the professionalisation of teachers'. He proposed the view that employers and unions had fallen into adversarial industrial positions and that the involvement of teacher professional associations has the potential to provide a way forward in relation to professional standards and recognition of teachers with advanced professional capabilities. This 'third way' forward avoids the inevitable industrial issues that would occur if the employers and unions were centrally involved in the developments. To achieve this, the movement should maintain a focus on the grass roots involvement of teachers to build up a framework that is understood and owned.

Mr Spring noted that the development of nationally agreed standards for entry into the profession, for 're-registration' and for promotion positions (in the administrative line) is likely to be on the agenda in the near future. This work would be generic in nature rather than subject specific and could take 18 months to complete. In relation to the associated issue of discipline specific advanced certification, one possibility would be that the systems become attracted to the processes and outcomes of these projects and negotiate ways of incorporating these in their approach.

Three factors were identified as being important in achieving this result:

- there must be a continuing emphasis on the involvement and engagement of all teachers involved in teaching the disciplines;
- communication and, where practicable, collaboration with other key groups in the education community is essential to create understanding, appreciation and acceptance of the common intentions of the three projects as significant — this is essential in finding a productive way forward in terms of voluntary certification;
- strategic action to win support from employers and unions for this 'third way'.

Engaging and enthusing all teachers in these disciplines

The methodology of the three projects has involved intensive work with a small group of teachers and others. There has been some outreaching to teachers not immediately involved in the research. Each project sees the issue of informing and engaging the commitment of the rank and file of their membership — and others who are teachers of mathematics, science or English literacy but who are not members — as a key issue at this time. This was reinforced by Mr Spring's comment that grass roots ownership of the work is one of the potential strengths.

Although the teaching standards projects are initiatives of the national professional associations, teachers' first point of contact with their professional association is through their state/territory teacher groups. Hence, the four national groups need to establish processes within the local organisations that inform and involve members. Each organisation is different and should develop its own model for making this national activity a local priority, but there was a clear and encouraging commitment from the national representatives at the workshop.

Some strategies

- Use face-to-face processes at local levels such as conferences and special workshops to enable close examination of the work.
- Relate standards to teachers' personal experiences; build the number of exemplars, narratives etc. through these activities.
- There needs to be sustained effort within the local association committees and councils.
- Projects need to provide clear information for those involved in the project and responsible for outreach (e.g. workshop attendees) to help their efforts, maybe as ready to use workshop materials etc. This will enable the delivery of a consistent message.
- A dedicated special journal issue (the STELLA journal issue was seen to be an outstanding achievement) or other mass hard-copy information dissemination to members and others.
- A 'cascading' model in which local personnel seek to inform and engage a small number of schools in the first instance (say 10), with the speed of spread and energy growing fairly quickly as these others come on board and become agents for the project.

Informing and garnering support from the wider educational community

There was broad support for the four groups taking this up in some collective way. It was clear from Mr Spring's address that there are significant groups to be contacted and informed about the projects' work. The understanding and support of other professional groups, parents, employers and unions will be important in creating the environment in which the grass roots approaches being pioneered can spread and grow into a key component of the overall approach to professional standards in this country. It needs to be seen as a collaborative 'movement' of professional associations creating professional standards.

Given that this workshop was an historic first meeting, it was acknowledged that careful planning of future strategies, and phasing of emphases will need to be undertaken. This is a task of participants and other association leaders as a follow-up to the workshop.

The advice that 'nationally agreed' teacher standards are likely to be the way forward means that, as above, some of the emphasis should be at the local level. If the starting point for the workshop was a willingness for the national teacher organisations to work together, one of the key achievements was the way in which this was mirrored at the end of the workshop by a similar commitment at the state and territory levels. There is a real commitment to working together as ambassadors for the movement and each others' work on teacher professional standards.

Some strategies

Note: these strategies arose from small group discussion and were not shared and 'vetted' by the whole group. They are presented as potentially helpful ideas that may be useful to readers.

A wide and diverse range of stakeholder groups was identified. These include principal associations, parent groups, tertiary educators, education systems, unions, professional associations in education (other disciplines) and professional societies in the discipline itself.

The four groups should not be defensive about the work — it should be made public and celebrated as it demonstrates that teachers, through their professional associations, have the capacity and the will to play a major role in the standards agenda. Hence, a number of the ideas below are deliberately oriented towards making the work public.

