

To what extent do the APST and the EAL/D elaborations support teachers of EAL/D students to describe their work and plan their professional learning?

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What is the purpose of the research?

- To explore teachers' perceptions of the APST and the EAL/D Elaborations of the APST for:
 - describing teachers' work
 - identifying and defining professional learning needs

Who participated?

- Approximately 20 teachers from four sites in or near Sydney NSW
- The participants were recruited by word-of-mouth, for instance from EAL/D networks and schools we had contact with through our work
- The group included EAL/D specialist teachers; mainstream classroom teachers of EAL/D students and school leaders
- Most participants were from primary schools but some secondary teachers also participated

How was the study conducted?

- A case study research design was used to explore a contemporary issue within a real life setting , the perceptions of EAL/D teachers in a specific context in Australia.
- With one exception, participants engaged in group discussions
- The discussions were developed through the use of open ended questions and prompts.
- The discussions were then recorded, transcribed and analysed

Some questions and prompts

- To what extent do the APST and the EAL/D Elaborations support teachers to define and identify their professional learning needs as teachers of EAL/D students?
 - -What are the challenges in teaching EAL/D learners?
 - -Give some examples of effective teaching practices you have implemented with EAL/D students.
- What do teachers perceive to be the strengths and limitations of the Elaborations of the Australian Professional Standards for teachers (APST)?
 - -Can the ACTA Elaborations:
 - -support a better understanding of the APST in your context?
 - -support the identification of your personal professional

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST)

Domains of Teaching	Standards
Professional Knowledge	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Know students and how they learn2. Know the content and how to teach it
Professional Practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning4. Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments5. Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning
Professional Engagement	<ol style="list-style-type: none">6. Engage in professional learning7. Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community

Why the Elaborations were developed

- The Australian Council of TESOL Associations (ACTA) updated and redesigned their standards to assist teachers to "map the EAL-oriented detail of ACTA standards onto national teacher standards" ([Hammond, 2014, p. 512](#)).
- The former ACTA standards consisted of nine standards incorporating the dispositions, understandings and skills of TESOL teachers and the related orientations to TESOL practice, second language education and multiculturalism. These standards outlined what TESOL teachers should know and be able to do to address the specific needs of EAL/D students and to assist teachers to be able to work effectively with diverse groups of students.

How the Elaborations were developed

In designing the *EAL/D Standards Elaboration* the Working Group built on their own expertise and:

- ACTA's two existing sets of Standards, one for ESL teachers and one for mainstream teachers;
- the *EAL/D Teacher Resource* in the Australian Curriculum
- State and Territory policy documents or guidelines for working with EAL/D learners across jurisdictions
- Capability Framework - Teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander EAL/D learners
- <http://www.det.wa.edu.au/curriculumsupport/eald/detcms/school-support-programs/english-as-an-additional-language-or-dialect/news/capability-framework---teaching-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-eal-d-learners.en>

Potential EAL/D learners are only mentioned in two Focus Areas (in the Knowledge domain):

- **Standard 1 Know students and how they learn (Graduate)**
- **1.3 Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds**
- Demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from **diverse, linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.**
- **1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students**
- Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of the **impact of culture, cultural identity and linguistic background** on the education of students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

Teachers working with EAL/D learners need to recognise that their students are:

(Standard 1: Know students and how they learn)

- (a) learning *English*
- (b) learning *through* English
- (c) learning *about* English.

APST 1.1- Graduate

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of **(21 individual)** students and how these may affect learning.



Elaborations Standard 1.1 – Graduate

Demonstrate understanding that EAL/D learners are in the process of developing proficiency for both social and academic purposes and that their social and intellectual development may not be accurately represented through EAL/D

Demonstrate knowledge of the diverse social and intellectual characteristics of EAL/D learners in terms of

- Age, prior schooling & interruptions, EAL/D proficiency, home language(s) or **dialect(s)**, heritage, cultures and beliefs
- Migrant or refugee (**first or later generations**), temporary resident, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- **Trauma** associated with, for example, **racism, warfare and dislocation**
- Stage in **developing a sense of belonging in the school environment**
- Base teaching strategies on understanding of how **characteristics of EAL/D learners** may affect their capacity of learning and wellbeing.

Your turn... in pairs or groups

- Compare the APST 1.3 and 1.4 (Graduate) with
- The EAL/D Elaborations of 1.3 and 1.4 (Graduate)



Elaborations Standard 1.3 – Graduate

Demonstrate knowledge of inclusive teaching strategies that respond to EAL/D learner needs and principles of multilingualism, reconciliation and anti-racism.

- Be aware that EAL/D learners are **learning about the community as well the curriculum content** and that teaching must address both aspects.
- **Be aware of EAL/D teaching strategies and EAL/D resources** that are responsive to learner characteristics, referring to all Elaborations in this document.
- Understand school and system processes for **identifying EAL/D** learners as needing support.
- Understand the **diversity of language, cultures, family histories and religions** in multicultural Australian society, and the changing nature of this diversity over time.
- **Draw on the EAL/D Elaboration for Graduate descriptors across Standards.**
- Draw on all EAL/D Elaborations for Graduate Focus Area descriptors.

Elaborations Standard 1.4 – Graduate

Taking account of the local context and building on students' learning strengths, implement practices informed by all Graduate indicators in the EAL/D Elaborations and refer to the Capability Framework as relevant.

