

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**

Report on AGQTP

***Taking Professional Standards into Practice  
(2009) Project***

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April 2010



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## 1. Executive Summary

The *Taking Professional Standards into Practice* cross-sector project in NSW is funded by the Australian Government Quality Teaching Program (AGQTP). The project aims to support New Scheme Teachers (NSTs) in translating criteria from the NSW Institute of Teachers Professional Teaching Graduate Standards document and putting them into practice, thus contributing to their evidence to attain competent standard accreditation. The project has a particular focus on Element 5 of the standards.

Teachers study their practice in a way that facilitates dialogue among colleagues about their beliefs, knowledge and skills. They collaboratively engage in active experimentation, trialling of new ideas for classroom practice, including a focus on engaging students through the use of ICT, close examination of student work, student learning, and observation of classroom practice.

In 2006, the *Taking Professional Standards into Practice Project* funded 32 projects across the three school sectors in New South Wales. In 2007, this number increased to 34 projects and in 2008 to 40 projects. In 2009, 28 projects were funded across 39 schools. The 2009 projects spanned the primary and secondary continuum across government, catholic and independent sectors (30 government, 5 catholic, 4 independent) and were conducted in Term 3, 2009. This report provides an analysis of 28 final project reports from the 2009 projects. It also builds and reflects on these reports in light of the 2006, 2007 and 2008 findings.

Element 5 addresses how *‘teachers create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments through the use of classroom management skills’*. Many of the projects undertaken in 2009 focused on the use of rich program content, coupled with quality teaching pedagogy, with a focus on the use of ICT to produce engaging and interactive lessons, reducing the need for reactive discipline-only techniques. Explicit links were made to connect new teachers, supervisors and mentors with professional learning that addressed ICT-related standards.

Many of the overall benefits of the 2009 school projects are similar to those reported in 2006, 2007 and 2008. Previous common themes continue to run through the 2009 reports; notably, the benefit of having time to observe, discuss, reflect and fine tune pedagogical practices in collegial groups and the platform for professional growth this presents.

Opportunities for New Scheme Teachers to observe more experienced staff has been a key element identified in the large majority of reports across all years of the project. This, coupled with a session of feedback or reflection with either a supervisor, mentor, or another New Scheme Teacher, has been consistently highly valued and deemed vital to ongoing professional learning.

The projects consistently facilitate the opportunity for participating teachers to engage in productive professional dialogue. This increased engagement with professional dialogue has often been found to ripple throughout the entire school community. Mentors and supervisors frequently commented on how enjoyable the process was and that they had greatly enjoyed the opportunity to share their expertise and felt deeply valued.

Overall, the reports self-concluded that the 2009 projects, as in 2006, 2007 and 2008, effectively supported NSTs in translating the criteria related to 'Element 5' in the NSW Institute of Teachers Professional Teaching Standards document into practice, helping them compile *meaningful* evidence to move towards accreditation. The 2009 reports also suggest a broad shift in confidence and competence in the use of ICT in the classroom to develop stimulating and engaging lessons. This includes the use of both hardware (Smartboards, cameras, laptops etc) and software to develop lessons. Wiki, Moodle, blogs and podcasts were all utilised.

## 2. Introduction

The *Institute of Teachers Act (2004 No 65)* requires the NSW Institute of Teachers to make provision for professional teaching standards and the accreditation of school teachers in relation to those standards across NSW.

Following graduation, all New Scheme Teachers (NSTs) entering the teaching profession in NSW must gain accreditation by meeting all the NSW Institute of Teachers Professional Teaching Standards (the standards) at the level of 'Professional Competence' within three years. The Institute suggests:

*Professionally competent teachers have demonstrated successful teaching experience. They have met the standards for professional competence.*

*They effectively monitor, evaluate and plan for learning. They are able to tailor teaching programs to meet the needs of individuals and groups within the class.*

*These teachers have a record of effective and ongoing professional learning. They work collegially and in teams to further enhance their professional practice. They take responsibility for collaboration with others to identify and address their own learning needs.*

*They are effective members of a school and its broader community and interact effectively with all those involved.*

(Professional Teaching Standards, NSW Institute of Teachers, February 2005 p.2).

Evidence is gathered to show this level of 'Professional Competence' has been adequately attained and is submitted to the NSW Institute of Teachers for review. Following successful accreditation, NSTs must also complete 100 hours of professional learning every five years to ensure they retain their accreditation.

Funded by the Australian Government Quality Teaching Program (AGQTP) 2006 – 2009 the *Taking Professional Standards into Practice* project aimed to effectively support NSTs to translate the criteria related to 'Element 5' (see Appendix 1) in the *NSW Institute of Teachers Professional Teaching Standards* document into practice and document evidence to attain accreditation. The projects also helped to encourage a sense of collegiality and collaborative professional development and learning. Element 5 is located in the Domain of Professional Practice and particularly focuses on how 'teachers create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments through the use of classroom management skills'.

