Identifying professional learning needs using the ACTA EAL/D Elaborations of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

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The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST)

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Standard 1: Know students and how they learn

Teachers working with EAL/D learners know that they are:

(a) learning *English*

(b) learning *through* English

(c) learning *about* English.
Strengths and limitations of the national Standards for teachers working with EAL/D learners

**Strengths**

The APST is a generic document, inviting interpretation relevant to the teaching context

A career stage framework reflects progression over time

The descriptors are measurable through actual practices in actual contexts

**Limitations**

A generic framework does not give specific guidance for teachers working with EAL/D learners

A career stage framework does not reflect the roles required of the EAL/D specialist

Measurable descriptors do not engage with required values and dispositions
A generic framework does not give specific guidance for teachers working with EAL/D learners.

There is no mention of EAL/D anywhere in the APST, nor that teachers have a responsibility to:

- help students learn EAL/D
- help students access content through EAL/D

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

- 1.3 Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds
- 1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
Basis of the EAL/D Elaboration

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
Why an Expanded Elaboration?

http://www.tesol.org.au/RESOURCES/Australian-Professional-Standards-for-Teachers

The Expanded Elaboration is designed to help teachers:

- Understand the professional performance expected when working with EAL/D learners

- Build their repertoire of practices supportive of EAL/D learners

- Document their achievement of a Focus Area through actual examples
STANDARD 6: Engage in professional learning (Highly Accomplished)

6.1 Analyse the EAL/D Elaborations of the National Professional Standards for Teachers to plan personal professional development goals, and to support colleagues to identify and achieve the goals needed to effectively support EAL/D learners.

6.2 Engage in high quality EAL/D professional learning and initiate EAL/D professional learning for colleagues that is targeted to their identified needs.

6.3 Initiate and engage in professional discussions with colleagues to evaluate and improve EAL/D professional knowledge and practice, and the educational outcomes of EAL/D learners.

6.4 Evaluate the effectiveness of teacher professional learning activities in light of the multiple factors that may affect individual EAL/D learners (Standard 1.1), and engage colleagues in such evaluation.
Some suggested questions/statements to identify professional learning needs

6.4 Evaluate the effectiveness of teacher professional learning activities in light of the multiple factors that may affect individual EAL/D learners (Standard 1.1), and engage colleagues in such evaluation.

- I can...
- Our team can...
- Our school can...

Example: Our team can arrange a workshop for mainstream teachers on the needs of newly arrived students.
Factors (Standard 1.1 - Graduate)

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.
What is the study about?

- We aim to explore teachers’ perceptions of the Expanded Version of the EAL/D Standards Elaboration in relation to the identification of their professional learning needs.
Planning Professional learning

• Teachers in NSW DOE are now required to complete an annual “Performance and Development Plan” in which they state their professional learning goals in relation to the school’s priorities and targets.

• They are required to use the APST to define their goals
Preliminary investigation

- Annie Jones – School principal
- Sophia Munro – EAL/D trained teacher and Assistant principal

- Both work in a Primary school in a socio-economically disadvantaged urban area in NSW
How can the EAL/D elaborations help teachers?

• **Annie:** It (The EAL/D elaborations) can help teachers identify... you don’t know what you don’t know.

• **Sophia:** I would think that a lot of teachers here would say: “We do it” and you watch them and they don’t do it... They are not addressing that extra vocabulary... they’re not building up that first language.

• **Annie:** 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.
Who would use the elaborations?

• Sophia EAL/D specialist and Assistant Principal:

  • **Performance & Development plan:** I did when I did mine because I didn’t think the others (APST) addressed what I did anyway so this is what I needed to do. I don’t know that the others would have used them.

  • I looked at lead for some things and highly accomplished for others. I looked at that (highly accomplished) because I’m still in the classroom some of the time so therefore I’m not just leading I’m modelling and supporting and showing practice so that’s why I did the highly accomplished
Could you confidently use the elaborations to develop a plan?

• **Sophia:** I think I’d be better at it now, because I have used them myself... I’d like to get them to read it when their doing it.

• **Annie:** This year is the first year we’re doing this new Performance & Development plan but certainly next year when we’ve had a whole year of doing it... we would look at this as part of that goal setting. I’m going to use them as part of the planning for the whole school professional development.
Is there an advantage for you in using the elaborations?

- **Sophia:** I think in a school like this they fit much better than the ordinary, the other standards that everyone is using. I would say that even these teachers that are doing it now could actually start using...

- **Annie:** 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.
References


• Le Cornu, R. (2015) Key Components of Professional Experience in Initial Teacher Education Programs in Australia, Melbourne, AITSL.


• NSW Department of Education and communities (2014) Performance and development FAQ.


