

CHAPTER 2



Teacher values

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

- LO 2.1** identify some key values for teaching in the 21st century
- LO 2.2** demonstrate an understanding of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
- LO 2.3** explain why valuing professional learning is critical for being a teacher



Source: Alice McBroom/Pearson Australia.

You are commencing your journey to become a teacher at a very interesting time. You and your students will face many challenges during the 21st century and perhaps constant change will be the only certainty! The closure of school campuses and the move to online learning for extended periods of time in response to the COVID-19 pandemic are recent examples of how quickly teachers and their students must adapt to rapidly changing circumstances. Such events remind us that teachers and students need to develop a range of capabilities and skills to live, learn and work safely in a technologically charged and uncertain world: a world in which some forms of employment disappear and new ways of working emerge.

As part of preparing for such challenges, Standard 6 of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2017) emphasises the importance of engaging in professional learning. This chapter will help you explore some of the value dimensions of teaching and the sort of professional learning you will need in order to adapt and respond to change. In particular, it provides opportunities for you to reflect on the factors that shape and govern



AITSL Teacher Standards

This chapter is aligned to Standard 6 of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

the teaching profession in current times and the values embedded in teacher professional practice.

To help us make sense of this changing educational landscape, the chapter refers briefly to another powerful discourse, or argument, about what is required to make teachers' work effective in the 21st century. This centres on demands for greater accountability and standardisation. The push to reform teacher education and establish professional standards for teachers, which gathered pace during the second half of the 1990s in many countries, also occurred in Australia. Currently, the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL], 2020a) define teachers' work and establish specific expectations about the qualities that contribute to effective teaching, learning and improved educational outcomes for students.

You are encouraged to consider how you can meaningfully engage with the AITSL Standards as you progress through each stage of your career. However, as teaching standards are not above criticism and cannot by themselves address the challenges and problems teachers must manage in schools, you also need to think about how you can negotiate such standardisation and accountability regimes in purposeful ways. This involves critiquing what it means to be a quality teacher and reflecting on how the discourse, or 'language' of professionalism, is used to shape and govern teachers' work. Finally, the chapter prompts you to consider why you need to engage in and value ongoing professional learning throughout your career and to start planning your own vision for professional learning. These facets of teaching are essential for developing your professional values.

LO 2.1

Identify some key values for teaching in the 21st century

professional learning Involves a broad range of formal and informal learning opportunities designed to enhance professional knowledge, understanding and skills.

professional values Those values that influence approaches to teaching and relationships with students and colleagues, such as respecting individual learners and diverse learning communities, honesty, fairness, integrity, and respect for others and self.

► VALUES FOR TEACHING IN THE 21st CENTURY

You will recall from the chapter titled 'Personal values and attitudes' that values underpin our thinking and our decisions. Teaching is a value-laden profession and all your work will be indicative of what you value. Valuing and knowing students and placing them at the centre of your pedagogical endeavours and your **professional learning**, are critical aspects of being a teacher. What other values are important for you as a teacher? Some of these will be an extension of your personal values, such as honesty, fairness and helpfulness. These, and additional values, will form the basis of your **professional values**. Prior to exploring this further, consider the following anecdote.

At his retirement dinner, a school principal, Terry Logan, was asked to recall someone who helped shaped his life when he was young. Logan referred to his second, third and fourth grade teacher, Mrs Wood, whom he remembered so vividly because she communicated to him that he had worth. Mrs Wood was glad to see him in her class every day – and she told him so. And because she told him he was special, Logan said he blossomed. It wasn't until he was older that Terry Logan realised that, in fact, Mrs Wood made *all* the children in her class feel special. And this was just one example of how, in her own inimitable way, Mrs Wood enacted her professional values in the classroom!

Interestingly, there are no explicit value statements in the AITSL Standards. We'll come back to this point later. This approach contrasts with the statements of values in, for example, the General Teaching Council for Scotland's Professional Standards (General Teaching Council for Scotland [GTCS], 2012). The GTCS posits that teacher professionalism and teacher identity are underpinned by professional values such as social justice, integrity, trust and respect, and personal commitment. Such professional values are reflected across the GTCS Standards and are considered relevant to all registered teachers in Scotland.

Do you think this approach to making professional values core to teachers' practice is helpful? How might you tell if a teacher is enacting their professional values in the classroom? Andreas Schleicher, the current Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), challenges us to think about it in this way: if he were to walk into your classroom, what would he *see*, *hear* and *feel* that would show what you value in your professional practice?

Now let's think about this in a different way. What would you like your students to say about being in your classroom? Imagine you had the opportunity to interview your students in a hypothetical classroom; now write what you would like them to say to each of the following statements: 'When I am in your classroom:

- ▶ I feel ...
- ▶ I am ...
- ▶ I know I can ...
- ▶ I am grateful that you ...'

In completing this activity, you are reflecting on the value component of the impact you'd like to have on students. There are also other aspects to refining your professional values to consider. Let's briefly refer to the importance of valuing reflective practice (Ghaye, 2011).

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Your willingness to review and **reflect** on your own values, beliefs and practices in relation to the theories and ideas you already have, and on those you will add and refine from your professional learning, is also important.

Here are five examples of basic reflective questions you might like to consider in your teaching.