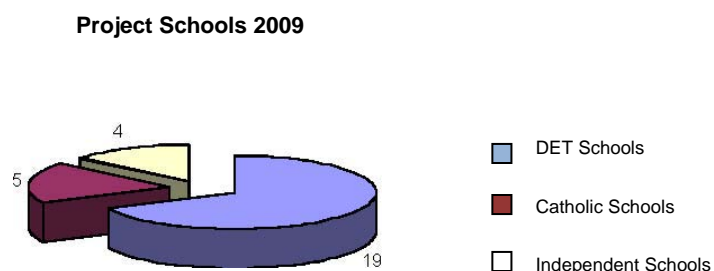
In 2006, *Taking Professional Standards into Practice* funded 32 projects, in 2007, 34 projects, in 2008, 40 projects and, in 2009, 28 projects. Projects in all years have included primary and secondary schools spanning government, catholic and independent sectors across diverse contexts in NSW. Some

schools joined with other schools (secondary – primary and secondary – secondary) to form clusters, while others worked independently.

This report provides an analysis of the 28 final project reports received at the conclusion of 2009. It also reviews and reflects on these in light of the 2006, 2007 and 2008 reports. Many of the 2009 findings once again mirror and extend those of 2006, 2007 and 2008.

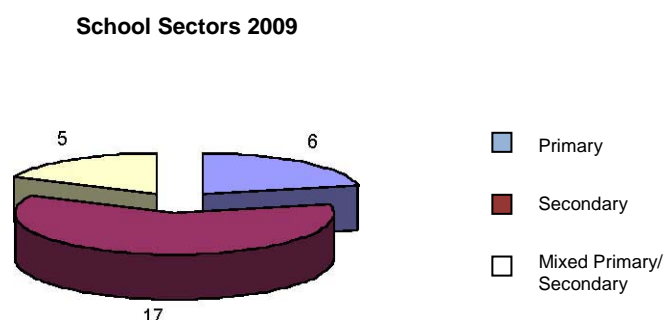
The sector breakdown of schools in 2009 can be seen in Figure 1. This split is equivalent to that of other years.

**Figure 1**



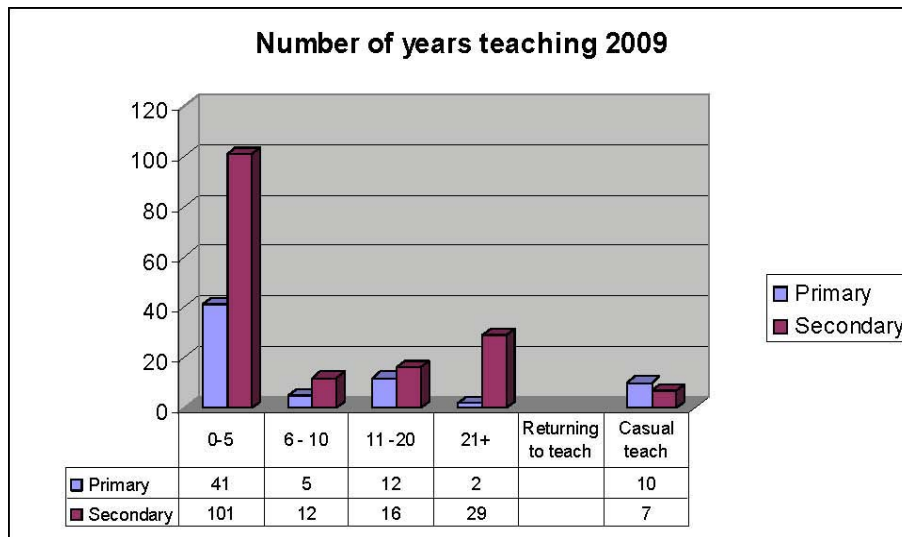
**Figure 2**

Of the schools in the 2009 projects, the majority are from the secondary sector which mirrors previous years.



**Figure 3**

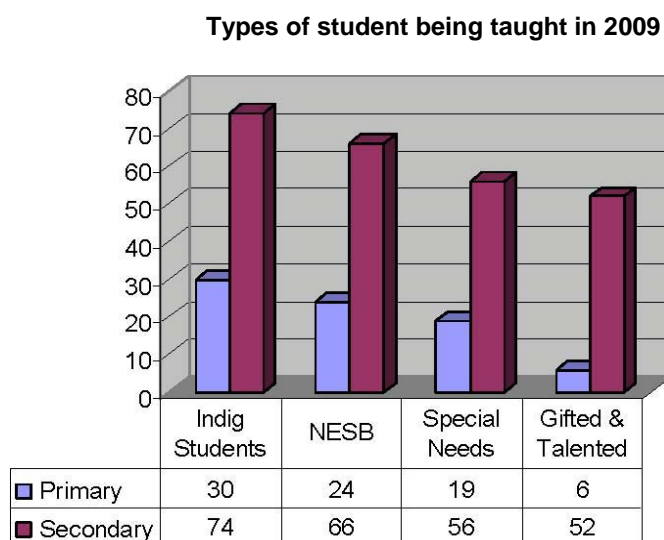
Figure 3 shows the number of years that those involved in the 2009 projects had been teaching.



The highest number of project participants, as would be expected, has been teaching for between 0 – 5 years in 2009. This is mirrored in both 2007 and 2008. Teachers from the 11 – 20 and 21+ years experience range are also well represented. Once again, it is assumed that they represent the bulk of the mentor/ supervisor participants drawn from executive and senior positions. Across the 2006 – 2009 projects, there has been a low representation of those teaching for between 6 – 10 years.

