The 'good' teacher in an era of professional standards: Policy frameworks and lived realities

ACCEPTED VERSION

This paper presents an analysis of contemporary education policy levers that seek to standardise and measure teaching quality through the deployment of professional standards and increased surveillance of teachers' work. These policy frameworks—with a focus in this paper on the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers—are contrasted against the experiences of five Australian primary school teachers, using interpretative case study analysis to demonstrate the contradictions, tensions and fragile discursive construction of the idealised 'good' teacher. Implications for teacher agency and autonomy are considered, and propositions are generated for policy frameworks that support and enhance quality teaching, rather than reducing the complexities of teaching to a set of standardised metrics.

Keywords: teacher quality, professional standards, teacher identity, education policy, Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

Introduction

In his book, *The Good Teacher: Dominant Discourses in Teaching and Teacher Education*, Moore (2004) argued that 'the concept of the good teacher cannot sit "outside" or untouched by … larger social conversations, situations, ideologies and purposes' (p. 36), which troubled the claims of universality that are inherent in professional teaching standards, such as the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. The policy logic of teacher professional standards and other performance and accountability metrics rely on an assumed unproblematic universal, often obscured by technocratic and bureaucratic language—benchmarks, what works, evidence-based, continuous improvement, the list goes on. However, the neat boundaries placed around

teachers and their work are a convenient fiction that policymakers use to hide the complexities of teaching. The lived realities of teaching are much more complex, entangled and messy, full of contradiction, uncertainty and precarity.

There have been more than 100 reviews into teacher education in Australia since the 1970s, which have perpetuated the narrative of teachers as being an ongoing policy problem (Mayer, 2014). During that time, prevailing neoliberal policy settings aligned with the notion of education as being an 'engine room' and 'pillar' of economic growth (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2017), have seen the work of teachers shift from being understood as a vocation to a profession, followed by multiple subsequent de-professionalising moves (Mockler, 2012). In addition, there has been a discursive shift in Australian education over the past decade from 'quality teaching' to 'teacher quality', which has been accompanied by increasing policy standardisation, surveillance and accountability metrics for teachers (e.g., Lingard et al., 2013; Mockler, 2012; Mockler & Groundwater-Smith, 2015; Savage & Lingard, 2018). While debates have raged over the problem of teacher quality on mainstream and social media, the voices of teachers themselves have often been marginalised, silenced or appropriated by others (Thomson & Riddle, 2019; Ingersoll, 2017).

This paper presents an analysis of the policy logic represented by professional teaching standards and its enactment as a policy attempt to address the problem of teacher quality within a context of increasing surveillance and accountability of teachers' work and lives. Set against this policy logic are the voices of five Australian primary school teachers, who considered their teaching experiences and contemporary practices through the lens of the current set of professional standards. The accounts shared by the teacher–participants clearly demonstrate the contradictions, tensions and fragile discursive construction of the idealised 'good' teacher.

Teacher professional standards and the 'good' teacher

The professional standards were developed and implemented by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL, 2020) in a context of increased national education policy cooperation, which was launched by the *National Partnership Agreement on Improving Teacher Quality* (Council of Australian Governments, 2008). Under the umbrella of the Australian federal government's 'education revolution' (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2008), a raft of policy levers and initiatives were developed, including the Australian Curriculum, the National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), AITSL and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. A second wave of policy reform followed, which focused explicitly on the problem of quality teaching, including the *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers* (Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group, 2014) and *Quality Schools, Quality Outcomes* (Australian Government, 2016) reports.

The current professional standards (AITSL, 2020) contain seven standards that address professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement: 1) know students and how they learn; 2) know the content and how to teach it; 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; 6) engage in professional learning; and 7) engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community. Each standard contains several sub-standards. Further, there are four levels of teacher standards: graduate, proficient, highly accomplished and lead. Despite the range of levels and scope provided within them, the professional standards provide a narrow band of scope to define quality teaching, which is primarily aimed to quantify, measure and standardise teachers' work (Mockler, 2012), while simultaneously limiting their professional autonomy (Sachs, 2016).