- Create a slogan for the 'movement' (*'Teachers have standards'*).
- Distribute bumper stickers and posters.
- Seek media exposure (opinion-editorial pieces for newspapers; radio talkback; television coverage of events; through websites etc.).
- Promote the movement and the work in professional newsletters and journals (systems, unions, principals, parents etc.).
- Conduct combined conferences and regional meetings involving the four groups and others.
- Develop and use consistent information (including both this report and material distilled from it) when promoting the joint work of the 'movement'.
- Approaches to principals and principals' groups needs to be a combined effort that reflects their overall educational leadership and the fact that many teachers do not necessarily relate closely with these particular discipline areas.
- Ensure that the associations' work is promoted and influential in the work of governments and other authorities at the state, territory and national levels, and in the work of other professional organisations (such as the Australian College of Education, Australian Curriculum Studies Association and others) on teacher standards and associated issues.
- Make individual and combined submissions to public enquiries on education, consultation processes on recommendations of reviews into teaching and teaching bodies.

Possible further work

Each of the projects has an ambitious program of work to be completed. For those present at the workshop and their colleagues involved in the projects, this will be a focus over the short and medium terms. The workshop has created, however, a platform with the potential to inform and significantly advance work on professional standards in this country. In the few months after the workshop, its results have been reported in a number of forums, including workshops conducted by the Australian College of Education, a meeting of the National

Education Forum, a meeting of the MCEETYA Task Force on Teacher Preparation, Recruitment and Training, as well as within our organisations at the national, state and territory levels.

In the shorter term, informing and encouraging other professional groups to consider the issues involved in developing standards for their area of specialisation is an important goal. Clearly, widespread availability of this report will be important in this process. Other materials and expertise developed by these four associations will also be useful. In addition, the organisations involved can and will work proactively to inform and encourage others. This will take place through informal means. Some structure and support would enhance these efforts, however. In particular:

1. A workshop at the end of the projects (e.g. second quarter of 2002) to share final results and products and to highlight resolution of many of the issues identified in this workshop. This would create a further resource for other groups considering, or working on teacher standards. In fact, involving others working in the area would make this a highly effective means for disseminating the completed work of the projects. An important addition to what could be reported at that time are the results in relation to assessing teachers against standards.
2. Much of the effort to ensure grass-roots educators are informed about the importance and potential of professional standards will occur at the state/territory level, through the local arms of the four national bodies. A range of strategies and activities was foreshadowed by participants at the workshop. Support for means which inform, encourage and support this work will greatly enhance the levels of teacher commitment to and ownership of professional standards being developed by the profession.

Although it is a longer term proposition, the four associations see an immediate need to engage with bodies involved with professional standards at the national and state/territory levels. The purpose would be to inform others about the work of these projects and to establish collaborative investigations that pave the way for the wider implementation of their work, and the work of others that might follow. In particular, the four groups involved in the workshop seek support to work collaboratively to:

3. Make ongoing contributions to the considerations about teacher standards by the MCEETYA Task Force on Teacher Preparation, Recruitment and Training, and any relevant subsequent initiatives.
4. Inform relevant authorities and groups (the mooted institutes of teachers/teaching; teacher registration authorities and so on) in the states and territories about their work and its potential.

These four areas are seen as the most effective for maximising the benefits of the workshop now and into the future. They may be supportable as stand-alone activities, or exist as part of some wider initiative that relates to teacher quality, teacher standards and the status of teaching.

Appendix 1. List of attendees

AAMT

| | | | |
|------------------|------|---------------|------|
| Margaret Bigelow | NSW | Will Morony | SA |
| Barbara Clarke | Vic. | Carol Moule | SA |
| Peter Cooper | Qld | Ray Peck | Vic. |
| John Gaulke | NT | Neville Punch | WA |
| Vince Geiger | Qld | Di Siemon | Vic. |
| Christina Jonas | SA | Trish Wilson | Tas. |
| Paulene Kibble | ACT | | |