**Figure 4**

Figure 4 shows the number of teachers working with either one or a combination of students from Indigenous backgrounds, non-English-speaking backgrounds, students with special needs and gifted and talented students.



N.B. Numbers should be taken as approximations as not all final project reports supplied accurate participatory details.



### 3. Professional Learning Strategies and Changes in Practice

#### 3.1 Support for New Scheme Teachers

The level of support has varied across the project schools between 2006 – 2009 although, in general, the level of support NSTs received from their schools was very high. Some schools noted that the project highlighted the need for a more formalised approach to training mentors and, in turn, allocating resources to this specific area of staff development.

Support for NSTs going through the accreditation process with the NSW Institute of Teachers seems to have become more structured and better understood over the course of the project as more teachers complete the process and are able to support NSTs.

*Following initial induction, meetings are facilitated by the HT Mentors to assist NSTs with various school and DET processes and procedures. NSTs have supervisors, their relevant Faculty Head Teachers, who also support them in attaining their accreditation for Professional Competence through the NSW Institute of Teachers.*  
(Fairfield & Fairvale High Schools)

*Cranebrook High School runs an 8-week Orientation Workshop program for NST's which has been in operation for 10 years. It aims to provide support, strategies and observation opportunities for NST's. It also provides advice, support and information to NST's and their supervisors about the completion of reports and gathering of evidence for accreditation with the NSW Institute of Teachers.*  
(Cranebrook High School)

Many schools continued to adopt a 'whole school approach' to NST support, using workshops and induction and orientation days. How often a school receives NSTs affects familiarity with mentoring and accreditation processes. For example, in 2009 one high school had 11 New Scheme Teachers whilst one primary school had its first NST appointed in several years.

*To support the needs of 11 permanent and temporary NSTs the Collegial Support Team (CST) continues within the school. The CST delivers a comprehensive Professional Learning Program "Teachers Helping Teachers" that focuses on the Elements of the Quality Teaching Framework and the NSW Professional Teaching Standards. The CST carefully selects and pairs the NSTs with suitable peer mentors that have been teaching for 5 years or more.*  
(Macquarie Fields High School)

The demographics of a school area can affect how a program may be implemented and delivered, with large distances becoming a potential issue in rural areas.

*There are local issues which make mentoring options involve significant travel. Our NST's attend Regional DET Conferences and Regional Federation Conferences, both of which provide networking, learning and support.*

(Moree East Public School)

As in previous years, in 2009 most NSTs worked closely with both a supervisor and mentor. Supervisors and mentors can sometimes be one and the same but most commonly there are two different people involved in these roles. In many cases, in secondary schools, the supervisor is faculty based, whereas mentors were often drawn upon from the executive staff of the school.

Examples of the different kinds of support taken from 2008 and 2009 reports are below:

- defining roles and responsibilities and the timeline for accreditation and providing assistance
- developing knowledge and understanding of Legislative Requirements and the Institute of Teachers Professional Teaching Standards
- establishing collegial support within and between campuses and KLA teams
- identification of personal professional goals and plans
- collaborative planning and programming
- team teaching and lesson observations
- professional conversations (formal feedback)
- professional learning workshops
- regular meetings
- induction programs
- relief time from teaching
- professional learning plans and support programs
- supervisors/mentors providing demonstration lessons
- working with academic partners
- providing student and class management strategies and
- assistance with programming and assessment.

### 3.2 Effective collegial professional learning strategies used to focus on Element 5

Several schools started the process by posing questions to help formulate a direction and focus for their specific projects:

*When developing our professional learning strategy, our team asked the following questions:*

- *What is it we do as a teacher that will create a safe environment?*
- *What strategies do we employ to maintain this environment?*
- *How do we create a challenging learning environment within a classroom?*
- *What classroom management strategies do teachers employ to encourage an effective learning environment?*

*When answering the above questions we included an ICT focus with a specialisation in animation.  
(GyMEA Bay Public School)*

*Six NST's analysed the question, "Is good behaviour management based on good curriculum delivery or vice versa?" In an effort to answer this question, teachers observed a number of lessons focusing on effective behaviour management strategies...  
(Narromine High School)*

Other projects began with NSTs analysing existing faculty programs and assessing which of those programs might benefit from an overhaul and the incorporation of ICT:

*Beginning teachers were asked to obtain teaching and learning programs and assess them with respect to elements of the QT Framework, Gardner's Multiple Intelligences and the Pirozzo Matrix. From this, Beginning Teachers identified areas of their faculty programs that would benefit from Quality Teaching and technology with respect to the dimensions of Quality Teaching.  
(Duval High School)*

#### 3.2.1 Effective learning environments

As in previous years, the majority of projects focused on the use of rich program content, coupled with the use of quality teaching strategies, to produce engaging and interactive lessons, thus reducing the need for reactive discipline-only techniques.