The argument has been made by AITSL (2020) that the professional standards ensure a commitment by teachers, school leaders, school systems and policymakers to world-class teaching via the improvement of teacher quality. At face value, this is an aim to which all would readily agree. However, the acts of defining and regulating 'good' teaching is another matter entirely. As one example of thinking differently about the qualities of quality teachers, Bahr and Mellor (2016, pp. 59–60) proposed a set of attributes possessed by quality teachers: they have a personal vocation for teaching and a desire to make a difference, they are purposeful and enable all students to reach their potential, they identify as professionals, and they have a lasting influence on developing students' skills, knowledge and capacities as life-long learners.

The literature on teachers' experiences, identities and agency (e.g., Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Biesta et al., 2015; Moore, 2004, 2018) has demonstrated the complexity and diversity of teachers and teaching practices. However, this diversity has been reduced into a set of standardised and measurable competencies and behaviours (Bahr & Mellor, 2016), which have largely been accepted by Australian state-based teacher registration authorities and embedded into university initial teacher education programmes (AITSL, 2015, 2016). As such, the policy logic of the professional standards in teacher education and registration has become accepted by education policymakers, authorities and school systems. However, 'imposed policy relies on affect rather than on rationality for its successful implementation' (Moore, 2018, p. xi), which means that there are some troubling assumptions about the reductive nature of the professional standards and their policy effects on teachers' work and lives. Such effects are evident in the standardisation, surveillance and measurement of teacher performance, which is framed by a narrative of constant improvement of teacher quality.

Educational policies have 'increasingly perpetuated a policing of teachers' (Thompson & Cook, 2012, p. 700), which has had a de-professionalising effect as autonomy gives way to accountability and productivity metrics (Rich & Evans, 2009). Further, the professional capacities and knowledge of teachers have been reduced to technical and rational elements, which 'devalues the emotional, personal and relational aspects of teaching' (Buchanan, 2015, p. 705). However, Moore (2018) described important acts of policy refusal and resistance by teachers as 'not just refusing to accept and internalise dominant discourses and ideologies but actively seeking to oppose and subvert them' (p. 23). Such acts of opposition and subversion are evident to greater and lesser extent in the accounts of the teacher–participants shared in this paper.

Research design

This study sought to consider the affective and relational encounters of teachers within the contemporary policy context of standardisation and de-professionalisation. Through the teachers' accounts, it became evident that the professional standards produce a dual effect of framing what counts as professional practice in teaching, which can potentially be productive and supportive, while also having a reductive effect by closing down the possibilities of what counts as effective and 'good' teaching to a narrowly defined set of parameters.

An interpretative case study design was used to investigate the experiences and perceptions of five Australian primary school teachers. Ethics approval was obtained from the [University redacted for review] (Approval No, H12REA202) and the Queensland Department of Education to conduct the research. The teacher–participants were recruited through email invitations shared via principals at three public primary schools. The teacher–participants had experience teaching in a range of schools and had a variety of experiences, which enabled rich qualitative analyses. The five teacher–

participants in this study were all women employed as primary school teachers in Queensland, Australia: Harriot (over 50 years' classroom experience), Kathy (3 years' classroom experience), Jessie (4 years' classroom experience), Tina (26 years' classroom experience) and Cassie (11 years' classroom experience).

The research design was intended to capture the everyday conditions and experiences of the teacher–participants in granular detail (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2013), which could be examined for the moments of affective rupture and resistance (Moore, 2018) against the reductive policy constraints of the professional standards. Four interviews with each teacher were conducted over 2013–2014, which was during the period of national implementation of the professional standards and the *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers* report (Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group, 2014). Each interview focused on the teacher–participants experiences through a particular temporal lens, with the first interview focused on the past, the second on the present, the third on the future, and the fourth explored tensions and disruptions that arose during the interviews.