1. What am I doing? (How self-aware are you?)
2. How successful am I? (How can you tell if your work is making a difference or not?)
3. What is a better way to do this? (How can you draw from and extend your knowledge?)
4. What do I need to do to achieve this? (What knowledge and professional learning will inform your approach?)
5. Is this what I should be doing? (How can you apply your professional values to make an informed decision?)

REFLEXIVITY

Your professional values are developed, deepened and challenged throughout your teaching career and they serve to prompt you to ask critical questions about policies and practices. This requires **reflexive thinking**. In education, reflexivity involves more than reflection. It encompasses the capacity to think deeply about yourself as a teacher, about what you value, the context and circumstances shaping your work, and how these impact (positively and negatively) on your perspectives and your practice.

Two important theorists in the area of reflexive practice, Dewey (1933) and Schön (1983), have provided a foundation for understanding this notion. Dewey defined reflexive practice as an action that involves 'active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further consequences to which it leads' (1933, p. 9). Schön (1983) made the distinction between reflection 'in action' – the kind of reflection that occurs while a problem is being addressed – and 'on action'. This reflection takes place after the event and it is deliberately undertaken and documented.

So, to be reflexive – and to enact it as part of your professional values for teaching – you need to be willing to look inwards at yourself and draw upon your capacity to be self-aware. As reflexive thinking requires you to stand back from your habitual ways of thinking and relating to others, to be

reflection The act of reviewing and analysing one's practice with the view to refining and improving it.

reflexive thinking The capacity to look inwards to uncover those assumptions and implicit standpoints that are the basis of one's taken-for-granted understandings that appear to be representative or truthful until they are critiqued and uncovered.

a self-reflexive teacher you need to mindfully evaluate your teaching as you work with your students in your classroom.

A *critically* reflexive teacher also considers the political and social implications shaping her/his teaching practice (Larrivee, 2008). This means that you need to think critically about the ways in which those assumptions embedded in education policies shape what is required of teacher professional practice and how they impinge on you, your sense of professionalism and your work. You also need to challenge and question the educational status quo so you can be sure you are adhering to your own professional values (Bloomfield, 2009; Day & Smethem, 2009).

DEVELOPING A TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

It is important that you can clearly articulate – in a written statement – your personal and professional values and beliefs as they relate to teaching or teaching philosophy. This statement identifies and clarifies your beliefs, values and understandings about what counts as education. It also includes a description of how you teach, accompanied by some specific examples of the ways in which you enact these beliefs in the classroom and a justification for why you teach in that way. Essentially, your teaching philosophy demonstrates *how* you are reflective and purposeful in your teaching. Indeed, when you apply for a teaching position, you may be asked to include your teaching philosophy and to discuss it further during your interview.

Tom's teaching philosophy

Here's a brief extract from the first part of Tom's teaching philosophy. Tom is in his fourth year of a Bachelor of Education (Secondary) and was influenced by some of Gert Biesta's (2012, 2016) work on education he encountered in one of his curriculum units.

'My philosophy of teaching places students at the centre of everything I do. In my classroom I want my students to feel valued and respected, regardless of their background, culture or learning needs. I aim to provide a safe and purposeful environment where my students can thrive and achieve their potential. I believe that students learn by doing and seek to provide authentic opportunities for students to collaborate, make informed choices and engage with a rich selection of materials and technology. Following Biesta (2012, 2016), I think teaching also involves some risk and experimentation. I will endeavour to reflect on my lessons and adapt and redesign my teaching strategies to ensure that I not only meet the learning needs of each student in my classroom, but also challenge them to think about things differently.'

Hannah's teaching philosophy

Now consider a short extract from Hannah's teaching philosophy. Hannah is in her final year of a Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood).

'I draw from my life experiences growing up as a Gubbi Gubbi woman from southeast Queensland and learning about my culture from Elders, past and present. In my teaching, I aim to engage Indigenous and non-Indigenous children in authentic learning experiences that enable them to value and respect different cultural perspectives. My understanding about how children learn is shaped by my community and by research that emphasises children's natural curiosity about the world around them (Jirout & Zimmerman, 2015), the significance of familial support in contributing to learning outcomes, and the importance of using age-appropriate pedagogies (Queensland Government Early Childhood Education and Care, 2016).

'One of my aims is to position First Nations perspectives in the curriculum in ways that acknowledge their diversity and enrich the education of all students – rather than as a simple token or nod to reconciliation. As storytelling is a key element of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, during my last professional experience placement in a school, I looked to ways to authentically involve Year 2 students in a story about country. Following encouragement and support from the school Principal, I drew from research (Harrison & Murray, 2013; Lowe & Yunkaporta, 2013) to inform my planning and preparation and to consult with local community Elders. Drawing from yarns with Elders and with their help, we painted a mural on a Year 2 classroom wall that represents the local story of country. Once the mural was completed, local Elders spoke with the children in class about the meaning of the story, what they wanted the students to know about the story, and how they represented aspects of this in the mural's symbols.'

REFLECTION

Take a moment to reflect on what you've read so far. Make a list of three personal values and three professional values that will be fundamental to your work as a teacher. Now look at the six values together and rank them from one (most important) to six (least important). Compare your ranking with a classmate's. What similarities and differences can you identify? What does this suggest about teacher values?

Now consider Tom's teaching philosophy. Imagine Tom is teaching a Year 7 class in your discipline. What examples might you expect him to provide to illustrate how he prompts students to learn by doing, and to offer opportunities for them to collaborate and make informed choices?