AATE/ALEA

| | | | |
|----------------------|------|----------------|------|
| Caroline J. Cockburn | ACT | Rebecca Ryan | QLD |
| Brenton Doecke | Vic. | John Sarev | NT |
| Susan Gazis | NSW | Bev Sattler | Vic. |
| Terry Hayes | Vic. | Robyn Smith | WA |
| Bill Johnstone | Qld | Paul Sommer | SA |
| Phil Page | Tas. | Bette Triglone | ACT |
| Karren Philp | WA | | |

ASTA

| | | | |
|-------------------------|------|--------------------|------|
| Susan Alexander-Littler | ACT | Lawrence Ingvarson | Vic. |
| Jan Althorp | ACT | Mike Roach | SA |
| Marj Colvill | Tas. | Greg Smith | Qld |
| Andrew Dodson | SA | Gary Thomas | WA |
| Peter Ferguson | Tas. | John Werry | Vic. |
| Hilary Fowler | NT | Jane Wright | SA |
| Chris Huxley | NSW | | |

DETYA

| | | | |
|------------|-----|---------------|-----|
| Susan Gurr | ACT | Brian Pearson | ACT |
|------------|-----|---------------|-----|

Appendix 2. Program

Day 1 — Saturday 24 March

Part 1 — The Work

Chair: Vince Geiger (Mathematics)

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| 8.30 | Morning coffee and chat | |
| 9.30 | Welcome and introductions | |
| | Welcome to venue; begin process of getting to know each other. | |
| 9.40 | Setting the scene and purposes | |
| | <i>Why are teaching standards a priority in Teachers for the 21st Century?</i> | Brian Pearson (DETYA) |
| | Outline of purpose of workshop and expected outcomes, leading to overview of process (recording discussions and collation of these etc.). | Will Morony (on behalf of the organising group) |
| 9.50 | Overviews of the three projects | |
| | Three 'champagne moments'. Short (5 minutes each) presentations of a really great incident or achievement in the project. | Jane Wright (Science) Carol Cockburn (English/literacy) Trish Wilson (Mathematics) |
| | Outline of the frameworks for the three projects (10–15 minutes each). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the goals of the project? • What are the motivations and roles of the different partners? • How is the work being done? • What will the 'final' documentation of standards look like? • What will be achieved in terms of assessment of teachers against the standards? | Terry Hayes (English/literacy) Barbara Clarke (Mathematics) Jane Wright (Science) |
| 10.40 | Morning tea | |

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| 11.00 | Exploring commonalities 1 | |
| | Three area-specific groups discuss information received so far. Focus on commonalities, differences, interesting features and areas for caution from the perspective of their curriculum area project. | Chairs for each group. Individuals to keep their own record to help inform their contribution to the next discussion. |
| | Four mixed groups to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seek brief clarifications about projects (if needed); • begin to identify commonalities, differences, interesting features and cautions. | Chairs (organising group members or other) |
| | Plenary session to share discussions. | |
| 12.50 | Lunch | |

Part 2 — Some key issues

Chair: Sue Gazis (English/literacy)

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| 1.30 | Standards and developing professionally | |
| | Panel (one from each project) to make short presentations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does this mean in their project?(identify a metaphor?) • How is developing professionally built into the project? • What are the responses from teachers involved? | Rebecca Ryan (English/literacy) Jane Wright (Science) Di Siemon (Mathematics) |
| | Questions and clarifications. | |
| 2.10 | Exploring commonalities 2 | |
| | Four mixed groups (as before) identify commonalities/differences/cautions and any 'fundamentals' for this kind of work in relation to developing professionally. | Chairs as before |
| | Plenary session to share discussions. | |
| 3.10 | Three vital issues | |
| | Short plenary presentations about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards and teaching context; • Standards and assessment/certification; • Standards and student outcomes. | Standards and student outcomes — Will Morony (Mathematics) Standards and assessment/certification — Lawrence Ingvarson (Science) Standards and teaching context — Brenton Doecke (English/literacy) |
| 3.40 | Afternoon tea | |

| | | |
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| 4.00 | Exploring these issues | |
| | Participants to select one of three groups to focus on one of these issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the issues in the overarching issue? • Opportunities and cautions • Any notes from individual projects. | Chairs from organising group |
| | Plenary session to share discussions. | |
| 5.00 | Exploring commonalities — summary | |
| | Plenary session to draw together the outcomes of the three discussion sessions to formulate key advice/input to go to Geoff Spring overnight. | |
| 5.30 | Refreshments and informal networking | |
| 6.30 | Dinner (local restaurant) | |