In addition to the interview data, the teacher–participants shared their personal teaching philosophy statements and self-evaluations against the professional standards. The self-evaluations were conducted prior to the third interview, during which the teacher–participants were asked to place themselves on a continuum for each standard, from graduate to proficient, highly accomplished or lead (i.e., the teaching levels described in the professional standards). The self-evaluations of the teacher–participants were mapped onto a continuum of the professional standards, which are presented in Figure 1.

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

A four-stage process of thematic analysis was undertaken—adopted from Clarke and Braun (2013) and Boyatzis (1998)—which included initial data sense (MacLure, 2013), diffractive reading (Barad, 2007; Taguchi, 2012), topological mapping of thematic patterns (Phillips, 2013) and drawing on affective images of teachers' experiences (Moore, 2018). The four-stage process enabled generative immersion in the data, which produced multiple iterative mappings of diffractive themes from the interviews and artefacts, while also enabling the perceptions and experiences of the teacher–participants to emerge in response to the contemporary policy construction of the 'good' teacher. These data are represented in the following section through the use of thematic groupings and selected extracts from the interviews, which provide illustrative examples of how the teacher–participants understood their experiences within the broader policy context of quality and standardisation.

'Good' teachers in an era of quality and standardisation: Resistance, compliance, subversion, adaption and cynicism

Despite the professional standards providing the official standardised version of what counts as quality teaching, the teacher–participants in this study took a range of positions in response to the standards, including resistance, compliance, subversion, adaption and cynicism. These were not fixed positions, but rather the mapping of diffractive themes showed that some teacher–participants held contradictory positions or changed over time.

Cassie was unambiguous in her assessment of what makes for a good teacher, drawing on her experiences and teacher role models, during her time as a student, which acted as an effective 'apprenticeship of observation' (Lortie, 1975):

I always reflect back to when I was in primary school; I had really excellent role models as teachers. I see a lot of their attributes in me now. Just the way that they

taught me how to be a great student and how to be responsible and how to be a great learner and get the most out of my education. I can see myself doing those things now with the kids that I teach. (Cassie, Interview 1)

In her self-evaluation against the professional standards, Cassie chose 'highly accomplished' in all standards, although she also selected 'proficient' for *Standard 7: Engage with colleagues, parents/carers and community*. She acknowledged the pressures of accountability coming down onto her classroom practice and how the practices of data collection and reporting were becoming more important to demonstrate effectiveness to school leaders, systems and parents:

> I think because we are so accountable too, we need that data to support things when parents come and say 'Why? Why has my kid got this, why has this happened?' and you need to have that to back yourself up. (Cassie, Interview 3)

According to Santoro et al. (2012), 'standards are seen increasingly by policy makers and schooling systems as the most important way to ensure the "production" of quality teachers' (p. 1). This is evident in the outlined purpose of the professional standards as 'a public statement of what constitutes teacher quality' (AITSL, 2020). At the time the interviews were conducted, the implementation of the professional standards was in its infancy, and the implications of their introduction were only just beginning to be realised. For example, Cassie was clear that she needed to extend her knowledge to meet external performative expectations, as reflected in Standards 1 and 2:

> I would say in the last five years it's just been a big push, ever since OneSchool came on board. Yes, the OneSchool revolution, you know, being so accountable for everything and making sure that you are providing that level of education directed at that kid's needs so that they can achieve. (Cassie, Interview 3)

For Tina, relationships were central to her sense of purpose as a teacher:

> I think when I first started teaching, I wanted to save children and everything like that, but now I just want them to be happy. I want them to learn as much as they can … but I think life's more about relationships. (Tina, Interview 2)

Tina ranked herself as being 'highly accomplished' for Standards 1–5, although she ranked herself as 'proficient' for Standards 6 and 7. Her belief in the importance of resilience and experience to develop as a 'good' teacher were evident in her comments about teaching as a vocation, which grows over time:

> Sometimes, I think a lot of teachers—even younger teachers—don't realise the skills that they have because they accrue them slowly along the way and through different experiences … You kind of learn bit by bit over time and all those experiences come together. You might muddle your way through the first few years, but you learn skills through that. (Tina, Interview 1)