Refer to the extract from Hannah's teaching philosophy. To what degree do you think Hannah was able to implement this part of her philosophy in the example she provides? What do you think was worthwhile about Hannah's efforts? Consider the potential impact on the Year 2 children and the local Elders who participated.

► PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

During the past 40 years, many countries participated in 'identifying, codifying and applying professional standards of practice to the teaching force' (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996, p. 1). Bloomfield (2006) suggested that in Australia a new discourse on professionalism has emerged that links notions of quality teaching and learning within a framework of professional standards. She points to the structures and processes of accountability and **standardisation**.

More recently, Holloway and Brass (2018) refer to the prevalence of **accountability regimes** in the US that not only guide educational practice but also shape how teachers reflect on their value of their work.

So apart from a personal commitment, what do teachers refer to as a guide to being a professional? Let's now focus on the development of professional standards for teaching – something which is supported by some and contested by others.

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST, or the Standards) were introduced in 2011 by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL, 2020b). The Standards are intended to make explicit the elements of high-quality teaching that will improve educational outcomes for students. Seven Standards are identified and grouped into three domains: Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement. AITSL contends that, in practice, teaching draws on aspects of all three domains. Within each Standard, focus areas provide further illustration of teaching knowledge, practice and professional engagement. Refer to Table 2.1 to see how each of the seven Standards is identified across the three domains.

These are then separated into descriptors at four professional career stages (Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, 2018. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), pp. 7–8. © Education Services Australia, 2018).

1. Graduate Teachers – those who have successfully completed their initial teacher education
2. Proficient Teachers – those who meet the requirements for full registration through demonstrating achievement in the seven Standards
3. Highly Accomplished Teachers – those who are recognised as being highly effective, skilled classroom practitioners
4. Lead Teachers – those who are respected by colleagues; they lead activities that focus on improving learning opportunities for students; and they are skilled in mentoring teachers.

LO 2.2

Demonstrate an understanding of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

standardisation Usually refers to the development and implementation of agreed technical standards that apply to all in a particular field. It is critiqued in education for its conformity and lack of attention to contextual factors.

accountability regimes Refer to the use of standardised tests to hold teachers and schools accountable for student learning outcomes. The assumption is that differences in the achievement of students on standardised tests can be attributed to differences in the quality of education received by students.

TABLE 2.1 Australian professional standards for teachers

Domain	Standards
Professional Knowledge	1: Know students and how they learn 2: Know the content and how to teach it
Professional Practice	3: Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning 4: Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments 5: Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning
Professional Engagement	6: Engage in professional learning 7: Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community

Source: Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, 2018. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), p. 4. © Education Services Australia, 2018.

The introduction of teacher professional standards has been accompanied by debates about *which* standards should be applied and *how* they will be evaluated (Ingersoll & Collins, 2018; Ingvarson & Rowe, 2007; McInerney et al., 2007). Some raise concerns about the use of professional standards in order to improve teacher quality – and, in particular, notions of efficiency (Solbrekke & Sugrue, 2014). The British sociologist Stephen Ball (2013) contends that standardisation reduces teachers to a ‘bundle of skills and competencies which can be measured against standards set by government agencies’ (p. 33). So given these debates, how did the movement for teacher professional standards develop in Australia?

THE AUSTRALIAN DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER STANDARDS

Louden (2000) refers to the teachers’ standard movement in Australia as developing over two phases – or ‘waves’ – with different emphases. The ‘first wave’ of professional standards for Australian teachers in the 1990s was largely competency-based, whereas the ‘second wave’ consisted of a push for standards that were more subject-specific. It might be argued that the Australian Professional Standards produced by AITSL represent a ‘third wave’. Before we explore this briefly, it is important to note that teacher professional standards are not ‘bullet proof’. Writing of the context in the US, more than two decades ago, Linda Darling-Hammond (1999, p. 39) noted:

By themselves, they cannot solve the problems of dysfunctional school organisations, outmoded curricula, inequitable allocation of resources, or lack of social supports for children and youth. Standards, like all reforms, hold their own dangers. Standard setting in all professions must be vigilant against the possibilities that practice could become constrained by the codification of knowledge that does not significantly acknowledge legitimate diversity of approaches or advances in the field; that access to practice could become overly restricted on grounds not directly related to competence; or that adequate learning opportunities for candidates to meet standards may not emerge on an equitable basis.

Despite this, the momentum for teacher professional standards in Australia increased with the announcement in July 2003 by Brendan Nelson, Minister for Education, Science and Training in the Howard government, that a National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership would be formed. Renamed three years later as Teaching Australia, this organisation was established under an Act of Parliament as the national body for the teaching profession, promoting quality teaching and school leadership for the benefit of all Australians. Its four objectives were:

- ▶ to support and advance the quality of teaching in Australian schools
- ▶ to support and advance the quality of school leadership
- ▶ to strengthen the teaching profession
- ▶ to establish an organisation that operates openly, collaboratively, efficiently and ethically (Teaching Australia, 2006, p. 1).

In 2009, Teaching Australia became the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). The stated objectives for AITSL were similar but a noticeable level of rigour was introduced:

- ▶ developing and maintaining rigorous national professional standards for teachers and school leaders
- ▶ fostering and driving high-quality professional development for teachers and school leaders
- ▶ working collaboratively across jurisdictions and engaging with key professional bodies (<https://www.aitsl.edu.au/about-aitsl>. © 2017, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Limited).