- Demonstrate knowledge of **inclusive teaching practices** that respond to students' learning needs and to **principles of multilingualism, reconciliation and anti-racism**.
- Develop **respectful professional relations with intercultural officers** recognising their knowledge of the students and their learning needs.
- **Seek support from bilingual/intercultural officers** in teaching and for communicating with learners **and their families**.
- **Recognise the role of the home language for classroom learning and in social and cognitive development**.
- Understand processes for **identifying learners needing EAL/D teaching**.
- Learn about the **sociocultural practices of the community**.

What do teachers think about the Elaborations?

- What are teachers' perceptions about the strengths and limitations of the Elaborations, and their use in defining and identifying professional learning needs?
- Teachers in NSW public schools are required to use the APST to define their goals and to complete an annual "Performance and Development Plan" (PDP) in which they state their professional learning goals in relation to the school's priorities and targets.

What are teachers' perceptions about the strengths and limitations of the Elaborations, and their use in defining and identifying professional learning needs?

- It (**The EAL/D Elaborations**) can help teachers identify... you don't know what you don't know.
- I think the Elaborations would give those principals a little more support in recognizing the needs of the qualified and or unqualified EAL/D teachers.
- I think for a school the whole point of this is it helps us plan for what sort of professional learning we need to give teachers so they get a better understanding of what they need to do to support these students.
- I'm using them to evaluate ... it gives us more information... because supporting ESL students is... in our school plan... part of one of our strategic directions, so these will help me to evaluate how we are going.

What are teachers' perceptions about the strengths and limitations of the Elaborations, and their use in defining and identifying professional learning needs?

- I used it when I was doing my maintenance, my accreditation and I found that I had been off class for so long that it was hard to link to the regular standards so using the elaborated standards helped me link it back to what I was doing in the class as a new arrivals teacher.
- I agree I want to do my Highly Accomplished and I found it really hard when I did my maintenance last year because I haven't been on class and the normal standards are just based on classroom teaching and it was really hard to find evidence and just annotate what I was doing.

What are teachers' perceptions about the strengths and limitations of the Elaborations, and their use in defining and identifying professional learning needs?

- ... we would use the Elaborations to annotate our examples.
- I have (been using the EAL/D Elaborations) and they're fabulous however I have had people who have said no don't you use them don't trust them. So I think there're a lot of people not feeling very confident about using those kinds of elaborations because they're different.
- We weren't given the options to use the EAL/D elaborations
- ... they've just given you the standards as they are. It would be nice to have the option.
- I'd like to have another look.
- No didn't know about them (many voices)
- No I've never seen them.

... “you don’t know what you don’t know.”

- In staff development workshops we do things about explicit teaching and what works best... explicit teaching is one of them... They say well this is it that’s what teachers need to do. They say it is the teaching of literacy... and the language will just develop, magically I guess.
- I was an EAL/D teacher mentor... for 5 weeks last term, and there are a lot of teachers being appointed with new arrival funding with no EAL/D training at all. I think the natural thing for them to do is to give learning support. They will teach the New Arrival child to read English and to write English but that child won’t comprehend, they won’t interact because they’re not using the right methods... I think the teachers who’ve been doing it a long time like we have... are keeping the quality going. ..They (the new untrained teachers) just don’t know what to do, they don’t know where to get help because there are no consultants.

“...you don't know what you don't know.”

- ... If you don't know what EAL/D is, or if you know what it is but you don't know how to do it, you'd just go straight to learning support... and put him in the phonics group and leave him there.
- Before I came the Learning Support teacher said to me that a New Arrival, who's a Russian speaker, would be better at his vowels if he lost his Russian accent. **(Laughter.)** Don't laugh she was being sincere. I said it might be years before he loses his accent and he might not ever as he is trying very hard to keep it...

But if you do know...

- Also that the methods that we use are good for most children, for the English speakers as well... It's showing classroom teachers those ideas...
- Teachers of Special Ed classes or Autism classes, who have undertaken the TELL course especially... they say to me how well those EAL/D strategies work in their classrooms.
- Because they're interactive, you're interacting orally... They're engaging.
- That's why EAL/D teachers are in a better position to go for highly accomplished because they are providing this additional TPL in their schools around how to do targeted teaching towards EAL/D learners... when I look at that in terms of the elaborated standards, that's me, I'm actually thinking of going for this.

The APST

- **Standard 1 Know students and how they learn (Graduate)**

Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds

- 1.3 Demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that are **responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse, linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic** backgrounds.

Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

- 1.4 Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of **the impact of culture, cultural identity and linguistic background** on the education of students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

In conclusion..

- The APST do not adequately describe the work of EAL/D professionals
- The Elaborations are informative and useful for describing teachers' work and professional learning needs
- Many teachers do not know about or use the elaborations possibly because the APST are widely used online when teachers are recording professional learning or describing their work.

Implications..

- The Elaborations provide a framework for **all** teachers of EAL/D learners and for school leaders in planning for professional learning
- Inclusive classroom practices are dependent on a shared understanding of the knowledge and work of EAL/D professionals, who have undertaken relevant professional learning.
- The work of EAL/D professionals could position them as Highly Accomplished teachers as they provide advice and support to their colleagues

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