Jessie used the metaphor of teaching as an artform, which is a common description of teaching practice (Eisner, 1996):

> Not everyone can draw pictures; not everyone can teach. It can be quite creative; it can be quite mindboggling at times. Sometimes, you are doing a great drawing in the classroom and it turns out horrible when you stop to reflect. You know you are either good at it or you are not … but I guess I see teaching as you are there for the children and without you being there, your artwork is never going to be complete. (Jessie, Interview 2)

Jessie claimed that she was on the lower end of 'proficient' for *Standard 1: Know students and how they learn.* However, during the third interview, she said:

> I'm pretty confident that I'm knowing my students to the level I need to know them at; I'm making sure that their learning is in line with what they need and can do, and assessment come along with it. So yeah, I'm pretty confident that I'm on track. (Jessie, Interview 3)

Authentic care was the central aspect of Harriot's teaching practice, which Valenzuela

(1999) described as one in which 'trusting relationships constitute the cornerstone of all learning' (p. 263). Harriot's long experience in the classroom was reflected in her observations about responding to continuous policy change and the realities of teaching:

> We are like the reeds in the pond and when the wind blows we all just bend; we let it pass over our heads and then we stand up straight again, and it gets too much; you bend over because it's a strong force; it goes away and you can stand up and get on with [teaching]. I will always give it my best; I will not let them [the students] down, and that's why I'm here after 50 plus years! (Harriot, Interview 2)

For Harriot, being a 'good' teacher was a question of authenticity. Conversely, Kathy expressed the importance to be seen as being a 'good' teacher as being central to her experience:

> I have noticed in the last couple of years that nearly everything is based on how other people see me. That is such a bad self-image. I want to be perceived to be a good teacher. Not just to be a good teacher but to be seen as a good teacher. (Kathy, Interview 1)

Harriot ranked herself as 'highly accomplished' on the seven professional standards, although this came with the caveat: 'I seem to be here to satisfy adults' (Harriot, Interview 1). For Harriot, being a good teacher was about being there for the students and their learning. However, she saw the current policy emphasis as being at odds with these aims, because the model is one of evidence of performance against metrics and criteria, rather than addressing the individual learning needs for diverse students. Harriot argued that there had been a noticeable shift from care of the child to a focus on 'learning outcomes':

> [There are] kids who actually need a lot of help, and I know of instances where they've been in Year One, they've had really horrendous problems, and they mightn't get fixed until they're in Year Six … I think if you're going into battle,

you know the enemy. You have to know what the enemy is, and the enemy is behaviour and how they see themselves. (Harriot, Interview 4)

Kathy rated herself against the professional standards as 'graduate' for Standards 1 and 2, 'highly accomplished' for Standard 3 and 'proficient' for Standards 4–7. Despite her lack of confidence and struggles to be seen as performing as a good teacher, Kathy appeared to consider herself to be capable in terms of the expectations that the professional standards placed upon her; that is, to be the 'good enough' teacher:

> The first day that I was on my own … and nobody died … nothing exploded. It was not a spectacular day. It was not a bad day. Nothing exciting happened in it, but I survived and that was a real comfort. And by the end of that, I was I was like, 'I can do this'. (Kathy, Interview 4)

There was an element of masquerade to Kathy's understanding of how a 'good' teacher should be perceived by others—within the classroom and by school leaders, parents, policymakers, accreditation authorities and the wider community—which was disconnected from the actual performance of teaching. However, Kathy's observations are illustrative in regard to the increasing surveillance and policing of teachers' work and lives through the professional standards and other standardising practices and assessments, including the Australian Curriculum and NAPLAN (Thompson & Cook, 2014).

Similarly, Jessie sought to position herself as being seen by others as being a professional. She described a mentor teacher who was 'extremely professional; very routine-based [and] very student-centred' and explained that 'mimicking her wasn't a problem' (Jessie, Interview 1). Cassie viewed confidence as an important part of being viewed as an effective teacher by others:

> I really looked at them [mentor teacher] as somebody that I was trying to impress and if they came across and said that I was doing something wrong or something that maybe they didn't like, I did lose that confidence and then had to reflect upon that. And there were some times where I did let it get to me a little bit and other times I had to go, 'No I feel confident in what I am doing and I am just going to roll with it' (Cassie, Interview 1).