*The majority of the funding provided face to face relief. Pairs then met on an ongoing basis planning, implementing and evaluating teaching strategies. The focus was to engage students in challenging and meaningful learning environments.  
(Broughton Anglican College)*

Many programs explicitly focused on the use of ICT to achieve goals:

*The collegial professional learning strategy involved the pairing of a new scheme teacher with a Head Teacher in the faculty within which they did the majority of their teaching.*

*One pair participated in a “WIKI” Professional development video conference during term 2 from which a ‘Wiki’ was to be developed with a year 7 History class and a year 12 Ancient History Class. A “Wiki” for the year 7 class was developed first, and in the midst it was recognised how important it was to focus the topic for maximum flexibility in the application of element 5. The collegial professional strategy was based on the concept that after developing both “WIKIS” staff involved would be able to engage in the classes together and learn from their limitations. (Camden Haven High School)*

*Five teachers chose to utilise the Smart Board in their lessons. One teacher used Podcasting and three teachers also set up class Blogs.*

*The team jointly constructed cross-faculty lesson structures and formed pairs for working cooperatively during the project. The aim was to utilise ICT to improve engagement and behaviour management. Pairs then designed specific lessons, either using the Smartboard or Podcasting with advice from their mentors and sharing ideas with each other. (Wadalba Community School & Lake Munmorah High School)*

*To maximise sharing and expertise of learning strategies and explicitly address ICT through pedagogical approaches through a collegially based model and context, in conjunction with Element 5 was at the forefront of this projects perceived outcome. We chose construction of a ‘web BLOG’ to deliver these standards to our NST’s, and to challenge their creativity to put this learning tool into best practice. Using the construction of the ‘BLOGS’ as our quality teaching device, NST’s exposed themselves to the variety of engaging and practical applications available when implementing specific ICT lessons/programs across KLA’s. (Sarah Redfern High School)*

### **3.2.2 Academic partners**

Throughout the 2006 – 2009 projects, academic partners have been utilised to give advice, direction and also support. The schools that utilised an external academic often note that the process was an enjoyable and rewarding one.

Teachers at James Busby High School were given input from an expert (Pam Kelly from Macquarie University ICT Centre) on web2tools, with the plan to develop their own web-based resources for engaging students, so that the standards of Element 5 would be met. St Johns Primary School, Dubbo, explored the building of a theoretical basis for positive behaviour management by exploring the beliefs of Perceptual Control Theory under the training and guidance of Mrs Judy McFadden (Association for Applied Control Theory Australia).

### 3.2.3 Observation sessions

In 2006 – 2009 project reports, observation has been a key element. Observation has been used as a tool in various formats including:

- NSTs observing more experienced teachers teaching across a range of faculties and schools
- NSTs observing each other teaching
- NSTs observing their own groups being taught by someone else in a different subject area.

A period of observation was typically followed up with a session of feedback or reflection with a supervisor, mentor, or another NST. Alternatively, a period of self-reflection was encouraged and proformas, journals and directed questions were used as scaffolds to aid this process.

Consistently, feedback across the projects suggests that NSTs greatly valued the opportunity to observe more experienced teachers and to apply a variety of useful classroom management approaches that they have observed. This helped them to develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between planning lessons for student engagement and thus the management of student behaviour in the classroom.

*Observations, discussion and reflections on learning were determined to be highly beneficial to New Scheme teachers. A bank of resources, detailing possible management strategies and possible outcomes from implementing these strategies has been developed.*

(Narromine High School)

*..the lesson [was then taught], being observed by their partner or a mentor. Teachers used an Observation feedback/reflection sheet to identify attainment of Element 5, aspects of explicit teaching instruction and use of technology. After reflecting, the lesson was changed and retaught, this time being videoed. The group of NSTs from both schools met again, viewed and critiqued the edited videos. A tuning protocol, QT structured conversation, was used as a basis for critiquing, then ideas about positives and suggested improvements were discussed. Teachers then taught a similar refined lesson and evaluated the process. The focus of*

*teacher learning was mainly on using the different kinds of technology, incorporating more student interaction and engagement with concepts. Mentors were used when needed but teachers mainly learnt through doing, sharing and discovering together. Teachers asked students to evaluate the lessons.*  
(Wadalba Community School & Lake Munmorah High School)

### **3.2.4 Lesson Study approach**

The Lesson Study approach was once again common in 2009. Of the 28 final reports, 10 projects reported directly using this method. Various other reports, although not directly stating a lesson study approach, reported a variety of similar techniques being utilised including: lessons being jointly developed, observation sessions, reflection time and discussion meetings where feedback was provided.

The opportunity to co-plan lessons with more experienced teachers and then observe those lessons with the opportunity to reflect, critique, deconstruct and discuss improvements to the lessons was seen as a powerful learning tool for both NSTs and more experienced teachers alike. Consistently, feedback from all schools adopting a lesson study approach was highly supportive of the effectiveness of the method.

*By completing an effective lesson study approach to their programming, the NSTs were able to recognise the importance of establishing effective transition strategies, age and stage appropriate lesson sequences that had realistic expectations for student achievement.*  
(Macquarie Fields High School)

*Examining and implementing Lesson Study as a formal Professional Learning Strategy has developed opportunities and skills in professional conversations which focus on the pedagogy of the teacher and the opportunity for the supervisor and New Scheme Teacher to learn together and from each other.*  
(Dubbo College)

*We used a variation of the lesson study whereby teachers collaboratively planned a lesson (On the Eureka Stockade), observed each other teach it and then reflected on the lesson. Our second lesson was collaboratively planned again using the same layout and sequencing but on a different topic (The Lambing Flat riots). They were also able to observe the mentor teach the same lesson who modelled some ways to maintain a safe and challenging classroom.*  
(Prestons Public School)



### **3.3 Positive Changes and Improvements in Teacher Practices observed as a result of participating in the team learning project.**

Virtually all final project reports spanning 2006 – 2009 report wide and varied positive changes and improvements in teacher practices. These benefits were not confined to NSTs but were also reported for mentors and supervisors involved in the projects, across faculties and whole-school communities.