Day 2 — Sunday 25 March

Part 3 — Reality checks

Chair: Marj Colvill (Science)

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| 8.30 | Reality in relation to systems/employers | |
| | <i>If you want systems/employers to take this seriously, these are the things you have to take into account.</i> | Geoff Spring (Chief Executive of DETE, Chair of the MCEETYA Teacher Preparation, Recruitment and Training Task Force) |
| | Questions and discussion. | |
| | Further small group discussion to identify implications of the Spring input. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging signs. • Things to think about. • Issues. | |
| | Plenary sharing of small group discussions | |
| 10.00 | Morning tea | |

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| 10.30 | Reality for teachers | |
| | The three area-specific groups to discuss issues of reality for teachers. (<i>What do we have to do to make sure our work is known about, appreciated and used widely by our constituencies?</i>) Some areas to address are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encouragement/blockers • dissemination • generating real ownership • other stakeholders. | Each group to identify chair and recorder Recording to proforma. |
| | Plenary sharing of discussions, particularly strategies for addressing issues. | |
| 12.00 | Lunch | |

Part 4 — Next Steps

Chair: Vince Geiger (Mathematics)

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| 12.45 | Potential for the future | |
| | Brief statement of known future activities that move the teacher standards work forward. | One of organising group |
| | Brainstorm of ideas for the future | |
| | Mixed groups to discuss and elaborate some essential and desirable future developments in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standards in Australia; • the three groups; • the profession. | Each group to identify chair and recorder |
| | Plenary session to draw together the Next Steps. | |
| 2.45 | Closing session | |
| | Clear statement of the process in relation to finalising the project to conduct this workshop | Will Morony (on behalf of the organising group) |
| | Thanks and closing comments. | |
| 3.00 | Close | |

Appendix 3. Summary of process for the three projects

WHY — RATIONALE AND BACKGROUND

| English literacy | Mathematics | Science |
|---|--|---|
| <p>The STELLA project had its genesis in a remark made by Professor A .D .Hope in his role as President of the Australian Association for the Teaching of English in 1965 when he asserted that for a profession to be taken seriously as a profession it needed to take responsibility for developing and implementing standards against which its members' expertise and competence might be judged. In recent years that claim has received impetus from the Senate Enquiry into the Status of Teaching recommending a clearly defined self regulatory role for the teaching profession. The developing political agenda in various states has made issues of standards and accountability a focus in education. The profession's aim to develop professional standards based on English literacy teachers own professional knowledge, experience and values is an attempt to meet those challenges and to speak with authority about standards which directly impinge upon us. The nature of the partnership in the project between practising teachers, academic researchers and 'standards' bodies recognises the need for collaborative action between as the key players in developing standards for teachers and for embedding them in a realistic, practical context.</p> | <p>The AAMT has recognised that 'teaching standards' are a national and international issue. This led to a commitment to take action to develop standards that represent the views and aspirations of teachers of mathematics, rather than allowing others to occupy the territory.</p> <p>The Association also believes that it is important to enhance the status of teachers of mathematics in the eyes of the community. A credible system of standards is seen as an important factor in achieving this.</p> <p>The <i>Excellence in teaching mathematics: Professional standards project</i> is a research and development project to explore the issues and produce results for consideration for adoption by the wider AAMT community. It focusses on establishing high standards of performance in order to avoid the difficulties inherent in the area of standards for 'beginning' or 'competent' teachers. It is intended, however, that the standards developed will provide a developmental framework for teachers at all stages of their careers. Processes for assessing teachers against the standards are also being developed. Any implementation will be based on voluntary participation in assessment processes.</p> | <p>ASTA is a Federation of the eight State and Territory Science Teachers Associations in Australia. Its focus is to promote science education and support science teaching at a national level.</p> <p>This project was agreed to by ASTA Federal Council with the rationale that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional standards recognise the complex and skilled work of teachers of science. • They will therefore raise the status of teachers and improve their career paths. • By declaring publicly the attributes of highly accomplished teachers of science, the standards will guide long term professional development and hence raise the quality of teaching and learning in science. |