AITSL pushed strongly to achieve national consensus on teacher quality issues, especially national standards for teaching. Its efforts were assisted by large funding allocations announced by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 2009.

THE AUSTRALIAN PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS (APST)

When AITSL produced the National (now Australian) Professional Standards for Teachers (the Standards), these were endorsed by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) in December 2010. The Standards are intended to present a common understanding and language for discourse between teachers, teacher educators, teacher organisations, professional associations and the public. They are also to be applied to inform the development of professional learning goals, provide a framework by which teachers can judge the success of their learning and assist self-reflection and self-assessment. AITSL contends that the Standards contribute to ‘the professionalisation of teaching’ (2018, p. 3). Indeed, some Australian researchers maintain that the introduction of professional standards provides a stimulus – or provocation – for teachers to think more deeply about their work (Sachs, 2003). However, other researchers writing of the experience in the UK extend Darling–Hammond’s concerns and argue that the requirements of professional standards inevitably lead to increased workloads and the ‘technicisation’ of the profession (Beck, 2009; Evans, 2011). Take time to contemplate both contrasting standpoints as you learn more about the Standards.

So how will the Standards impact upon you as a pre-service teacher studying an accredited teaching program? Put simply, by the end of your course, you will be expected to meet several requirements that include Standards of the Graduate career stage, such as: proficiency in literacy and numeracy; teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; and engaging with parents and communities to teach Indigenous content in and across the Australian Curriculum.

The APST and evidence

As you progress through your university studies, you will become more familiar with how to address the three domains of Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement at the Graduate stage. Essentially, you must show the ways in which you demonstrate your capabilities across the seven Standards, as this is a requirement of pre-service programs. This ability to document your professionalism against the Standards will continue throughout your career. Find out what your university advises about collecting and presenting – or curating – such documentation.

An increasingly common practice is to compile a **digital portfolio** (or **ePortfolio**). This is a useful tool that enables you to demonstrate your professional growth over time and to show how you meet the AITSL Standards. Here you can store work samples, certificates and supervisor feedback, and show how you reflect on the ways in which you put your beliefs into practice by including concrete examples, or **artefacts** of what you do, or anticipate doing, in the classroom. The **evidence set** may include specific examples of professional learning, videos, multimedia, images, referee statements, documents as well as **annotations** on your own and on school student work. However, as a pre-service teacher you must be mindful of collecting data from schools where you do your professional placements in ethical ways. This means that you must always remove student names from documentation and must maintain confidentiality about children/students. Note that the AITSL website provides tools and resource to guide you in these matters.

Cochran-Smith and the Boston College Evidence Team (2009) suggest that the development of a portfolio approach to compiling evidence of your development as a future teacher enables you

digital portfolio, ePortfolio

A collection of university course-related work created by a student to document his/her academic learning and capture his/her developing personal and social capacities in response to his/her studies.

artefact A piece of evidence and/or linked extract which demonstrates a teacher’s achievement against one or more of the Descriptors, such as a lesson plan, worksheet or observation report.

evidence set A group of artefacts related by a general theme (e.g. unit of work, curriculum area or professional learning program) such as a unit plan which is combined with an assessment rubric, student feedback and student data.

annotations Explanatory comments written by pre-service and practising teachers to show how the evidence selected demonstrates that their practice meets the selected Proficient Teacher Standard Descriptors.

to explore the value dimensions of your work and to frame insightful reflections on your practice, among other qualities. However, it is important to note that some educators are critical of a focus on evidence as a requirement for demonstrating the nature of teacher professional practice. For example, while acknowledging that evidenced-based approaches can result in some improvements in professions such as medicine, Biesta (2010) queries its use in education. He contends that there are too many other contextual factors to consider in teaching and learning for evidence-based approaches to be effective in considering the impact of teachers' work in schools.

The APST and Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA)

Your capacity to demonstrate that you can work effectively with the AITSL Standards is critical to your performance in a new compulsory assessment task. Since 2019, all pre-service teachers completing their final professional experience or practicum in a school must participate in a **Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA)**. The TPA is a national reform designed to connect classroom practice with academic performance in **initial teacher education (ITE)**.

The TPA responds to reports from the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group [TEMAG], 2014) and the Department of Education and Training (Department of Education and Training [DET], 2018) to improve the classroom readiness of graduate teachers and create high standards for the future of the profession and quality student outcomes. Your university will provide specific guidelines to help you prepare for the TPA, but in broad terms you have to demonstrate you can meet the Graduate Teacher Standards. For example, you will need to show how you:

- ▶ use authentic data, evidence and information about student needs to identify learning goals in planning for teaching that is responsive to the learning needs of your students
- ▶ teach a sequence of lessons in one learning area or subject
- ▶ collect and use evidence of learning to monitor student progress, make adjustments to teaching and provide feedback to the students
- ▶ reflect meaningfully on the impact of teaching to consider what you need to do next to support and improve student learning.

Hence, the TPA and your evidence-based digital (and/or other formats) portfolio are now considered to be a major component of becoming and being a teacher.

Getting practical

Consider the domain of Professional Practice (Standard 3 and Standard 5), specifically Standards 3.1 (Establish challenging learning goals), 3.2 (Plan, structure and sequence learning programs), 3.4 (Select and use resources) and 5.4 (Interpret student data). During your professional experience placement in a school as part of your university course, your supervising teachers could ask you to plan and prepare a teaching and learning sequence of four to six lessons for a class in one subject area, and make links to the TPA. As you are expected to demonstrate that you meet the needs of Standards 3.1, 3.2, 3.4 and 5.4 at the Graduate stage, you will need to provide evidence in your digital portfolio of your **impact** as a pre-service teacher. This requires some careful reflection on the sort of evidence you will need to gather.