*The allocated time to develop skills and resources has provided real and lasting benefits to each teacher. Many acknowledge they would not have developed these specific ICT skills without the time made available through the project. The strong collegial bonds and positive professional partnerships have extended into other areas of school life for the teachers working on the project*  
(Ambarvale High School)

*Greater confidence in classroom management. Understanding of educational needs of students with special needs/ improved ability to differentiate curriculum/ better use of proactive behaviour strategy. Implementation of both proactive and reactive behaviour management strategies for students with high support needs, intellectual disabilities, as well as many with extremely challenging behaviours*  
(Bates Drive School)

*The project has been integrated into the supervision practices of each of the executive so they have felt empowered in their support for the New Scheme Teachers. The artefacts designed, developed and implemented by the project team have become the evidence which the teachers will use to demonstrate their professional competence. The NSTs have grown in their capacity to manage their classrooms more effectively, are more reflective in their practice and interact with their supervisors in positive, supportive relationships based on trust and willingness to share and learn. The team enjoy effective professional relationships and look forward to opportunities to work together*  
(Dubbo College)

*Our NSTs have developed a genuine realisation of the ‘bigger picture’ of teaching. They have taken ownership of the responsibilities of embedding literacy and numeracy targets (identified through NAPLAN) into their KLA teaching and learning programs and lesson sequences.*  
(Fairfield & Fairvale High Schools)

As in previous years, NSTs and the wider school community reported a better understanding of accreditation requirements and the Professional Teaching Standards, particularly Element 5, and how to make links with existing school policies and priorities. Increased confidence in working towards accreditation was also regularly cited in the reports.

Benefits from a joint primary/secondary project between the Cranebrook Learning Community (Cranebrook High School, Braddock Public School, Kingswood Park Public School and Samuel Terry Public School) are below:

*The links between primary and secondary schools within our learning community have been strengthened.*

*Teachers working with students at different ages and stages of learning have had an opportunity to learn from one another.*

*We have become more aware of resources that are available to us within our local learning community eg. Cranebrook High School has full computer rooms and two rooms with interactive whiteboards which primary teachers, who have limited computer access in their classrooms, can access with their classes or for their own teacher professional learning.*

*By focusing on one Element [5], NST's and their Supervisors have had an opportunity to 'immerse' themselves in the language of the NSW Institute of Teachers' Professional Teaching Standards. This assists them in preparing to write Teacher Accreditation Reports or collate and annotate evidence to support their accreditation.*

(Cranebrook Learning Community)

### **3.4 Insights into the Collegial Team Approach**

The *Taking Professional Standards into Practice* projects have provided many insights into the benefits of a collegial team approach for NST professional development and wider professional development for all staff, at all levels, across the school environment in general. The final reports from the 2009 projects have continued to build upon and strengthen the idea that a collegial ethos within schools can greatly enhance teacher professional development and increase student outcomes.

It has been understood that a mentor is not necessarily a supervisor or expert and that growth occurs for all parties in the process of mentoring an NST. Open collegiality has helped NSTs to appreciate that classroom management is more effective when the learning is differentiated for all student learning needs, and also that student behaviour is more positive when they are engaged in their learning. These themes recur throughout 2006 – 2009.

The realisation for NSTs that other teachers may be having similar problems in their classrooms and that they are not isolated, without any support, was an often cited advantage for NSTs. Final report statements have offered a window into how the collegial team approach has enhanced not only teaching practices but also the lives of those involved:

*The beginning Teachers were always aware of the necessity of having work aimed at student outcomes and engagement but now are also able to link the process of engagement and learning enrichment to research and support documents.*

(Duval High School)



Collegial teamwork has been a highly successful approach to enhancing the professional growth of not only NSTs, but also in the continuing professional development of teachers at any level of experience.

*Professional relationships have been enhanced through the collaborative process, with inter-faculty and cross-sector rapport built throughout the project.*

(Fairfield & Fairvale High School)

*The project allowed for a high level of trust which made it possible for the team to support and listen to one another and to adapt teaching instruction based on individual needs. Having other teachers observe classes, team teach and work together gave individuals feedback on strengths, weaknesses and areas of improvement.*

*There was a sense of comfort from working with peers as this process alleviated the sense or fear of a 'supervisor' or 'administer' formally scrutinising lessons. The collegial approach allowed for more 'risk taking' without worry of reprimand or making mistakes- in fact mistakes were encouraged.*

(GyMEA Bay Public School)

*Teachers felt very positive about working in a team and loved the interaction of teachers from the two schools, extending their network across faculties as well as schools. Surprisingly, teachers particularly liked the sharing of their videoed lessons and being involved in critiquing each other's practice. They learned to relax when other people were in their lessons and see feedback as constructive.*