WHAT — OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

| English literacy | Mathematics | Science |
|---|--|--|
| <p><i>A Professional Standards Framework</i> which will identify standards that English language and literacy teachers recognise as grounded in their own professional knowledge, experience and values: and which will enable them to distinguish between the levels of performance expected of beginning teachers (P-12) and the level of performance expected of teachers seeking advanced standing at a later stage of their career.</p> <p>The Framework will consist of the following interrelated interactive components :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a framework outlining domains such as believing, knowing, teaching/learning/professional engagement • bridging statements, relating the framework concepts to subject/level specific statements • the narratives/commentaries/video exemplars <p>In developing the framework as an interactive website (http://www.aate.org.au/STELLA) the project recognises the fact that standards are not static but subject to the changing dynamic of both the knowledge base of the discipline and the evolving nature of pedagogy.</p> <p><i>A comprehensive set of standards based materials</i> including the framework, a set of contextualised case study narratives exemplifying the standards, and a standards based assessment portfolio</p> <p>The project also intends that such a product will provide an invaluable <i>professional development resource</i> for teachers developing their own career pathways and for faculties and schools in planning curriculum.</p> | <p>Two outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards that describe excellence in teaching mathematics. • Processes for assessing teachers as achieving a high level of accomplishment against these standards. These processes ready for piloting at the end of the Project. <p>The output of the project will be an electronic document consisting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptors that are concise statements to describe excellence in teaching mathematics; • Elaboration that clarifies the standards and make them live for teachers; • Assessment information and examples; and • Background information about the project and associated publications. <p>This electronic document will be dynamic and able to expand and develop further over time to take on board new examples and elaboration. It will be a resource for the teaching of mathematics at a number of levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A public statement of what excellent teaching of mathematics is like; • Guidance for teachers in planning professional development, and for those who provide PD programs (employers and schools, teacher associations, universities); and • Assistance for those seeking assessment against the standards (if appropriate). | <p>The expected outcomes of the project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A set of rigorous, validated ASTA professional standards that describe what the profession believes accomplished teachers of science should know and be able to do. • A collection of exercises for assessing teacher performance that has met strict criteria of feasibility, credibility and validity. • A specially trained group of ASTA members in each State and Territory who have the capacity to apply and score these assessments reliably and fairly |