However, confidence does not always come easily. For Kathy, her lack of confidence affected her performance and understanding of herself as a 'not yet good enough' teacher. Bullough and Pinnegar (2009) argued that the contemporary managerialist approach to education policy focuses on 'best practice' over relationships, which could partly explain Kathy's desire to be seen to be a good teacher:

> I was not really confident at all … All I ever got was, 'you need to do this; you need to do that', not 'you're doing well' … It took me a long time to be gutsy enough to do my own thing, my style. (Kathy, Interview 1)

Tina believed that resilience and a focus on her wellbeing were critical to longevity and success as a teacher. Gibbs (2011) argued that self-efficacy is a hallmark of resilience for teachers, which was evident in Tina's concern:

> If you go home from teaching thinking, 'well my class just rioted all day'—I mean, what sort of life would that be, if you've got to be doing that for 25/30 years, going home thinking I've made no difference? … You know, if you go to work and no matter what you do, you have to think 'well, this is what I did today'. (Tina, Interview 2)

Harriot also argued for the importance of resilience, although she felt less trusted and more constrained by the policy context to provide high-quality learning experiences for her students:

> They forget [teaching] is a craft. It's not just stand there and tell; it is a craft and you have to be able to pick things up by a look or a turn of the head or an expression … I see this as the era of desperation. (Harriot, Interview 2)

Jessie acknowledged that her relational view of teaching was out of place with the performative culture of teaching in an era of standardisation, which has led to others leaving teaching (Ball, 2010). However, Jessie explained that she subverts the system to teach in ways that she believes best suit the learning needs of her students:

> I do what I think's best. So, you know, I don't think I should change if I feel that's the right thing and I'm coasting along quite good and the kids are adapting … If I was a graduate [newly qualified] teacher, I would probably knuckle down and just do as the [policy/curriculum] document says, but now with the experience, I would just speak up for myself and for the kids and say, 'This is what we're doing and this is why'. (Jessie, Interview 4)

Similarly, Harriot placed the care of her students above the mandated requirements of curriculum and assessment. However, this came at a cost because there were unresolvable tensions between what was required (e.g., NAPLAN, Australian Curriculum and professional standards) and what Harriot knew will benefit her students in their learning:

> I think one thing that has changed: I've become cynical. Because I see and hear all these words, but as Oscar Wilde said: 'More is said than done'. Sometimes I see things to be done and they get put into the 'too-hard basket' and they're never addressed. (Harriot, Interview 4)

Tina's experience and knowledge enabled her to push back against some of the standardisation practices, although Kathy was more prepared to do what was required to maintain her employment and perform to the best of her ability:

> I'm not going to say that I would compromise my principles. You have to do what you have to do. There are so many demands on your time and so many other things

that go on. I'm fundamentally opposed to standardised testing, but I'm not going to refuse to do NAPLAN … I got to do what I got to do. And if that involves prepping kids for a term in NAPLAN, because that is what we are doing, well that is what we are doing. I can't change that. (Kathy, Interview 2)

Cassie described the administrative and affective burden placed upon teachers by the accountability frameworks and reporting requirements, in which standardised data and metrics are valued more highly than teachers' professional knowledge:

There's so much reporting and recording so that we're accountable for the decisions that we make, and we're accountable for the reasons why we're grading children the way we are with moderating. It is really tiring when you think about everything that we do now that we didn't do 10 years ago. (Cassie, Interview 4)