Be mindful of your audience. For evidence to serve its purpose, it must be able to help you document the narrative, or story, of your teaching practice to an experienced colleague or supervisor – in this case, your university lecturer. So, you need to gather materials that indicate what you want your students to learn, how you will facilitate this learning and how you will know they have achieved this learning. Each of these factors requires careful planning.

To demonstrate your ability to understand and plan for teaching and learning, you will need to collect data on learners in the class, design a learning experience and collect evidence to show how you can successfully support learners through a learning sequence. A critical part of thinking about a learning sequence is taking into consideration the context of learning and the individual students in that context. How will you collect data on students in the class to address this? In what ways will you demonstrate how you have used data and evidence to identify where your learners

Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) Assessment of the practical skills and knowledge of pre-service teachers against the Graduate Teacher Standards in the final year of their initial teacher education program.

initial teacher education (ITE) Entry-level qualifications completed at university at the undergraduate or postgraduate level prior to entering service as a teacher.

impact In teaching this means how you know you have made a difference to your students' learning by comparing where they were at an earlier time with where they are now. According to the Standards, determining impact requires an evidence base.

are positioned in terms of their learning and achievement levels, prior to the planning and teaching of your learning sequence? How will you provide evidence that demonstrates how your teaching practice has impacted on the students' learning and achievement? What sorts of strategies will you utilise to annotate samples of your learners' work? No doubt these questions are prompting your awareness that the practicality of working with the AITSL Standards involves an integration of many different facets. Similarly, demonstrating evidence of how your teaching practice is effective requires a lot of planning and preparation. Read the Case Study at the end of this chapter to see how one final-year pre-service teacher reflected on this process.

The APST and teacher registration

It is a statutory requirement in all jurisdictions (except New South Wales (NSW)) that a teacher must be **registered** to teach. Teacher registration is also the process by which teachers in all states and territories (except NSW) demonstrate they have met the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. (In NSW, the registration process is referred to as **accreditation**; the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) provides information about this process on its website.) Once you have graduated, you will need to apply for **provisional registration** from the teacher regulatory authority in the Australian state or territory where you seek employment. **Statutory bodies or authorities** oversee teacher registration or accreditation and implement policies and processes around the quality of teacher entry, teacher preparation and teacher development.

Thus, if you wish to teach in the Northern Territory, you will follow the procedures of the Teacher Registration Board of the Northern Territory, whereas in Queensland you need to apply to the Queensland College of Teachers. Following the approval of provisional registration, you can commence teaching and during this time you are expected to engage in ongoing reflection, identification of learning goals and areas for development and professional learning using the Standards. You need to be aware that beginning teachers are expected to move from provisional to **full registration** early in their careers and that each state and territory teacher registration authority has its own requirements.

Critically, all of the Australian teacher regulatory bodies require this process to be mapped to AITSL Standards. If you are employed in Queensland as a provisionally registered teacher, then in order to transition to full registration you must complete a minimum of one year (defined as 200 days) of teaching and meet the AITSL Standards at the Proficient career stage, by presenting a range of evidence to demonstrate your achievement of each of the seven Standards. The forms of 'evidence' required for this purpose include examples drawn directly from your planning and preparation across a range of sources. Such authentic examples of practice might include notes your colleagues and school supervisors, such as the Head of Department, have made as they've observed you teaching, and examples of work that demonstrate the impact of your teaching on student learning. You are also expected to annotate the evidence you present to reflect your achievement of the Standards by taking account of each descriptor. No doubt you can now appreciate why the capacity to provide clear and documented evidence of your impact on student learning and the ability to reflect on your practice using annotations in a digital (or other format) portfolio are such important skills to develop during your university studies.

teacher registration Process by which teachers in all states and territories (except NSW) demonstrate that they have met the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers at the Graduate career stage (Provisional registration) or the Proficient career stage (Full registration).

teacher accreditation Process by which teachers in New South Wales demonstrate that they have met the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers at one or more the following career stages in teaching: Conditional/Provisional; Proficient; Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher.

provisional registration Gained when a teacher demonstrates achievement of the Graduate career stage of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

statutory body/authority Body set up by law and authorised to enact legislation on behalf of the relevant Australian state or territory. Regulatory bodies for the teaching profession develop and apply professional standards, codes of practice and policies to underpin initial entry to and continuing membership of the profession.

full registration Gained when a teacher demonstrates achievement of the Proficient career stage of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and meets all other requirements of teacher registration.

REFLECTION

To what degree do the Standards help you understand the expectations placed on the teaching profession in an era of accountability that requires you to demonstrate the impact of your work on student learning outcomes? How will you work with the Standards to achieve *meaningful* learning outcomes with your students? What other insights have you gained so far about working with the Standards at Graduate level? Think about the challenges and opportunities teachers face now and will face in the future, as highlighted at the beginning of the chapter with reference to the rapid move to online teaching in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Do you think the Standards are useful in preparing teachers for these contexts? Explain.

LO 2.3

Explain why valuing professional learning is critical for being a teacher

professional development

Processes for updating and improving professional knowledge.