(Wadalba Community School & Lake Munmorah)

#### **4. Resources**

A broad and varied range of resources and artefacts has been developed between 2006 and 2009. Below are examples taken from the 2009 project reports:

- Lesson study observation scaffold
- Professional learning plan
- Personal, supervisor and unit reflection proforma
- Lesson observation proforma
- Student evaluation of lessons proforma
- Multisensory lesson activities
- Visual communication resources
- Brochures and booklets to share knowledge with wider school community
- Units of work
- Assessment tasks
- Professional learning proforma to guide short and longterm goals in professional learning
- Lesson plans

- Wiki collaborative websites
- Moodle online learning sites
- Blogs
- Podcasts
- Smartboard lessons
- Resources based on establishing and maintaining a safe and challenging classroom
- Presentations to faculties and whole school based on project findings
- Student work samples
- DVD demonstrating 'rich task in action' (claymation)
- Mentor guides
- Restorative Justice brochure
- Poster to support behavioural teaching and to remind students of specific expectations in technology area
- Lesson templates to ensure inclusion of ICT strategies
- ICT lesson templates (i.e. Engaging Research Tasks, Web Quests, Virtual Experiments, Smartboard lessons)
- Professional readings
- Videos of lessons for analysis and also to demonstrate techniques such as the use of a blog in class
- Learning journals
- Element 5 micro-skills package
- Video file of teacher reflections

A continuing and significant feature of the schools' involvement in the sharing of these resources is through the online portal at [www.qtp.nsw.edu.au/tpsip](http://www.qtp.nsw.edu.au/tpsip).

Publication of a collection of exemplar artefacts would make an interesting and valuable addition to the profession of teaching.

## 5. Suggested Improvements

The following suggestions are from 2009 reports. As with other years, some suggestions go beyond the scope/influence of the project but have been mentioned frequently enough to be deemed important.

**5.1** The need for structured training for supervisors and mentors about the teaching standards and the Institute's requirements along with the need for training for supervisors on how to support both mentor and NST, with possible techniques and approaches that can be utilised.

**5.2** The possibility of a reduction in beginning teacher loads and mentor loads and allocating more timetabled periods for supervisors and NSTs to meet. This recognises that professional learning and development is as important as classroom teaching.

*Time continues to be a factor in developing quality programs. In order for this to continue in the school we should set aside designated blocks of time for planning and developing quality programs on an ongoing basis.*  
(Broughton Anglican College)

**5.3** The timing of projects within the school year/cycle and extended time to conduct the projects was raised in various reports across 2006 – 2009. The possibility of extending the timeline across three terms or even one year, reflecting on a different element each term, was suggested.

**5.4** Timetabling is often stated as an issue that must be addressed creatively to allow observations to occur with the busy nature of schools and the variations to routine that regularly take place unexpectedly.

**5.5** Gymea Bay Public School suggested they would ideally like to include 'lone NST voices' from other schools in a local community of practice, noting that Gymea is a very large school, close to other smaller schools that may not have the human resource capacity to help NSTs complete such projects. They felt an ideal project would include these NSTs in running a local project, involving many schools, not just one.

**5.6** Potential issues were noted around accessing ICT facilities in some schools and that gaining access to sufficient functioning computers could be problematic.

**5.7** Support for casual and temporary teachers has been noted across all years' reports. The overall numbers of participants does reflect a low number of casual and temporary staff taking part in the projects. In 2007, from an approximate total of 324 NST participants, 45 of those were casual or relief teachers. In 2008, of an approximate total of 321 participants, 55 were casual or relief teachers and in 2009, from an

approximate 256 participants, 17 were casual or relief teachers (see Figure 3).

**5.8** St. Mary's Primary School suggested that they would use more in-depth briefing sessions at the start of the project to provide maximum opportunity for participants to ask questions and provide input into the development of the focus for the project and formal goal-setting process.

## **6 Conclusions**

Many of the cited benefits from the 2006 and 2007 projects resonate throughout the 2008 and 2009 final reports and were common across many schools. One of the most notable benefits of participation was the provision of time to observe, discuss, reflect and fine-tune pedagogical practices. Within this process the opportunity for professional dialogue to flow was enhanced and, as a result, collegiality was strengthened.

The projects added considerable extra burdens to often already heavy workloads although the positive outcomes and professional development opportunities of participating in the projects were regarded as outweighing this drawback. Ensuring that NSTs were involved in the design and implementation stages of the projects and choosing subjects and projects they wanted to work on were noted as providing a sense of ownership for the project, thus increasing its chance of success.

### **6.1 Benefits of observation**

*The sharing sessions clearly demonstrated the New Scheme Teachers' ability to draw upon strategies witnessed in observations, in order to handle classroom discipline problems quickly, fairly and respectfully. Observations, discussion and reflections on learning were determined to be highly beneficial to New Scheme teachers.*  
(Narromine High School)

*This collegial team approach has given supervisors the opportunity to observe NST's in a supportive, meaningful way. It has assisted in realising how vital Element 5 is in the classroom for a NST. Teachers who manage classroom activities efficiently ensure that substantial student time is spent on learning tasks. This observational approach is being replicated throughout the school to maintain safe and challenging learning environments.*  
(Preston Public School)

*Observation across KLA areas has broadened NST experiences and exposed them to a range of professional practice and strategies for engaging students whilst helping to gain a better understanding of consistency of expectations in the classroom.*  
(Terra Sancta College)

## 6.2 Professional dialogue

An increase in whole-school and cross-sector rapport was often cited as a major benefit of the projects in 2006 and 2007. The 2008 and 2009 project reports were no exception. There has been a noted increase in professional discussion among colleagues and an increase in NSTs' confidence in participating and contributing to professional dialogue. This has led to improved student outcomes, a reinvigoration and renewed enthusiasm of more experienced staff and an opening up of classrooms.