The de-professionalisation of teachers and their work is concerning given that teachers' knowledge is framed by their personal philosophies and experiences. The embedding of personal concepts such as belonging, professionalism and the interconnected personal and professional images of self in teaching were evident in the interviews. For Harriot, this revolved around belonging; for Jessie, it was her experiences from her early years of teaching through to the present day. For Tina, it was 'to do no harm' (Tina, Interview 1), which led her to prioritise the relational over the academic in students' learning. Therefore, tensions inevitably arise when systemic expectations require the reverse, which results in a 'struggle over the teacher's soul' (Ball, 2010, p. 217). For example, Harriet and Tina expressed frustration at the limitations placed on their professional practice and the trust put in them as professionals:

I used to do things that you would not think of doing now. (Tina, Interview 1)
It is not humanly possible to perform how you want to perform. (Harriot, Interview 2)

Teaching practice becomes a list of competencies, which encourage conformity to a set

of strategies and approaches, rather than professional judgement and capacity of teachers. Harriot argued that in this context, 'art and craft is being ignored' and that 'more and more decisions are being made for me' (Harriot, Interview 4). The era of quality and standardisation ensures that care and creativity become surplus to the education process (Jagodzinski, 2010, Ewing, 2018).

Professional engagement is reflected in Standards 6 and 7, in which teachers engage with communities and professional networks. Jessie described how she engages in professional learning to develop her capacity to deliver high-quality and engaging learning experiences for her students:

> You go to professional development, whether it be about Down Syndrome or Autism Spectrum Disorder or something like that; you think of that kid in the back of your head that you're going to that professional development for, and you think 'Yep, that's that child, okay that might work'. Then they'll give you strategies there and you'll go back, and you'll change it and you'll alter it, you know, do it your way. And that's pretty much how I've found that it works the most. (Jessie, Interview 3)

Similarly, Cassie acknowledges that the highest priority is being 'accountable to the students in my care' (Cassie, Interview 3). Harriot also puts her students first, although this can come to the detriment of her professional engagement and networking. She explained that 'I get appalled with some of the things that I see and hear' (Harriot, Interview 3). She did not believe she had been given the opportunity to advance in her practice due to her age and longevity in teaching.

The performative pressures of the professional standards and other local policy levers meant that engagement in professional learning was understood in terms of its utility to performance on these measures. Teachers' professional knowledge, practice and engagement is reduced to superficial compliance and reduced professional

autonomy. The value placed on the framing of teachers' professional knowledge and practice by the professional standards over teachers' knowledge, experience and practice demonstrates that the professional standards perform a gatekeeping function in terms of determining measures of quality, standardisation and accountability of teachers' work.

Conclusion

Despite the policy intention of the professional standards to improve the quality of teaching and learning in Australian schools, they also constrain effective professional practice because they foreclose the possibility of other ways of being a 'good' teacher. The teacher–participants in this study felt significant pressure to place systemic expectations to adhere to standardised and metricised requirements above the learning needs of their students and what they valued as professionals. However, the effects of the professional standards were not uniform for the teacher–participants in this study. While the professional standards present an officially sanctioned, standardised and idealised version of what counts in education policy as a 'good' teacher, the lived experiences and practices of teachers can produce a wide range of different responses, such as resistance (e.g., Tina), compliance (e.g., Kathy), subversion (e.g., Jessie), adaption (e.g., Cassie) or cynicism (e.g., Harriot).

Education policy logics attempt to give the appearance of rationality and order, whereas teaching is a set of messy and entangled practices and experiences. Teachers undertake complex emotional, social, cultural and cognitive work with their students in classrooms and other sites of education. Moore (2018) argued that teachers' work is affective work, which is difficult to quantify or neatly describe. While the professional standards serve as a neat frame of reference for policymakers, education leaders and commentators to make claims regarding 'quality teachers', which fit particular sets of

knowledges and conceptions of learning and teaching, the accounts of teachers presented in this paper demonstrate that teachers can perform acts of policy resistance (Moore, 2018), while also adhering to the requirements of accreditation, professional standards and other performative metrics imposed on their work.

