ENGAGE IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN THE REMOTE CONTEXT

This is one of seven Teacher Guides in the series *'Teaching in Remote Australian Schools: Enhancing Pre-Service Teacher Education – A Resource Package'*.

STANDARD

6.0 **Engage in Professional Learning**

FOCUS AREA

6.1 **Identifying and planning professional learning needs**

GRADUATE DESCRIPTOR

Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the National Professional Standards for Teachers in identifying professional learning needs.

PARTNER UNIVERSITIES

Curtin University

ECU EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA

Murdoch UNIVERSITY

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

SPERA SOCIETY FOR THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION FOR RURAL AUSTRALIA

INTRODUCTION

The end of your pre-service/initial teacher education marks a new phase in the continuing journey of learning how to maximise the educational outcomes of the thousands of students you will teach over the coming years. As you enter your "community of practice" the **National Professional Standards for Teachers** (NPST) will be a valuable reference/starting point for you to develop your professional skills and knowledge as an effective and quality teacher. While the NPST will be used by all graduates, this teaching guide focuses on the learning needs and processes for continuing learning for graduates in remote contexts.

Your ability to effectively use the NPST will depend on a number of things. For example:

- your willingness and ability to reflect on your professional practice;
- your attitude and willingness to be a life-time leaner;
- your ability to establish effective working and learning relationships with your colleagues;
- your ability to be an effective and constructive member of a learning community; and
- the extent to which you engage in keeping yourself current with theory and practice.

These are not always easy to do in remote locations.

These activities provide you with the opportunity to make a start on how you might use the NPST to identify your progress into your community of practice as a teacher at both the classroom and wider professional level in the remote context. These activities provide a starting point for you to consider how the NPST can be used by you to assess what action you need to take to improve your effectiveness as a teacher.

OUTCOMES

- Graduates can develop an individual professional learning needs plan based on the application of the NPST to their own practice in a remote context.
- Graduates can make decisions about specific areas of their practices that can be improved through applying the NPST in a remote context.
- Graduates can apply the NPST to reflect on progress being made with their individual professional learning needs plan in a remote context.
- Graduates can identify online learning resources and opportunities for professional interaction and growth in a remote context.
- Graduates can develop interpersonal relations with onsite, regional and distant peers for the purposes of professional learning.

TOPICS

Reflective theory practices associated with professional growth and development in the remote context.

- *"….you cannot grow, understand a meaningful working life and become as skilful as you possibly can as a teacher without reflecting"* (Fetherston, 2006, p.331).
- Using the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) to reflect on one's working life and improve practice.

Community of Practice – building professional relationships in the remote context

- The meaning of Community of Practice generally and in the remote context?
- The dimensions of a Community of Practice?
- The impact of staff transience on Community of Practice in the remote context. Effective interpersonal and communication skills for participating in a Community of Practice. The development of online, face-to-face and "blended" forms of Communities of Practice.
- The role of the NPST in Community of Practice.

Working collaboratively with mentors, supervisors (line managers), learning area teams, literacy and numeracy learning teams, colleagues etc. in the remote context.

- Sharing knowledge and skills.
- Facing challenges together.
- Being a critical friend.
- Peer reviewing.
- Listening and other communication skills.
- Team building skills.
- Acknowledging ones strengths and weaknesses (especially in relation to the NPST).
- Networking skills.
- Using ICT for professional learning.
- Accessing opportunities and funding for professional learning.

Developing a Teaching Portfolio for performance reviews using the NPST as a framework.

- Documenting and collating evidence against the NPST.
- Use of off-site peer reviews.

TASKS

1. Based on your last practicum experience:

- Select *one* focus areas and its related descriptor (Graduate level) from *each* of the National Professional Standards for Teachers. (http://www. decd.sa.gov.au/hrdevelopment/pages/ workforcedevelopment/NPST/?reFlag=1)

- Select one or more reflective practice strategy/approach (see, for example, Fetherston, 2006, p.331-336 or the 5 R Framework, *Reporting, Responding, Relating, Reasoning and Reconstructing* [Bain, et al., 2002]).

- Identify the strengths you have in each of the selected focus areas. Use the Graduate Descriptor for that focus area to help explain your strengths.

- Develop a professional development plan detailing activities you are going to undertake to address the area/s you have identified that need attention. (Heading might include: NPST, Focus Areas & Descriptors; Professional Colleagues).

National Professional Standards for Teachers	Focus Areas and Descriptors	Professional Colleagues

2. Develop a professional portfolio with an emphasis on your experiences in a remote context. Use these Teacher Guides to identify evidence that could be used. Refer to AITSL's Illustrations of Practice to assist your reflection http://www.teacherstandards.aitsl.edu.au/ Illustrations

3. How can you use on-line connections such as blogs and emails to document your professional growth?

4. Brookfield (1995) suggests that, to undertake reflection, teachers need to:
- Collect autobiographical data about their actions such as diaries/accounts;
- Find out from students how they perceive a teacher's actions; and
- Engage colleagues in critical conversations about practice.

Identify times and means for incorporating reflection practices such as these into your daily routine as a teacher in a remote context.

5. When you begin teaching
- What autobiographical evidence are you going to keep which reflects on your practice and understanding in relation to the National Professional Standards for Teachers?
- How could you collect feedback from students on your effectiveness as a teacher?

6. During your first year of teaching:
How can close proximity of colleagues in a small school present difficulties for professional learning? How can you reduce negatives and develop strengths and alternative relationships?
  i. Who will be the most important colleagues with whom you will engage in critical conversations?
 ii. What interpersonal skills will you have to employ to maximise the effectiveness of these critical conversations?
iii. Explain what these interpersonal skills really mean – key what is effective listening?

7. Identify sources of funding to support professional learning e.g. scholarships from professional associations, corporate sponsors, community organisations e.g. ICPA, CWA etc.
- How might a Community of Practice be different in a remote context to an urban context?
- How can you maximise learning by working in a community of face-to-face and online learning?

RESOURCES

Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (2012) *Illustrations of practice*. Retrieved from: http://www.teacherstandards.aitsl.edu.au/Illustrations

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Education Services Australia. (2011). *National Professional Standards for Teachers*. Retrieved from: http://www.aitsl.edu.au/verve/_resources/AITSL_ National_Professional_Standards_for_Teachers.pdf

Fetherston, T. (2006). *Becoming an effective teacher*. Melbourne: Thomson.

Mulford, B. (2011). Teacher and school leader quality and sustainability - Resource sheet no. 5. Retrieved from: http://www.aihw.gov.au/closingthegap/documents/ resource_sheets/ctgc-rs05.pdf

Santoro, N., Reid, J., Mayer, D., & Singh, M. (2012). Producing 'Quality' teachers: the role of teacher professional standards. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 40, 1-3. Retrieved from: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13598 66X.2012.644508

Shalaway L. (2005). *Building your professional teaching portfolio*. Retrieved from: http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article. jsp?id=3749720

The Teaching Center, Washington University in St. Louis. (2007). *Creating a teaching portfolio*. Retrieved from: http://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/creating-teaching- portfolio

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