► THE IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Teachers never stop learning. As in all professions, a teacher's professional standing is enhanced by ongoing learning around all facets of her/his work (Sachs, 2016). In fact, teacher professional learning – like change – will be constant throughout your teaching career. Moreover, you will be required to provide ongoing evidence of the different forms of professional learning you participate in. Helen Timperley (2011) reminds us that professional learning is inclusive of many different factors. Prior to exploring these possibilities, let's examine the terminology.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

For many years the term 'professional development' has been used to refer to teacher professional learning and the terms were used interchangeably. However, **professional development** is now used less frequently, as the idea of 'development' can sometimes be assumed to infer that which is 'done to' or 'provided to' teachers (Mayer & Lloyd, 2011), or it can be assumed to involve a technical process whereby members of the profession improve their competencies (Wayne et al., 2008). Similarly, the term 'professional development' is critiqued for inferring that it must always be closely tied to the context of teaching and the capacities of teachers. This is evident in the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) of 90,000 teachers and school principals in 23 participating countries. It defined professional development in terms of those activities that develop an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and related characteristics required for teaching (OECD, 2009). Marginson (1993) takes a broader view and refers to professional development as the process of growth in competence and maturity through which teachers add range, depth and quality to the performance of their professional tasks. Relatedly, Goodrum (2007) reminds us of the contextual factors at play for professional development to be maximised. He emphasises the importance of having a supportive environment, as well as the personal commitment of those who are participating.

Other researchers note that the term 'professional learning' can encompass learning that is not formally planned, or learning that occurs with unexpected outcomes or as part of the activities and interactions in which teachers participate each day in their classrooms (Day, 1999; Doecke et al., 2008). In this regard, Day and Sachs's (2004) view encompasses the notions of both development *and* learning. This is because they define professional development as including those natural learning experiences, as well as those conscious and planned activities, that can directly or indirectly benefit an individual or group in a school. They refer to this as the process by which teachers

review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives. (Day & Sachs, 2004, p. 34)

McDiarmid (1995) focuses more on the requirements of teachers in considering professional development. He advocates the need for colleagues to work together and the benefits of establishing larger learning communities in which teachers can work collaboratively and support one another's learning. Further, McDiarmid (1995) suggests that professional development must be redefined as a central part of teaching and that policymakers and the general public need to realise that it is an essential initiative. Darling-Hammond (2006) also notes that many policymakers and some members of the public lack an understanding of the importance of teacher professional development. Fortunately, it appears that this message has indeed been received by Australian policymakers, as AITSL Standard 6 is 'Engage in professional learning'. There are four focus areas within this domain:

- 6.1 Identify and plan professional learning needs
- 6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice
- 6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice
- 6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning (National Policy Framework, 2018. Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). © Education Services Australia, 2018).

Note that AITSL has selected the term ‘professional learning’ – rather than professional development – and we are also using this term to encapsulate the various ways in which teachers learn, and to align with AITSL requirements. What does the term ‘professional learning’ mean for you?

Consider Timperley’s (2011) observation that a potential problem with using standards as the basis of professional learning is that they may be seen as a series of boxes to be ticked. She contends that if the AITSL Standards are to become the basis for promoting high-quality professional learning, they need to be regarded as a series of signposts to guide an integrated professional learning agenda, rather than a series of discrete accomplishments. Furthermore, it is vitally important that you reflect on, and value, what you learn from each of the four components of Standard 6 as opportunities for professional growth. Let’s explore some of the different forms of professional learning opportunities you can engage in.

FORMS OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

There are formal elements, such as learning about the requirements of new education policy and official documents at the national, state/territory and local school level. These can range from the new statement on the national goals for schooling in Australia, to revised or updated versions of the Australian Curriculum and other curriculum/syllabus and school documents. In this case, professional learning could involve face-to-face participation in conferences and workshops provided by employing authorities, in regional and school-based workshops, as well as in those offered by teacher professional organisations and by commercial providers. Formal programs can also be accessed via online learning programs (such as webinars) or through professional learning programs that offer a mixture of face-to-face and online learning, usually referred to as **blended learning** (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008).

You might decide that some of your professional learning can be achieved by enrolling in a higher degree such as a coursework or research Master of Education degree. Some teachers use this opportunity to delve more deeply into a specific aspect of their practice. Such practitioner research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) views this form of inquiry as a reflective and scholarly means for teachers to analyse and evaluate the nature and impact of their teaching (see also Sachs (2016)). While the dual roles of practitioner and researcher can be tricky to navigate, Campbell and Groundwater-Smith (2007) encourage teachers who take this approach to be mindful of the ethical protocols to ensure they are engaged in research that does justice to their practice and their profession. Then there is the form of professional learning you select to acquire a specific skill or certificate – such as a Senior First Aid Certificate – or, if you are involved in extra-curricular activities and coach a sporting team, you may wish to obtain a coaching certificate. Of course, these are just some of the many formal professional learning programs you can access (Ravitch, 2011).

In some schools, teachers collaborate with and learn from each other by forming their own **Professional Learning Community (PLC)**. Such teacher-led learning communities set the agenda for their learning and mobilise their resources to foster a culture of empowerment and mutual support.