Freeman Catholic College noted development of professional dialogue processes, with increased confidence of NSTs and enhanced teaching and learning outcomes.

Sarah Redfern High School felt the project '*has allowed for more open and professional dialogue*', whilst Terra Sancta College felt that the project had increased professional dialogue, given opportunities for teacher leadership development, led to a significant increase in number of people willing to take up more formal mentoring positions and resulted in an opening up of the classroom.

*It has generated discussion within faculties with diverse staff curious to know what the project involved. The collegial relationships established from working in the project have long-term benefits for the school as a whole in sustaining a positive climate that continues to value professional learning.*  
(Ambarvale High School)

## 6.3 Personal reflection

The development of critical reflection skills through participation in the projects continues to have a very positive impact on teachers' approach to teaching, encouraging critical reflection on professional practice and the refinement and adaptation of lessons to best suit students and their learning needs. The development of reflection scaffolds and proformas has helped to instil this critical practice early in teachers' careers.

*The strategy has allowed new scheme teachers to critically reflect on their teaching practice. Self evaluation is an extremely important skill for all teachers and it is hoped, that establishing this process early in a teacher's career will set a foundation for career long evaluation and continued professional development.*  
(Narromine High School)

*Working together and observing each other has led to increased self-reflection and ease in discussing their attempts and mistakes in a non-threatening way...*  
(Wadalba Community School & Lake Munmorah High School)

## 6.4 Lesson Study approach

The Lesson Study approach has proved to be a powerful professional development strategy across the life cycle of the project. The schools that used this method may have gained the most benefit from their invested time.

The Lesson Study projects that have been implemented across two or more schools seem to produce an even larger benefit as they appear to have the value-adding effect of increasing networks and increasing the number of experienced teachers who can be accessed for their expertise:

*The new scheme teacher was concerned that the technology would be detrimental to behaviour and found instead it enhanced learning and engaged students. The lesson study process allowed the new scheme teacher to see how an experienced teacher is able to refocus students. This led to increased confidence on the part of the new scheme teacher to use these skills after watching the modelling.*  
(Camden Haven High School)

*Our NSTs have developed a genuine realisation of the 'bigger picture' of teaching. They have taken ownership of the responsibilities of embedding literacy and numeracy targets (identified through NAPLAN) into their KLA teaching and learning programs and lesson sequences.*  
(Fairfield & Fairvale High School)

*By completing an effective lesson study approach to their programming, the NSTs were able to recognise the importance of establishing effective transition strategies, age and stage appropriate lesson sequences that had realistic expectations for student achievement.*  
(Macquarie Fields High School)

*Enabled the mentor/supervisors to observe, in practice, how Element 5 was implemented in teachers' classrooms. This team approach also enabled the co-ordinators (who had never had the opportunity to observe lessons and discourse with their team on teaching/learning) to gain a valuable insight into the 'world' of the beginning and early career teacher.*  
(Busby Public School)

## 6.5 Working towards accreditation

The projects have enabled NSTs to focus on the professional teaching standards in meaningful ways and helped them to produce artefacts that they can use towards accreditation, whilst gaining confidence around the accreditation process. NSTs are regularly meeting with supervisors to work through the accreditation process, and a deeper understanding of the process is often cited as a benefit of the project.

## 6.6 Use of ICT in the classroom

It would appear that the 2009 projects have had very real and lasting benefits in terms of teachers increasing the use of ICT in the classroom. Project members have noted increased confidence in the use of ICT and an increased engagement of students with lessons that utilise ICT, helping to meet the outcomes of Element 5.

Participants have noted increased confidence in not only the use of hardware, such as smartboards, videos and cameras, but also in the use of software such as wikis, moodle and blogs. One project produced a poster to support positive behavioural teaching and to remind students of the expectations whilst they engage with ICT in technology areas.

*Teachers involved have benefited from familiarising themselves with the various technologies needed to successfully implement information and communication technologies (ICT) in classrooms. For example connected classrooms, interactive whiteboards, laptops, video and still cameras.*  
(Richmond Learning Community)

*ICT outcomes embedded into all KLAs, a willingness to research and trial new ICT programs to enhance learning, and smartboards used in majority of lessons.*  
(Lawrence Hargrave School)

*Participating in this ICT project has been a major learning curve for me. I was extremely anxious about using Smart Board in my teaching. I now am very excited and inspired to start implementing it into my lessons. If it wasn't for this opportunity I don't feel I would have this confidence to use this form of technology within the classroom.*  
(Teacher at Ambarvale High School)

*A variety of technology was incorporated: the project started with the development of a WIKI but expanded to include power point presentations, interactive websites and lessons on interactive whiteboards.*  
(Camden Haven High School)

