



Australian Association of Special Education Inc
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The Australian Association of Special Education Inc (AASE) is the national peak body of professionals, other paraprofessionals and community members with the expertise and/or interest in the education of children and young people with special education needs.

The key aims of AASE are to:

- Provide educational leadership to the professional and wider community
- Advocate for quality education for all
- Commission, participate in and disseminate quality research to inform educational practice
- Arrange, promote and facilitate high quality professional learning events and conferences
- Coach, mentor and model best practice in teaching and leadership
- Build partnerships with universities, service providers and the community

AASE operates at three levels:

- National Council
- State / Territory Chapters
- Regional Branches

AASE RESPONSE TO DISCUSSION PAPER

PREAMBLE

Generally, AASE believes that the preamble is clear and explicit. However, perhaps it is too wordy. It is also felt that there is a lack of consistency in the language, and in the groupings such as in the use of 'knowledge, skills and dispositions', 'knowledge and skills', 'knowledge, skills and practices' and 'knowledge, skills and attributes'.

We were pleased to see the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals* was given prominence, but as an organisation working for students with special educational needs, we are concerned that the Declaration's use of ALL students was not adhered to throughout the standards. AASE believes that the use of 'all' is inclusive and therefore should be used.

The first paragraphs of the Introduction and Purpose are almost identical, so are they both necessary or should there be rewording?

Another comment is that there is no mention of the qualities of teaching such as trust, respect and caring.

Also, could the word 'capabilities' be profiled somewhere in the diagram/table to make the use of it explicit.

AASE also questions the statement in Levels of professional capability that: "All teachers must demonstrate that they meet the standards at a Graduate and Proficient level". If this is so, why is there the need for the two different levels?

STANDARDS

The differentiation between the four levels is not always clear. The distinction between graduate and proficient is often very slight.

The standards in their current form are not quantifiable. If one outcome of the introduction of the NPS is to implement a recognition system, then further work will be needed in order to measure performance against them.

AASE also has concerns about the overall length of the document.

There is much use of 'know' and 'understand', but seldom 'demonstrate'.

Rather than use 'their students' as is predominantly used throughout the standards, AASE believes the terminology 'all students' carries more emphasis and really includes the entire student population. Similarly the heading for Standard 1 would be more inclusive if 'their' was deleted.

Only the highly accomplished and lead teacher standards describe the requirements to successfully engage and ensure appropriate learning outcomes for students with special needs. Graduate and proficient teachers will be working within classrooms comprising approximately 20% of students with identified special education needs (DEST, 2005).

The Proficient teacher category in some areas is a repeat of Graduate. The differentiation may be in the area of a Proficient teacher's promoting whatever the capability is, then the HA modelling, then the Lead teacher coaching/mentoring.

Generally in the differentiation between the HA and Lead teachers, the HA is modelling and the Lead teacher knows how to facilitate. The language needs to be active to reflect that the lead teacher is facilitating. Knowing how does not necessarily mean that it is done.

1.2 needs the addition of 'begin to apply this to their teaching' at the graduate level.

Re 1.3, does this imply that the level of need of the student is taken into account? Teachers need to understand how to support students to become independent learners.

In 1.6, for graduate teachers 'all' is used for their students, while for proficient and highly accomplished teachers, 'all' is replaced with 'their'. Why? This section also appears to highlight the reluctance for the Standards to use the word 'teach'. **Students with special needs need teaching, not just for teachers to 'construct programs'.**

A minor point in this section is to always place gifted and talented students before those with disabilities or those who are disadvantaged. This seems to disadvantage the latter students more.

Standard 2: Know the content and how to teach it

Teachers need to need to know how to make accommodations to provide student-centred programs rather than teaching the curriculum. See Disability Standards in Education, Part 6.2 (1) Standards for curriculum development and accreditation and delivery.

This standard makes no recognition of the skills that need to be taught to many students with special needs such as self-care and self-help skills, and social and inter-personal skills that other students gain in other ways.

Teachers need to make an intensive analysis of curriculum, instruction and the school environment in order to maximise learning outcomes for all students including students with special education needs. Thus appropriate curriculum, instruction and environment are the key to a quality education for the full range of students including students with special education needs.

There would appear to be too many descriptors in Standard 2, making it difficult to attain or maintain the standard. For instance, could 2.2 and 2.5 be combined?

While recognising the need to emphasise indigenous students, the repeated reference to them seems to not acknowledge the many students from other cultures.

The first section of 2.9 would seem to be more relevant to the Australian Curriculum, rather than the Standards.

AASE is pleased to see in 3.3 that there is recognition for the need for teachers to use evidence-based research in their teaching.

In 3.6, there is no mention of reflective practices to monitor the teacher's own teaching.

In 4.4, for graduate teachers, there is no mention of them working with parents/carers which, of course, they will be.