Also important is the informal professional learning that occurs as part of your daily work in schools. This happens as you interact with your students and get to know them as individuals, and as you learn more about their communities. Furthermore, participating in extra-curricular activities, such as the school musical, an after-school club or sporting activities, provides opportunities for you to learn about and to understand the contextual factors that shape your school and the school community. AITSL’s Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework (AITSL, 2018) makes clear that professional learning and development are inclusive of both formal and informal opportunities for teachers to deepen their professional knowledge and refine their professional skills as described in the relevant Standards. So how can you make decisions about the sort of professional learning you need to plan for once you graduate?

blended learning

A pedagogical approach that integrates student-centred, traditional in-class learning with flexible online and collaborative work.

Professional Learning Community (PLC)

Involves groups of teachers working collaboratively at the school level to create a positive culture of learning and to improve student outcomes.

WHAT WORKS IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING?

One way of addressing this question is to be mindful of what the literature suggests. For example, Ingvarson (2002) proposes three principles to consider. The first principle refers to the importance of focusing on what students are expected to learn and how to address the challenges and problems students may have in learning the material. Second, Ingvarson (2002) suggests you think about participating in programs that help you learn how to analyse the differences between what learning outcomes your students are expected to achieve and their actual performance. The third principle refers to learning how to audit your own professional learning needs and identify those programs that offer specific strategies to address these.

Other researchers emphasise the value of programs that enable teachers to gain an understanding of the theory underlying the knowledge and skills being learned, as well as those programs that engage participants in understanding a comprehensive change process focused on improving student learning (Hawley & Valli, 1999; Long, 2012). Useful insights into the effectiveness of professional learning can also be gained from the findings of a large project that mapped teaching professional learning activities in Australia (Doecke et al., 2008). In reviewing various effective approaches to professional learning, the research team advanced six principles of professional learning. These are that:

1. the collaborative nature of teachers' knowledge and teacher learning is fundamental
2. a lot of professional knowledge resides in the specific contexts in which teachers work
3. knowledge of teachers and teaching develops from, and usually involves, sustained inquiry into teaching and learning by teachers themselves
4. findings of research into the knowledge of teachers and teaching are often not straightforward or certain
5. teachers draw on a range of evidence to evaluate and review their existing practices
6. teachers engaged in rich professional learning tend to work together with other teachers to build more dynamic and rigorous learning communities in which all stakeholders (teachers, students and parents) can participate. (See Doecke et al., 2008, pp. 26–27.)

AITSL provides a range of resources to support teachers' professional learning, and its Australian Teacher Performance and Development Framework (AITSL, 2018) makes clear what it considers to be an effective approach to teacher professional learning. This approach involves: reflection and goal setting, professional practice and learning and ongoing feedback, reflection and review.

As part of your ongoing professional learning, you will need to develop the self-regulatory dispositions and skills that will enable you to draw from contemporary research to monitor and reflect on the effectiveness of changes you make to your practice (Mason, 2002). The literature refers to this as **teacher reflexivity**. Refer back to the section on teacher values and consider how you can incorporate valuing professional learning into your philosophy of teaching.

By reading this chapter and, of course, as you engage with the other chapters in this text, you have started to engage in professional learning. You've had opportunities to think about your personal and professional values for teaching, to explore the current Standards for teaching in Australia and also to consider why valuing professional learning is essential for being a teacher.

teacher reflexivity

The capacity of a teacher to reflect critically on actions informed by theoretical considerations.

REFLECTION

What sort of professional learning will you need in order to develop and enhance student learning? Start making a list of the formal and informal learning you will need to participate in. How will you ensure that you document this learning against all parts of Standard 6?

SUMMARY

LO 2.1 Identify some key values for teaching in the 21st century

Teaching is a value-laden profession and all aspects of a teacher's work are indicative of what she/he values. Valuing and knowing students, and placing them at the centre of pedagogical endeavours, are critical to being a teacher. An individual's personal values, such as honesty, fairness and helpfulness, also contribute to a teacher's professional values. There are no explicit value statements in the AITSL Standards. This contrasts with the publicly available statements of values in, for example, the General Teaching Council for Scotland's (GTCS) Professional Standards, which explicitly state that teacher professionalism and teacher identity are underpinned by professional values. GTCS identifies the values of social justice, integrity, trust and respect, and personal commitment as being critical to teachers' work. Although the AITSL Standards do not identify core values, values are embedded in teacher reflections, teachers' capacity to be reflexive and in teachers' professional philosophy for teaching. Hence, values are core to professional practice.

LO 2.2 Demonstrate an understanding of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) were introduced by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) in 2011. Referred to as the National Professional Standards for Teachers until December 2012, the APST are intended to make explicit the elements of high-quality teaching that will improve educational outcomes for students. Seven Standards are identified and grouped into three domains: Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice and Professional Engagement. AITSL contends that, in practice, teaching draws on aspects of all three domains. Within each Standard, focus areas provide further illustration of teaching knowledge, practice and professional engagement. These focus areas are then separated into Descriptors at four professional career stages: Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and

Lead. Since 2019, all pre-service teachers completing their final professional experience or practicum in a school must participate in a Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) to demonstrate they can meet the Graduate Teacher Standards as a requirement for graduation. Following graduation, provisional registration is awarded when a teacher demonstrates achievement of the Graduate career stage of the Standards, and this is a requirement for employing authorities.