*Staff involved in the project demonstrated a greater understanding of the role of "Moodle", "Wiki's", Quality Teaching, Quality Programming, and professional development to develop Quality Learning Environments and maximise student outcomes.... The teachers creating wikis have been inspired to plan ahead for the whole unit, and evaluate the unit based on how the students have been able to navigate the wiki.*  
(Duval High School)

*The project showed the versatility of blog use and its success in meeting Element 5. The blog itself was learning disguised, and created a highly engaged classroom..... Participants all noted the support structures of the AGQTP as the most significant support received to date for professional development.*  
(Sarah Redfern High School)



James Busby High School highlighted some of the challenges and opportunities that are arising from Year 9 students being issued with laptops:

*Currently, we are trying to use the wikis in class via the year 9 laptops as students find them engaging and they are keen to explore their use.... The teachers creating wikis have been inspired to plan ahead for the whole unit, and evaluate the unit based on how the students have been able to navigate the wiki. [We] have encountered problems such as internet coverage and blocked sites. What hasn't been learnt yet is how to manage the class while they are using the wikis: how to keep them on task, how much to monitor what they are doing, and how to cater for individual differences.*

(James Busby High School)

## **6.7 Linking lesson plans to the Quality Teaching Framework**

Various schools reported an increase in lesson plans being developed with both the NSW Institute of Teachers Professional Teaching Standards and the NSW DET Quality Teaching Model being taken in to consideration.

*NSTs have developed the ability to integrate Professional Teaching Standards and Quality Teaching elements into their planning and implementation and now see these frameworks as effective tools throughout the planning, implementation and evaluation process.*

(Fairfield & Fairvale High School)

*NST's are motivated to accept and include elements of QT in their teaching/learning programs.*

(James Busby High School)

*QT framework used as a reflective tool and also as an aide to planning.*

(Lawrence Hargrave School)

*Using the Quality Teaching Framework within the backward mapping format, enabled NSTs to realise the importance of quality teaching in creating a safe and challenging classroom. NST's observed that the lessons, which were significant and engaging with ICT to the students, created a respectful learning environment supporting students learning.*

(Prestons Public School).

## **6.8 Continuing beyond 2009**

Once again, schools noted that they would look towards maintaining and expanding the teachers' professional support networks that have been developed as a part of these projects as a valuable tool in their ongoing development.

*The project will be incorporated into the NST Induction Program at three campuses in the College and sharing within the KLAs in the preparation of the NSTs Accreditation Report and evidence collation and annotation.*

(Dubbo College)



*.....we anticipate that the program will be self supporting with modifications and additions to meet the needs of each group of new scheme teachers. We also hope to complete the professional development module package, the Moodle site and a similar series of reflection and observation sheets on elements 2, 3, 6 and 7.*  
(St Johns College)

In conclusion, the 2009 final reports from the AGQTP *Taking Professional Standards into Practice* project have again provided extensive evidence that the projects have been highly successful. The 2006 – 2009 projects have enabled a shift in mindsets towards collegiality, thereby increasing teacher focus upon professional development, and they have had positive effects for student outcomes.

The projects appear to have established long-term habits of openness, sharing, reflection and the notion of ‘open-door classroom policies’, where teachers are happy to have other people in their classrooms and be observed. There has been an increased willingness to adopt ICT in the classroom and many teachers have become more confident exploring and utilising technology within their day-to-day teaching practice, reporting an increase in student engagement and outcomes.

The 2009 projects have again been very successful in helping NSTs move the NSW Institute of Teachers Professional Standards from theory to practice and acquire meaningful evidence to help with accreditation.

Participant outcome surveys for 2009 also reflect a high level of satisfaction with the project. Ninety-three per cent of participants agreed that the currency and depth of their pedagogical knowledge and skills had increased to a large or great extent. Ninety-five per cent agreed that their capacity to apply professional standards to practice had increased to a large or great extent and ninety-four per cent agreed that their professional needs were met at the same high levels of satisfaction.

Follow-up interviews with a random stratified sample of participants and selected case studies of some of the most successful projects would further enhance this analysis of participants’ self-reports.

## 7 Appendix 1

Element 5 – Teachers create and maintain safe and challenging learning environments through the use of classroom management skills	
Aspect	Key stage
	Professional Competence
Create an environment of respect and rapport.	5.2.1 Maintain consistent, fair and equitable interactions with students to establish rapport and lead them to display these same characteristics in their interactions with one another.
5.2.2 Ensure equitable student participation in classroom activities by establishing safe and supportive learning environments.	
Establish a climate where learning is valued and students' ideas are respected.	5.2.3 Implement strategies to establish a positive environment supporting student effort and learning.
Manage classroom activities smoothly and efficiently.	5.2.4 Establish orderly and workable learning routines that ensure substantial student time on learning tasks.
Manage student behaviour and promote student responsibility for learning.	5.2.5 Manage student behaviour through engaging students in purposeful and worthwhile learning activities.
.	5.2.6 Handle classroom discipline problems quickly, fairly and respectfully.
Assure the safety of students.	5.2.7 Apply specific requirements to ensure student safety in classrooms.

Adapted from Professional Teaching Standards, NSW Institute of Teachers, February 2005, pp.10 - 11

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