The performance of teachers is now linked to student performance on standardised testing regimes such as NAPLAN and senior examinations (Whittle et al., 2018) with teachers' work being increasingly shaped by the demands of the regime of accountability (Rooney, 2015), resulting in a crisis of professional teacher identity. The current policy framework suggests that by controlling the major 'input'—teachers—the learning process and student results, ostensibly seen as 'outputs' can be controlled (Mockler & Groundwater-Smith, 2015). However, the connection between teacher performance and students' performance on standardised measures ignores the aesthetic and humanistic elements of teaching.

The homogenisation of teaching to a one-dimensional, one-size-fits-all approach has affected teachers' self-efficacy, agency and autonomy. Teachers have been limited in their ability to teach in the manner they know best, and to have agency over their professional development. The situation is untenable because teachers' knowledge and practices are viewed in government policy as unreliable and thus not valued, which exacerbates the mistrust that teachers feel, in turn affecting their knowledge and competence. This mistrust in teachers' knowledge and practices has fed into the increase in managerial accountability, which has driven the external imperatives that have decreased teachers' autonomy, wellbeing and value, leading to attrition from teaching.

Portraying teachers as the problem *is* the problem. There needs to be a re-evaluation in public policy of the view of teachers as service providers. Schooling and

teaching are complex phenomena that cannot be reduced by mandates and government policies into being more effective and more productive. Improvements will not be brought about through compliance measures, but by working with teachers on contextually relevant professional knowledge building and growth of the teaching profession in partnership with students, their families and communities.

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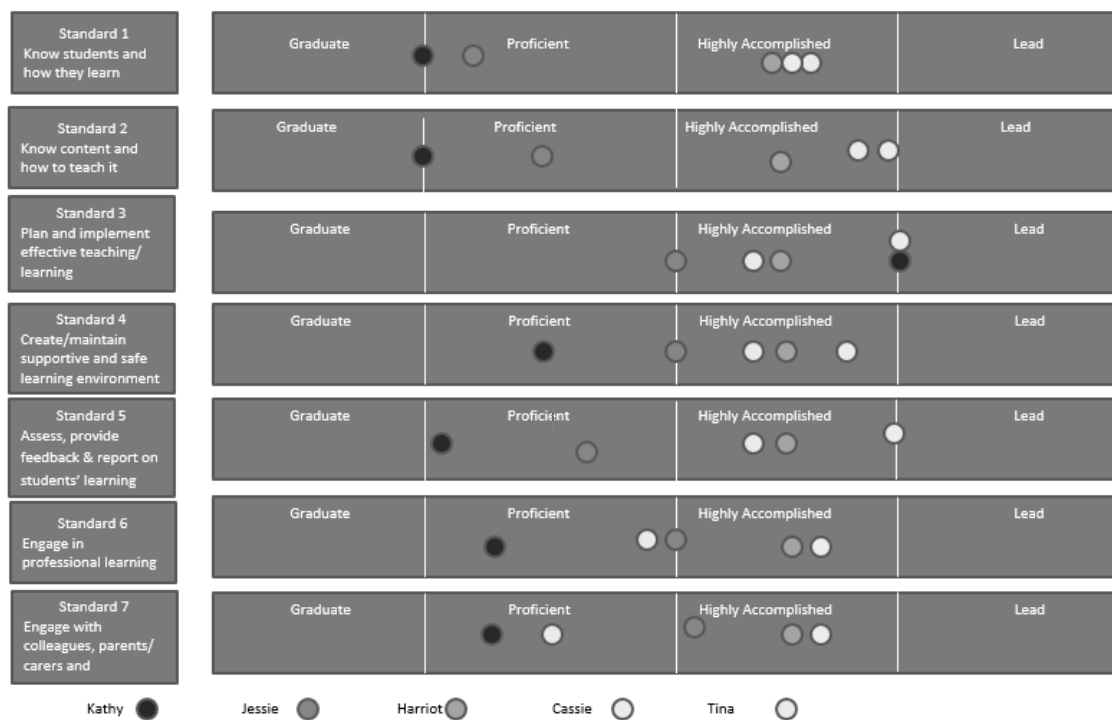Yin, R. K. (2013). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Sage Publications.

Figure 1. Self-evaluation against the professional standards