LO 2.3 Explain why valuing professional learning is critical for being a teacher

Valuing professional learning is critical for being a teacher. For some time, the term 'professional development' has been used to refer to teacher professional learning and the terms were used interchangeably. However, professional development is now used less frequently, as the idea of 'development' can sometimes be assumed to infer that which is 'done to' or 'provided to' teachers or that it involves a technical process whereby members of the profession improve their competencies. AITSL (2018) uses the term 'professional learning' in Standard 6: 'Engage in professional learning'. There are four focus areas within this domain: 6.1 Identify and plan professional learning needs, 6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice, 6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice, and 6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning. (National Policy Framework, 2018. Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). © Education Services Australia, 2018.) AITSL makes clear that professional learning and development are inclusive of both formal and informal opportunities for teachers to deepen their professional knowledge and refine their professional skills as described in the relevant Standards. There are different forms of professional learning available to teachers in Australia and the literature suggests some principles for effective professional learning programs.

QUESTIONS

1. What are teacher professional values? How could you identify some of a teacher's professional values if you could observe him/her teaching a class?
2. Unlike the explicit statement of professional values in the General Teaching Council for Scotland's (GTCS) Professional Standards, values are not

- addressed in the AITSL Standards. Imagine you have been employed to write a 150-word introduction setting out the values that inform the Standards at the Graduate level. What values would you select and emphasise? Why? Make this clear in your introduction.
3. What are you expected to write about in a teaching philosophy? Why might a school principal and/or employing authority want to read a written statement about your teaching philosophy when you are applying for a teaching position in a school?
 4. Why has there been a push for the introduction of teacher professional standards in Australia?
 5. What are some of the arguments for, and some of the arguments against, the development of professional standards for teachers?
 6. Explain how you are expected to use the AITSL Standards to guide your professional learning and improve the quality of your teaching.
 7. In what ways can you (a) draw from the AITSL Standards to reflect on your practice, and (b) be critically reflexive about the Standards and how they govern your work as a teacher?
 8. Imagine you are preparing for an interview for a 12-month contract teaching position in a school. This position has the potential to be converted into a permanent placement. You have been told applicants are expected to discuss their professional learning goals for the first year. What points will you make? Prepare a brief summary of about 100 words to capture your thoughts.
 9. What does the literature suggest about the nature of effective professional learning for teachers? Explain.
 10. Why is it important for you (a) to be conscious of participating in different (formal) programs for professional learning as a teacher, and (b) to draw from your informal professional learning experiences as they occur? Explain.

CASE STUDY



Terry reflects on preparing his digital portfolio, writing annotations on the evidence he collected to demonstrate his achievement of the Graduate Standards (3.1, 3.2, 3.4 and 5.4), and how he thought about his professional values.

One of the last assignments in my 4th-year program was really challenging. Part of the reason for this was that I hadn't engaged enough in thinking about the Standards. I'd always done well in my assignments and, to be honest, I'd regarded the Standards as a bit of a 'tick and flick' exercise – make links to them but don't worry too much about them. However, this assignment sorted me out. For this task, I had to demonstrate how I understood the professional role of a teacher by planning a learning sequence of four to six learning experiences or lessons during my final professional teaching placement in a school. For the first part of the task, I had to show how, in designing this sequence, I considered the learning environment and the learning needs of the students in that class. In the second part, I had to demonstrate how what I'd planned and taught impacted on student learning and achievement over time by annotating two samples of two students' work at two points in time: before

I started my planned learning sequence, and then after I'd taught it. I could choose to make handwritten notations attached to each sample of student work and to my lesson plans and accompanying resources, or in a summary explanatory paragraph attached to the evidence. I also had the option using a preferred software tool to make annotations. For the final part of the assignment, I had to reflect on this work and make links to my professional values.

There was just so much to think about and so much to do. The questions were endless – even for the first lesson. What content descriptor/s am I supposed to work with from the Australian Curriculum? What resources will I need? What do I really hope to achieve in introducing this lesson? Why is it important for students? How will I share my purpose and clarify my goals for this lesson? How can I demonstrate how important this experience is and what I expect from the students? What activities and experiences will best enable these purposes to be achieved? How can I motivate and engage the students in the learning experience? What will they gain from being in this class? Is it knowledge, social interaction, skill development or a combination of these factors?

What do I expect the students to be able to know and do as a result of this learning experience? How will they demonstrate this? How can I really tell whether I taught this effectively?

I went around in circles. Fortunately, I had a great experienced teacher as my supervisor who patiently talked me through some of these questions and gave me some specific feedback. Also, my lecturer at uni shared some tips on writing annotations on student work – such as illustrating the target areas of the learning experience I'd planned and making clear how this demonstrated achievement of the relevant Graduate Standards/descriptors. Although I didn't 'join the dots' between the evidence and annotations as clearly as I could have, as in some parts I was simply repeating what was there in the evidence, I learned a lot from this assignment. My reflections on the task helped me value the kids in the teaching process a lot more – after all, what are we there for? We are not filling their heads with stuff – we are there to help them achieve their potential. So this task made me value

students as individual learners in the class as one of the most important factors about becoming a teacher.

CASE STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What do you think Terry means when he says he regarded the Standards as a bit of a 'tick and flick' exercise?
2. Why does Terry find this assignment to be so challenging? Refer to three examples.
3. The classical Greek philosopher, Socrates (c. 469–399), was reputed to have said that education is like the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel. What connections can you make between this saying by Socrates and Terry's reflection on his professional values?
4. What points can you take from reading about Terry's experience to prepare evidence and reflect on it for his assignment that is helpful to your engagement with the Standards as you progress through your studies? Suggest two points.

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