HOW — PEOPLE AND PROCESSES

| English literacy | Mathematics | Science |
|---|--|--|
| <p>The project has established a research base in three states — Victoria, WA and Queensland. In each of those states a reference group representing all the stakeholders has been established. A national reference group drawing on these reference groups and critical friends from other states and territories also provides feedback to the project. As well chief investigators (academics based in Education faculties in the three research states) have met on a regular basis. The professional teaching associations (AATE and ALEA) have been conscious of the need to ground the project in as widespread, grass root support as possible by utilising their communication networks to inform and get feedback about the development of the project (especially in relation to drafts of the framework) from members of the English literacy profession. A significant moment in that communication has been the publication at the beginning of 2000 of a joint issue of the associations' journals, <i>English in Australia</i> (AATE) and <i>Literacy Learning: The Middle Years</i> (ALEA) devoted to work in progress on the STELLA Project.</p> <p>The key to the project has been the teacher panels created in each of the three research states. The panels have been the engine rooms of then projects. They have produced the narratives (stories teachers tell about significant moments of success/failure/conundrums in their teaching) and the collaborative reflections upon them. They have been the source of transforming what many teachers find 'implicit' about standards in their practice into 'explicit' statements of. The work of the panels give credibility to the project's belief that for, the standards to be of real value they must be grounded in the professional knowledge, experiences and values of practising teachers. As well the teacher panels have participated in the generation of the abstract concepts embedded in a standards framework and the formulation of the bridging statements which have attempted to make those concepts subject specific.</p> | <p>The work of the project is undertaken by four groups:</p> <p><i>Teacher Focus Groups</i> are the key teacher-researchers on the project — Four groups (12–15 each) identified by AAMT affiliates in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and SA due to budget constraints. Each TFG covers K–12 and all sectors; budget also limits the extent of representation of non-metropolitan teachers of mathematics.</p> <p><i>Management Committee</i> provides overall guidance — Five people (2 AAMT; 3 Monash)</p> <p><i>Project Team</i> undertakes key development tasks — Representatives of each TFG plus Management Committee.</p> <p><i>Steering Committee</i>⁴ provides advice to Management Committee — Representatives from a range of education stakeholders.</p> <p>Standards</p> <p><i>Descriptors</i></p> <p>TFG workshops provide raw data on their views of 'What a good teacher knows and does.' Data organised into initial draft descriptors. Input from Steering Committee.</p> <p>Draft Descriptors revised by TFG. Finalised by Management Committee. Checked by TFGs. Distributed to AAMT members with questionnaire. Feedback supportive — major revision not required.</p> <p>More validating input sought through shorter questionnaire delivered by various means (conferences, website, Steering Committee). Assessment development provides further commentary on Descriptors.</p> <p>All commentary and suggestions held to finalise Descriptors near end of Project.</p> <p><i>Elaboration</i></p> <p>TFG workshop focusses on 'artefacts' as means to demonstrate good practice. Discussion highlights the</p> | <p>Involving each state and territory association</p> <p>Each ASTA Member Association nominated a Professional Standards Coordinator who under took to convene a Professional Standards Coordination Group (PSCG) for that state or territory. Each of the eight state/territory PSCGs promoted the standards project, advertised for nominations to the standards writing committee and made recommendations for membership on that national committee. Following the release of the draft standards the PSCG in each state/territory undertook to convene focus group sessions to provide feedback on the draft standards.</p> <p>Development of the standards</p> <p>A National Science Standards Committee (NSSC) comprising highly regarded practicing teachers from all States and Territories and all levels of schooling, was selected on a competitive basis. The NSSC produced a draft set of standards.</p> <p>7000 copies of ASTA's professional standards were widely distributed for consultation with the profession and the wider community</p> <p>ASTA, its Member Associations and the State/Territory Professional Standards Coordinating Groups publicised and promoted the standards project widely to other teachers, tertiary educators, education systems and schools in order to develop ownership of the project by the education community. Focus meetings were also set up to gather feedback from the scientific community.</p> <p>Development and trialling of assessments</p> <p>The second stage of the project involves significant numbers of teachers throughout Australia developing and trialling methods for assessing teacher performance in relation to the standards. Portfolio Evaluation Teams have been set up in most states and territories.</p> <p>These assessment trials have:</p> |

⁴ Although this is the title of this group, its role is more one of reference and contact with other education stakeholders.

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| | <p>importance of teachers' commentaries on artefacts. Data on artefacts organised and linked to Descriptors by Management Committee.</p> <p>Power of 'narratives' as demonstrated in English literacy project prompts Project Team to include this style of elaboration. TFG workshops and other workshops and conference sessions prepare 'stories' and annotations.</p> <p>Trials of assessment and other TFG activity adds to collection of examples of teachers' work.</p> <p>Project Team develops draft process for selection. Elaboration progressively published towards end of Project; checked and refined by TFGs and Project Team.</p> <p>Assessment</p> <p>TFGs analyse artefacts as evidence. Project Team identifies a wide range of potential assessment means. Means for assessment discussed, evaluated and ranked by TFG workshop and three categories identified for further work.</p> <p><i>Portfolios</i></p> <p>TFGs (plus others) trial preparation of individual items to provide examples and identify needed process advice. TFG workshop evaluates these.</p> <p>Several 'full' portfolios prepared by volunteers. Evaluated by Project Team and TFGs.</p> <p>Evaluation/moderation processes documented, and guidelines for candidates developed by Project Team. Checked by TFGs; modified as necessary.</p> <p><i>Assessment Centre</i></p> <p>Range of possible items sourced by Management Committee of the advice of TFGs. Trialled and evaluated by TFGs.</p> <p>Project Team develops advice and guidelines. Checked by TFGs; modified as necessary.</p> <p><i>Interview</i></p> <p>TFG workshop discusses and identifies purposes and parameters.</p> <p>Project team prepares draft guidelines. Checked by TFGs; modified as necessary.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • used portfolios and video taped lessons; • provided for individual and different styles of teaching and learning; • taken account of the context in which the teacher is working; • encouraged reflective practice, mentoring and professional support from colleagues. <p>Assessment development teams have undertaken to develop portfolio items for each of the ASTA draft Standards.</p> <p>The assessment process will in turn inform the drafting of the ASTA Professional standards document.</p> |
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